

Sermon Outline

WHO ARE OUR FAMILY?

MARK 3: 20 -35

Text : Mark 3: 20 -35

Message: Because Jesus calls us His family, we are to obey His will as expected of family members.

I Introductory Context

1. Jesus was back at Capernaum after the appointment of the 12 apostles.
2. Jesus was making a tremendous impact in the region.
3. You would have thought his family members and relatives as well as his church family would be proud of him and the impact of his ministry. But what we hear from Mark is shocking.

II Because Jesus call us His family, we hear His will with faith. V21

A. What did the family hear

4. In v 21, the word “friends” and “family” in different bible versions. The Greek used is actually ”they who were of him”. Most accept the rendering as family or relatives. Family makes more sense especially taken as whole with last part of this chapter.
5. It was not surprising that what Jesus was doing was heard by the family. Jesus’ works was earth shaking news. His works were dramatic.
6. And he was proclaiming the good news widely throughout Galilee. His amazing ministry was out in the open, not only in the synagogues but also in the quiet places because as news of His wonderful works spread, Mark said Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, and people were coming to him from every quarter.
7. In contemporary terms it would be front page news almost every day. He was the talk of the town. Now he was back in his home town. We would have expected Jesus’ family to celebrate and prepare a home coming..

B. What was their response.

1. They were talking about his works. But it was not out of celebration and joy but of concern. Coming from family members, the response was shocking.
2. They planned to put a stop to what he is doing.
3. If a man devotes his life to some noble but earthly cause, he is applauded. But if a man gives himself in total dedication to the cause of God, he is branded as a fanatic.
4. Their response in hearing the works of Jesus was to seize him. That would stop Jesus from doing God’s will. And stop Him from doing the works of him who sent him. But Jesus’ aim is to work while it is day. John 9:4.

C. Why such a response

1. They kept saying, “He is out of his mind”. They believed after hearing the works he has done that he was mad. He had gone over the edge and become crazy. They heard

what He has done but did not believe that His works was proof that He was the promised Messiah of the Scriptures. He was doing the will of God, demonstrating his authority and power as the Son of God.

2. Jesus lived with his family for 30 years. Perhaps they heard many times of his miraculous birth rehearsed by mother Mary and testified by father Joseph and the relatives like Zachariah and Elizabeth. Perhaps they have even seen for themselves some of his works like turning water into wine or heard him teach in the synagogues. Yet John 7:5 tells us his brothers did not believe him and in fact mocked him as recorded by John, perhaps out of jealousy.

3. There is an obvious lesson here. Young people, you can hear over and over all the bible stories your parents, loved ones or the church family tell you about Jesus. You can live, eat and play with them. You can be their family. But you can still remain unbelieving and unsaved. Faith is not transmitted by genes and neither by contact with people with faith. It has to be given by God. True family members believe in one another.

4. You might sit there and say I don't care. I will read my own story book. These are nonsense stories. What's in it for me? Plenty. If you do not have Jesus as your Saviour, you are still under the rule of the Devil. You are his slave, lie to you, cheat you and in the end destroy you.

III Because Jesus call us His family, we sight His works with trust. vv 22-30

A. What did the church family see

1. The scribes or the teachers of the Jewish religious institution of the day right back in Mark 2:6 and following were watching and observing the works of Jesus. They were guardians of the Jewish faith. They saw what Jesus did openly. They could not deny what they saw.

2. The open acts demonstrating his power as the promised Messiah were convincing. That exhibition of sovereign power needs to be refuted as the crowds were following Jesus, some as spectators but there were many who believed. So they decided to sent a party from Jerusalem HQ to confront Jesus openly

B. What was the church family's response

1. Out of unbelief, the scribes used the incidents of Jesus casting out demons and how casted out demons submitted to Him, against Him. His works were real and factual. There were witnesses and living proof. The healed spoke and testified of His power. So if they could not deny his miraculous works, they have to try to explain away Jesus' power. Hence, they asserted that Jesus could cast out demons because he was working with or in league with Satan or Beelzebub.

2. It was a confrontation battle to rubbish the work of Jesus. The response of Jewish family was deliberate and wicked. Jesus said He worked the miracles because He is from God. But they disagreed and said He had this power from the evil one. This was not just a matter of a different point of view. This is defiance

3. Contrary to the adage – seeing is believing, this is a case of seeing and yet not believing but a hardening of an unbelieving heart to cling on to selfish ambitions.

