

Mark 3:20-35

Are You Part of God's Family?

The Summit Church, CPC

MPT: We are not brought into the family of God by physical relationships, but by faith in Jesus Christ evidenced by obedience.

MPS: Jesus had a greater family than even his biological one. The spiritual family he was creating in the church was more important than even his own biological family.

INTRODUCTION

Summit family, what an awesome last few weeks it's been:

- A few weekends ago I was able to baptize my oldest daughter.
- Last month we saw our neighbor and dear friend come to faith in Christ
- Seeing the prayer temperature rise in TSC
 - ALL JUST AMAZING. AIN'T GOD GOOD?

Turn to Mark 3...

This weekend we're going to **step away from our 1 Corinthians series**, but we're going to **remain on the subject of the church family...**and we're gonna see how **Jesus fundamentally redefines what it means to be part of God's family--the church.**

One of the things I've been reminded of recently is that **we don't go to church**; but that **we are the church**. We *are* the church, and **we go to worship alongside our church family.**

Now the church family is supposed to be the **collective body of believers** under the sole banner of Jesus Christ; a people who hold to the **gospel above all**. But as PJD and Pastor Bryan have shown us the last two weeks from the Church at Corinth, **the family of God often looks pretty dysfunctional.**

- Is it dysfunctional? Yes and amen.
- Is it still God's family? Yes and amen.

- We all have different preconceived notions of the church, right?

I'm curious, **Have you ever thought you knew something but it turns out you really didn't?** (Some of you live with someone who is **often wrong, but never in doubt!**) Have you ever **thought you knew something** but it turns out you really didn't? Or maybe you've **used a certain word** your entire life and you were *sure* you knew what it meant, but it turns out you've been incorrectly using that word for years?

- WWF not real (What else is not real? Is Stone Cold even drinking real beer?)
- Liz: Reindeer (Caribou. Don't fly, let's get that straight...)
- Pan-cakes (32 years old when I realized that)
- Kitten caboodle
- Inigo Montoya, *"You keep using that word. I do not think it means what you think it means."*

What we're going to see today is that **Jesus fundamentally redefines what it means to be part of God's family**. You might think because you **go to church** or because you **grew up in a Christian family** or because you **prayed a prayer or walked an aisle** that you're good with God...that he's **happy with you** and that your **eternal bed of clouds** awaits you and that you're in the family of God (and I hope you are!), but here in Mark 3 Jesus is going to challenge what we believe about being part of God's family.

CONTEXT

Now the Gospel writer, **Mark, doesn't focus a lot on Jesus's teaching – rather, we see Jesus doing...**Jesus is a man of action, who shows us that, in the Christian life, **neutral is not an option.**

And here in Mark 3, Jesus is talking to a bunch of people who are convinced they *know* what "family" means. But what he's about to--and this is what we're gonna walkthrough in these verses--is he's

gonna challenge their understanding of this word—"family." And then he's gonna tell them the implications of being part of God's family.

Let's look at it, Mark 3 beginning in v20.

WALKTHROUGH

At this point in Mark, Jesus has been **doing miracles** and **healing**...he's just **appointed the 12 disciples**... and "**great crowds**" are following him...²⁰Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat.

The author, Mark, doesn't cast "crowds" in a very positive light. **Crowds** represent the people who just **find Jesus interesting** – to them Jesus is the weird guy **healing** and **performing miracles** and **levitating** and doing **magic tricks** (David Blaine of the day)– but they **don't stick around** and would never actually **follow him** or **dedicate their lives to him**.

- Think of the crowds like today's "Twitter followers." *Curious. Loud. Irrational. At best, fairweather fans.*
- These are people who like **Jesus as a lucky charm** and **miracle worker**, but would quickly reject him as **Lord**.
- But what Mark makes clear is that Jesus "was never trying to **impress a crowd**, but rather to **usher in a kingdom**."¹ Everything he does has a purpose. Look at v21...

²¹And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, ("to restrain him") for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

Jesus' family and friends were convinced that, at best, he was **confused** and, at worst, **deranged and had completely lost his mind**..so they're staging a little **family intervention**.

- (Not a joke, **when I was 16 my parents had to stage an intervention for me once** – not because I was being too much like Jesus, quite the opposite – and when they did, I did what any **level headed child** would do to **try and prove they're**

perfectly sane: I tried to run away from home. Let's just say I may or may not have made it all the way to the front of my neighborhood...) This is kinda what's happening with Jesus' family...they've come to **stage this little intervention** and **consult him on his life choices**.

Now they did this because Jesus wasn't living a "normal Jewish life," so everyone thought something was wrong with him.

- Jesus' obedience to God the Father was so radical that even his own family thought he was crazy.

Which begs the question, if we call ourselves "CHRISTIANS--little Christs," *Do other people ever look at the way you live out your faith and think it's crazy?*

- *Why would they not watch that show?*
- *Why do they treat their marriages like this?*
- *Why do they give their money away or are so generous?*
- *Why are they always serving or asking me how they can help?*
- *Why do they have this view on divorce or sanctity of life?*
- *How can they have such positivity going through such pain or hard times?*
 - Does anybody look at you and the way you live your life and say, "That just doesn't make sense." Therefore giving you the opportunity to tell them about the Jesus who gives you **hope** and a **firm foundation** in all aspects and situations in life.

Everyone is packed in this house...²²And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "by the prince of demons he casts out the demons."²³And he called them to him and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan?"²⁴If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand."

