

## The Gospel According to Mark

### The Family of Jesus

Mark 3:20-21, 31-35

Sunday, May 17, 2020

#### Introduction

The Bible doesn't tell us much about Jesus' earthly family. Of course we know about Mary and Joseph, but Jesus also had siblings. It can be easy to forget that these are probably people whom He was close to and whom He loved. With that in mind we may wonder how they responded when Jesus, at age thirty, began teaching, performing miracles and drawing crowds.

In Mark 3 we get a small glimpse into the family of Jesus and their reaction to His ministry. But the most significant aspect of the passage is what Jesus says about His family, and whom He identifies as His family.

#### Structure – A Story within a Story

This is the first of several times in the Gospel when Mark inserts a story within a story. This literary device combines two stories that share similar themes in order to draw more attention to what's being communicated. In this case we see two groups of people who fail to recognize who Jesus is, who perceive Him as being out of His mind and who want to remove Him from the public eye. But we also see a strong affirmation of the authority of Jesus and a lesson on what it means to be a true follower of Jesus.

#### An Evaluation of Jesus: His Family's Perspective (2:20-21)

- **A return to the crowds (vs. 20)** After some time away with His disciples Jesus returns to the crowds. Again we see the nature of His growing popularity among those who sought His miracles.
- **The family's assessment: Jesus has lost His mind (vs. 21c)** As Jesus' brothers and mother hear of all that He is doing and saying and of the crowds that He is drawing they determine that He has lost His mind.
- **The family's response: Get Jesus out of the public eye (vs. 21b)** Maybe out of love for Jesus and concern for His safety, or maybe to save their family's reputation, they determine that they must get Jesus out of the public eye, by force if necessary.

#### An Evaluation of His Family: Jesus Describes His True Family (3:31-35)

- **The setting (vs. 31-32)** As the family of Jesus arrives He is inside the house and surrounded by people. Mark makes it clear that while there are people who are inside with Jesus (in fellowship with Him) His family remains outside (they are not yet true followers of Jesus).

- **The pronouncement of Jesus about His true family (vs. 33-34)**
  - **What He's not saying** – By His response, Jesus is not disparaging or belittling His family. And He's not suggesting that our earthly families are to be devalued or neglected.
  - **What He is saying** – Jesus understands the value of the family, which is why He uses the family to help us understand a significant spiritual truth: When we are joined to Christ we are adopted into a new family, the family of God. This family is just as real and even more permanent than our earthly family relationships.
  - **Kent Hughes** – *This new family relationship is far superior, far stronger, far more satisfying, far more demanding and far more dear than any human family relationship.*
- **The identifying mark of Jesus true family (vs. 35)** Jesus identifies His family as those who do the will of God. We know that the will of God is, first and foremost, that we place our faith in Jesus (John 6:40). Our life of faith will be made evident in our obedience (1 John 2:17).

#### Application

- **As the true family of Jesus we should recognize the beauty and rightness of His words and ways** – Jesus's earthly family did not understand the things He said or did. As His followers we should have eyes open to the things of Christ and be ready to follow Him in obedience.
- **As the true family of Jesus we should be unashamed to be associated with Him** – The people closest to Jesus saw the things He was doing and saying and determined that He was insane. The same may be said of us if we truly live God's way. Even so, we should be faithful and live out our faith with confidence (Matthew 5:11-12; Mark 8:34-38).
- **As the true family of Jesus there may be times when we are put at odds with our earthly family** – As we are faithful we may experience rejection by others, maybe even members of our own family. We can endure this separation as we remember that in Christ we will receive more than we will ever lose (Mark 10:29-31).
- **As the true family of Jesus we should rejoice in the privilege of being part of His family** – In God's kindness our earthly family is not the only family we have, or even our truest family. We should never underestimate or minimize the privilege it is to be joined to the family of God (1 John 3:1-3).