



The Family of Jesus

Key idea:

The true family of Jesus and His followers is not defined by biological relation but rather by a common obedience to the will of God.

Key text:

Mark 3:31-35

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." ³³ "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Key points:

1. The biological family was very important in Scripture and the Jewish culture of Jesus' day, so we would expect Him to be considerate of their desires.
2. Jesus' mother and brothers thought He was going insane and were attempting to take control of Him and stop Him from ministering and doing the will of God.
3. Jesus declared that His true family - His mother, brothers, and sisters - are those who, like Him, do the will of God.
4. The deepest love and loyalty of disciples are not to biological family relations, their own desires and dreams, or even the preservation of their own life, but rather to Jesus and doing the will of God.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. How close am I to my own biological family? Do I struggle more to love and honor my family, or to compromise God's will and Word to please my family?
3. What clues does Mark give to show that Jesus' mother and brothers were being an obstruction to His calling from His heavenly Father?

4. Why does Mark use subtle clues such as the literary device of mentioning the family on both sides of the controversy with the scribes, the use of “seeking” or “looking” (which is always negative for Mark), and the family being outside while the disciples are close to Jesus rather than just stating that the family was at cross-purposes with God’s will? What does this require of the reader? Why is this helpful in the end?
5. How surprising is Jesus’ reply to His family? How would I expect Him to reply to their request in this situation?
6. How is Jesus’ statement that His true family is those who obey God’s will a challenge? How is it a comfort?
7. Can I think of any relationships, desires, or dreams that might be at cross-purposes with God’s will in my life? How can I strengthen myself to not compromise in these areas?
8. How can I honor my parents and other family members even if they are not Christians and sometimes want me to disobey God in my actions?
9. Who will I call or see to invite to gather with the church this week?