4. The scribes were people who knew their scriptures. They are students of the law in comparison to the priests. They were teachers who were the moral guide of the day. Not only did they not believe they sought to attack God's will with all their vehemence.
- C. The on-going conflict between good and evil
1. Jesus called the scribes to himself. The scribes had come out openly and declared war. It was not time to be gentle. Blasphemy had to be dealt with before it becomes truth. Jesus faced these scribes and answered them to their very faces in the most crushing way before witnesses.
 2. This is a picture of the ongoing battle between the forces of darkness and light. The battle has its beginnings at the Garden of Eden. There the Lord God declared in Gen 3:15 the curse upon the serpent and Satan- I will put enmity between you (serpent) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."
 3. The conflict now breaks into the open again here. Jesus stepped into the arena facing the evil forces in the form of the scribes. This confrontation helps us to understand the present situation in the world. If it is not one battle in the larger arena of societal concern, it is another in the personal arena. But the battle as we shall see is not between 2 equals.
- D. Jesus' response
1. Jesus' response is swift. He gave 2 illustrations in the form of a parable to debunk the scribes' assertion as highly illogical. One is of the kingdom and the other of the house.
 2. First of all, he asked "How can Satan cast out Satan?" Jesus did not say, cast out demons but Satan. In doing so, he identified the demons and their ruler Satan as one. No sensible man would say that Satan casts out Satan. The thing is contradictory in itself.
 3. Further everyone could understand that a divided kingdom and a divided house cannot stand. This is a universal experience. And the end result of a divided kingdom is its destruction. The halves would destroy each other and come to an end as v 26 says.
 4. Opposition to Jesus upsets men's logic. Proud of their superiority, they put forth as being convincingly sound what is absolutely unsound.
 5. Jesus then expanded his illustration of the house to that belonging to a strong man. From sheer deduction you would conclude that to rob his house, you must first tie up the strong man and render him useless.
 6. The meaning of the parable on the other hand serves to illustrate that the demons are cast out when the kingdom of God comes. Satan is the strong man. He has been neutralized. Hence his goods and property or those victims possessed by Satan are now freed. Jesus is He who has come to "plunder" the goods of Satan and freeing them by first binding or rendering Satan ineffective. This binding of Satan was Jesus' victory recorded in 1:12, 13 in his temptation in the wilderness. That victory will finally climax in his victory over death which is the final enemy.
 7. This is a very meaningful parable for us. We were once under the control of Satan, the prince of the power of the air. But now the kingdom of God is here. Jesus has come

and freed us. We are no more slaves of sin and Satan. Satan has been disarmed. He is not powerless at least not for now. But his power is coming to an end before his final destruction. He is tied up and immobilised. We are freed to serve God. The cross of Jesus and His resurrection once and for all cancel off the power of Satan. Hallelujah.

E. Jesus' warning

1. But Jesus also ends his response to the scribes with a warning as well as a promise. The promise is all kinds of sins can be forgiven. However the scribes are warned that when they call the work of God as that of Satan, that blasphemy is unpardonable. They are liable to eternal damnation. It is possible that a soul can be lost forever in hell.
2. They are guilty of an eternal sin because they kept saying or believing that Jesus has an unclean spirit. That Jesus and His works are evil.

F. What is our response

1. You heard Jesus' family kept saying he was mad and the church family believed he was evil. But on the other hand Mark no doubt was highlighting by Jesus' ministry that Jesus is God. Their responses beg and demand a response from us. What is our response? Is Jesus mad, evil or is He God. Or as others sum it up –Is he a lunatic, liar or Lord? There is no sitting on the fence. We are to choose one of these 3 options.
2. In Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis said makes this statement, *"A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic or he would be the devil of hell. You must your choice. Either this was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us."*
3. So Mark is asking you who is He to you after hearing and seeing His works and ministry? Jesus was misunderstood by his nuclear family and misrepresented by his church family. Who do you say He is?

IV. Because Jesus call us His family, we are to do His will with devotion. vv 31-35

A. The family expected priority

1. In these last few verses of Mark 3, Mark now swings his attention back to the family. They had come to as the v21 says to "seize him" and take him back because he has gone "out of his mind". They might have come out of good intention to rescue their loved one. Or they could have come to save the family from embarrassment. Either way they have misunderstood their loved family member.
2. Sadly, his nuclear family just did not understand the significance of the busy life Jesus was leading. They did not take it to heart when he said at the age of 12, that he was about His Father's business. His growth in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man was unnoticed from the perspective that He was the promised Messiah.
3. When they arrived at the place where Jesus was teaching, they were on the outside of the crowd Mark, Matthew and Luke tell us. They had to pass the word to Jesus that they were here. Mark even record they perhaps were yelling above the crowd. The idea was they expected as family members special privilege of access and priority given to their presence.

