

Lesson 250

Jesus Teaches on His True Family



Story Elements

- **Text:** Mark 3:31-35 (also Matt. 12:46-50; Luke 8:19-21)
- **Setting:** circa AD 28 in Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, and Jesus' mother and brethren
- **Plot:** Jesus responds to his earthly family's summons by teaching about the eternal family.
- **Key word(s):** "my _____ and my brethren" (v 34) – Jesus seizes an opportunity to teach about the true family of God.
- **Climax:** **Mark 3:33** *And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?* This verse grabs the reader's attention because we would not expect Jesus to respond in this fashion. What he says next is both wise, encouraging, and gospel-centered.

The Family Outside

1. (v 31) Previously in the chapter (v 21) we read that Jesus' ministry activities were so demanding that they even inhibited his ability to take a _____ break.
 - (a) *His friends* (those near to him) feared that Jesus' hectic preaching schedule and ministry responsibilities were driving him _____ ("*he is beside himself*").
 - (b) His mother and brethren (mentioned in in v 31) were certainly motivated to speak with him for the same reason and from the same motives.
 - (c) (v 32) While preaching to the multitude inside a large building (cf. Matt. 12:46), Jesus' sermon is interrupted by when others notify him that his mother and brethren are outside and they want to speak with him.

APPLICATION➔ Spurgeon reminds us that "Many a nervous mother has been ready to hold back her consecrated son when his courage has defied danger. Our Lord did not allow his love to his mother to turn him aside."¹

APPLICATION➔ The Savior's perfect example is patterned in other places of Scripture: it is not unusual for God's servants to be interrupted or even _____ from their service. Ryle uses the Savior's example to encourage those who are thus tempted: "Let nothing turn them for a moment out of the narrow way. Let them not heed the ill-natured remarks of enemies. Let them not give way to the well-intentioned but mistaken entreaties of unconverted relations and friends. Let them reply in the words of Nehemiah, 'I am doing a great work and cannot come down.' (Neh. vi. 3.) Let them say, 'I have taken up the cross, and I will not cast it away.'"²

The Family Around

2. (vv 33) Given the serious nature of Christ's preaching and the ubiquity of his numerous enemies, such an interruption from one's mother would've proved _____ to most preachers. But Jesus is different, and once again he demonstrates his wisdom and infinitely quick thinking by redirecting the interruption into a valuable and encouraging lesson.
 - (a) (v 34) Jesus asked, *who is my mother and my brethren?* And then he looked round about on them that sat about him (i.e., his disciples) and said *behold my mother and my brethren!*
 - (b) Matthew adds this suggestive detail: *he stretched forth his _____ toward his disciples* (Matt. 12:49).

¹ Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 95.

² J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Volume One, Matthew/Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 60.

APPLICATION➔ Jesus is not disrespecting his family. Barnes explains, “Dear and tender as were the ties which bound him to his mother and brethren, yet those which bound him to his disciples were more tender and sacred.”³

APPLICATION➔ Spurgeon applies it personally: “All believers in Jesus are of the royal family, princes of the blood, brothers of the Christ... ‘He is not ashamed to call them brethren.’ In this instance his method of acknowledging them was singularly striking; he even set them before his earthly mother and brethren.”⁴

APPLICATION➔ Christ’s explicit preferment for his spiritual family is an obvious warning against the ancient error of excessively _____ his mother. Almost every time Jesus interacted with his mother in Scripture, there was a purposeful (but respectful) distancing in his language. Matthew Henry explains: “Now, as at other times, he put a *comparative neglect* upon his mother, which seemed purposely designed to obviate the prevent the extravagant respect which men in aftertimes would be apt to pay her.”⁵

Getting in the Family

3. (v 35) Jesus then makes the description of his spiritual family an open _____ to join his family. *For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*
- (a) *Doing the will of my Father* does not mean we earn our right into the family. It means that those who are in the spiritual family of Christ cannot be described by genetic traits but by spiritual _____.

John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

John 6:40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, **and believeth on him**, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

- (b) *Doing the will of the Father* is the continual pursuit of _____ that began when we first came to Christ in faith.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification...*

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Answer Key: key word(s) “mother” • 1. Meal; a) mad; ➔ distracted • 2. embarrassing; b) hand; ➔ exalting • invitation; a) fruit; b) holiness

³ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Matthew & Mark*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 137.

⁴ Spurgeon, 96.

⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1783.