

Theme: 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.

I. Intro - Blood Is Thicker Than Water!

- A. A common saying - blood is thicker than water
- B. I looked up the original use and meaning
 - 1. Family relations are stronger than baptism or other associations
 - 2. Blood covenant is stronger than family relations (same water of birth)
- C. Either way, it brings up the dilemma in today's text

II. The Biological Family of Jesus

- A. Jesus' mother and brothers arrive

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. Mark 3:31

 - 1. Mary and her other sons arrive in Capernaum
 - 2. The crowd is so large they are stuck outside
- B. The importance of family in Scripture & Jewish culture
 - 1. We are commanded to honor our father and mother "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12
 - 2. This principle was repeated many times in the Old Testament and was firmly entrenched in Jewish culture - one was expected to respond to the call of family.

- 3. Jesus Himself reiterated keeping this command

And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!"¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God),¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." Mark 7:9–13
- 4. More in AfterHours
- 5. For this reason, one would expect Jesus to immediately dismiss the crowd and respond to the call of His mother and brothers.

C. A problem with Jesus' family

- Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."...³¹ 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." Mark 3:20–21, 31-32
- 1. We are alerted to a problem by the fact that the family thought Jesus was out of His mind (v30)!
 - 2. Mark also mentioned the family, changed to the scribes, and then returned to the family
 - 3. He uses this literary device several times in the Gospel

4. It is always a clue to read the two incidents together as teaching the same basic point
5. Thus it is clear that Mark is highlighting the family's opposition to Jesus.
6. They may not think He is filled with Satan - but they do think He is not in His right mind!
7. They may not be trying to kill Him - but they are trying to stop His obedience to the Father!
8. Furthermore, the family is "looking" or "seeking" Jesus - and this is a negative word in Mark
 - a. ζητέω (look/seek) occurs 10 times in Mark
 - b. Negative every time (except possibly Mark 16:6)
 - c. Often used of leaders "seeking" Jesus to kill Him (14:1), or Judas "looking" for a way to betray Jesus (14:11).
 - d. This is another subtle clue that something is wrong with the desires of the family.
9. Note: we know from John 7:3-5 that Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him yet.
10. Jesus' response must be read in light of this fact!

III. The Family of Jesus

A. Jesus' shocking reply

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

³⁴Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!

³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:33–35

1. Jesus asks a penetrating question to make us think!
2. Jesus redefines the deepest bonds for a disciple!

3. He declares that His mother and brothers are seated around Him!
4. Note the contrast between the two "families"
 - a. Jesus' biological family is outside, while the disciples are gathered around Jesus.
 - b. The biological family thinks Jesus is out of His mind, the disciples think He is the only one in His right mind!
 - c. The biological family wants to stop Jesus from teaching, the disciples want to listen to Him teach!
 - d. The biological family wants to stop Jesus from ministering and doing God's will, the disciples want to see Jesus accomplish the ministry God has given Him!
5. Jesus teaches that there are bonds and loyalties that are deeper than even the bonds and loyalties due to the biological family.

B. The true family of Jesus

Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother. Mark 3:35

1. The true family of Jesus is not marked by physical relation, nor even familiarity with Jesus, but rather with doing the will of God!
2. For a disciple, obeying the will of God trumps every other desire and loyalty in life!
3. Jesus clearly taught this concerning family

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Matthew 10:37–39

- a. Disciples' love and loyalty to Jesus eclipses their love and loyalty for even their own family.
 - b. Disciples' love and loyalty to Jesus eclipses their own desires and dreams - they will bear the cross to follow Jesus.
 - c. Disciples' love and loyalty to Jesus eclipses their very life - they will abandon their own life to find true life in Jesus!
4. This is a radical call to discipleship, but the glorious outcome is that Jesus Himself becomes our family! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Mark 3:35

Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." Hebrews 2:11–12

- a. What a privilege - we are brothers and sisters of Jesus, the Eternal Son of God!
- b. When a disciple sees this, any cost required pales in comparison!

IV. Applying the Word

A. Do I see the radical nature of Jesus' call?

- 1. Even a biological relationship with Jesus Himself does not make one a follower or disciple!
- 2. One must respond to Jesus in personal repentance, faith, and desire to obey! DO SO TODAY!!!
- 3. Jesus tells us that the call to follow Him eclipses even our closest relationships in life.

- 4. New life in Christ is the death of life on our own terms or those of the world.

When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow Him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call. - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

- 5. This does NOT mean we are rude, or try to offend, or not give honor to whom it is due. The offense must be the offense of the cross - not my foolishness, arrogance, or attitude!
- 6. But our loyalty to Christ must trump every other loyalty in this world! Our identity as a disciple of Jesus must eclipse every other identity - ethnicity, gender, sexual desire or identity, political affiliation, nationality, or anything else by which we might define who we are.
- 7. This radical call is not to join a club, nor to take up the hobby of learning information about Jesus - it is a call to humbly embark on the journey of trying to obey the will of God in all of life for the rest of my life.
- 8. Is there any area the Spirit is bringing to mind that is vying for supremacy over my call as a disciple?
- 9. Hear the Spirit's call! Compromising our obedience will never bring joy for us, nor will it bring our loved ones into a living relationship with Jesus.

B. Do I see the comforting nature of Jesus' call?

1. Do not miss the comfort of this call!
2. You may be forsaken by your father and mother, brother and sister, even by close friends, but you are the family of Jesus and He will never leave or forsake you!
3. We are also given brothers and sisters in Christ - they are not perfect, but they are a source of comfort and help as we walk out our life.
4. Hear the Spirit's call - you are the brother or sister of Jesus, the son or daughter of God! You are loved, accepted, welcomed, and embraced!

C. The Family Table

1. We love to have our family gathered around the table, eating and celebrating together!
2. this is the family Table for the family of God!
3. Come and receive the love of God!

The Family of Jesus

Mark 3:31-35

March 5, 2023

Communion

Romans 8:15-17

Teaching keywords: Discipleship; marriage and family; obedience

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." ¹⁶ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷ Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. Go forth, filled with every blessing, and be a blessing!
Romans 8:15–17

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