4. What the family of Jesus was doing was representative of the family structure of that day. Earthly family ties have priority and precedence over all other relationships.
- B. The shocking question
1. When that message was passed on to Jesus, Jesus made a shocking counter response. He said this is not directly to his family but to those sitting around that he was teaching. This is indicated by how he conveyed his response. Your family is seeking you, they said. He replied, Who are my mother and my brothers? In Matt 12 we are told he replied to the man who conveyed the message with a stretched hand towards his disciples.
 2. The response is shocking today especially for us who think that our nuclear family is all there is in this world. . Family takes precedence and priority over everything so much so that family can become idolatrous. By asking the question who is my mother and my brothers, Jesus is questioning the whole accepted idea of family.
 3. If you don't think this is shocking then you have not understood the full force of this response especially in the culture of the day. They were coming to intervene in what was taking place and take Jesus home because they were family. They were laying claim on Jesus, body and all.
 4. Obviously from Jesus' response, he did not jump off his stool and stop all he was doing to attend to his family. Mary and Jesus' brothers must be made to understand that his comings and goings cannot be determined by physical ties but only by the will of God
 5. We must see here that Jesus was putting earthly family relationships in its right and proper perspective. Jesus was far from being anti-family. God has a high view of the family especially the covenant family.
 6. The marriage and family structure was ordained by the triune God. God incarnate was born and raised in a family relationship. Therein He obediently and lovingly respected and cared for those relationships as a devoted son and as a model for us. This is observed in the recorded instances in the gospels e.g when Joseph and Mary retrieved him from the temple where he was 3 days there raising and discussing spiritual questions, when he was asked to do his first miracle of turning water into wine or even at the pointed of death and in great agony but refusing anesthetic, he still had sufficient breath to make sure John would care for Mary after his death. And the apostles in the writings in their letters are no different in their teaching about the family.
- C. Who is true family
1. As is his practice, Jesus used the interruption as an occasion for instruction. Pointing to his disciples with a wave of his hand (Matt 12:49) to those sitting around him and listening to Him, he said you are my family. You are really my mother and my brothers. In other words not so much those who are seeking me and standing outside of our sphere of ministry or the general crowd but those who are in the inside are family. Those of you who hear my works and believe, see my works and believe are my family.
 2. The emphatic response of Jesus is stunning.
 3. Jesus is saying that over and above the nuclear family there is the spiritual family. When we are saved by the grace of God, there's a new family to which we belong. It is a

new family that transcends the bounds of time and space. A new family that will not last just for a time, but for eternity. In our new family, water is thicker than blood.

4. In light of its eternal significance and its role in the purposes of God, we have to see its priority and place in our lives. As precious as our family ties are, we should not pursue it at the expense of our spiritual family. We have 2 families. They are mutually beneficial, each making a contribution to the well-being of the other. Our nuclear family and our work have to be seen as scaffolding to our broader and all embracing calling as members of our spiritual family to seek first the kingdom of God..

D. The mark of true family membership

1. In v 50, what marks us out as a member of true family is doing the will of God which is centred around the indispensable necessity of obedience to Jesus' commands. It is not that we become a member of the spiritual family by our doing. But our doing the will of God is the mark and evidence of our true membership.

2. The will of God is the will Jesus reveals. It begins by Him inviting, drawing, and enabling us to perform His will. This is the good and gracious gospel will of God which demands our obedience. No one is able to "do the will of God" except by the power and sovereign grace of God. (Eph. 2:8; Phil. 2:12, 13). As reported by Mark, God is the great Enabler (1:17). And it is his substitutionary, atoning sacrifice that brings us into the family.

3. The "whosoever" in Jesus' statement is both inclusive and yet exclusive. It includes all not only those he was pointing to. But it is only those who do the will of God.

4. Doing the will of God accomplishes the purposes of God in this world. God can do all by Himself. But he chooses that his family does it to reflect His glory. Hence as spiritual family members we must give family time for our spiritual family business. Who will do the will of God if not the spiritual family? Can we say I will give time for my spiritual family only when my nuclear family and my work needs are met. There is an immense need to bring back a priority in Father's business. Too often we hide behind the façade that family and work commitments are spiritual business. But in reality they have subconsciously become idols.

5. We are so busy building our homes while the church of God lie in ruins. Haggai 1:4 Instead we should in the spirit of David, and say I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." 2 Samuel 7:2, 2 Chronicles 17:1.

6. Beloved, Jesus' teaching on the spiritual family is clear. We dare not water it down as precious as our family ties are and our calling in the workforce. I believe where our priority and commitment for the family of God is balanced, our obligations to our nuclear family and workforce will find its own biblical level.

V. **Conclusion**

1. The word and works of Jesus are undeniable. We are either for Him or against Him. We cannot be neutral. He is not a good moral teacher. Because of what He said, he can only be a lunatic, a liar or He is God.

2. Those who believe Jesus is Lord and Savior become members of His family. Members of His family give family time to do His will.