It's not just his family who thinks he's gone crazy, everyone else does, too. And the group that Mark singles out here is the **Scribes**...

- The Scribes were a part of the **conservative Jewish group known as the Pharisees**. (Pharisees were the **religious elite**,

¹ Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 30.

then within that religious elite there's even a *more* religious elite called the Scribes.) What was happening is that **the crowds** began comparing Jesus' teaching to that of the Scribes and Pharisees...and the Scribes didn't like that very much, so they've come down to **see what Jesus is all about** and hopefully **put him back in his rightful place**.

While they're **talking trash about Jesus** to one another, Jesus has this cool thing he can do where **he can read your thoughts**... Remember: they're over having their own conversation--**they never asked Jesus this question**. Yet, **Jesus answers the question they never asked him** about him casting out demons because **he himself is apparently possessed by a demon**.

- But Jesus comes over and is like, *"Think about y'all's logic here. If I'm playing for the bad guys, why would I be casting out bad guys? If I was sent here by Satan for Satan's rule, why would I be casting out Satan's minions? That doesn't make sense. That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard in my life. Y'all are supposed to be the smart people of the group."* But then the saddest part is, Jesus tells them, **"Your failure to recognize who I am is going to lead to your eternal damnation when you actually think you're the religious elite and are grandfathered into God's family."**

While Jesus is teaching all of this--skip down to v31, it just keeps getting more interesting--**And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him.**

The symbolism is so rich in the fact that his family is "outside"...because Jesus is about to redefine who is "inside" his family. He's about to show these religious elites, **who they think are in, are probably out**...and **those who the elite think are out are about to be welcomed in**. See, one of the things that makes the gospel so **beautiful**, yet so **scandalous**, isn't necessarily who it *excludes* but rather whom it *includes*. (Pastor Bryan showed us last week how Jesus beautifully chases after the 'little people' in the worlds eyes.)

32And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you." **33**And he answered them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" **34**And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **35**For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

Let's look at this:

Four ways Jesus challenges our thinking on what it means to be part of the family of God²...

...what it means to be part of this gospel community called the church.

First, Jesus challenges...

1) A Standard Assumption (vv31-32)

Look back at v31:

31And his mother and his brothers came, and **standing outside they sent to him and called him**. **32**And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers are outside, seeking you."

The assumption here is that Jesus would've gone straight to his family when they called. We may not pick up on it as much because we live in the twenty-first century, but in **first century Israel** your entire identity was built on what family you came from. Your family origins **defined your identity** and, in most cases, **predetermined your prospects and potential in life**.

The point here is that these were **very strong** and **very proud** family bonds at play. So when Jesus' family comes to him and can't even get inside the house, **that in and of itself would've been incredibly disrespectful**. Just think about this...

² I owe the direction of this outline to Alistair Begg and his sermon "[Jesus' True Family](#)" preached at Parkside Church on July 12, 2009.

- **ILLUSTRATION:** Liz trying to get in here while I'm preaching... *"Who is my wife? All of you are my family."* Think about how **disrespectful** that would be to my wife! My wife has **precedence**, she has **priority**...she has **access** to me that nobody else has.

In the same way, this is Jesus' *MOTHER!* I mean, *what is going on here? Did Jesus not love his mother and brothers?* Of course he did!...but he was using this opportunity to challenge the standard assumption about family and teach something extremely important: **he had a greater family than even his biological one**...that the family he was creating **in the church** would trump even the bonds of biology.

To first century Israel, family was your identity. And Jesus is saying, *"If you want to follow me then your identity can be in nothing else. Your identity as a follower of Jesus in the family of God is more important than any other allegiance you have in life."*

- He's challenging the standard assumption about what's most important in life...about what matters most.
 - For some of us that's **family**...
 - For other's it's a job or **financial security**...
 - For some it's **personal freedom**...

But what Jesus does is that he comes along and says, *"Hey. There are things that EVERYONE assumes are important, that might actually not matter much in my kingdom. You think your **family bond** is what gets you into the kingdom? You think your **bank account** gets you into the kingdom? **It's not about those things.** It's all about the new family that I am creating."*

Then Jesus goes one step farther in challenging their thinking by asking...

2) A Strange Question (v33)

³³And he answered them, *"Who are my mother and my brothers?"*

(If you're wondering what verse to write in your next Mother's Day card, this is NOT the one...)

Listen, these were not the words of an **insensitive** and **careless** man who is **indifferent** to his family...on the contrary, the Gospels give plenty of evidence that **Jesus was deeply devoted to his earthly family**. History shows that Jesus has done more for the **family unit**, along with the **valuation of women and children**, than anyone else in the history of world.³

Jesus wasn't being rude in ignoring this request...**he ignored them because he knew that while their motives were right, their method was wrong.**

See, if Jesus had gone with his family he would've played right into the hands of the religious opposition. They would've said, *"See, he agrees with his family – he's crazy! He needs help! Don't take this man from Nazareth too seriously!"*

Jesus was on a **mission**, and not even his own **mother** was going to stop him from that.

- (Now, to be fair to Mary, in general she seems to have been more **aware** and **supportive** of Jesus' mission than most of the ppl in the Bible. Mary exhibited **tremendous faith** when God told her she would give birth...*as a virgin*, mind you. (Not sure if you're aware of how someone gets pregnant, but let's just say Mary didn't follow the traditional path to pregnancy.) Mary was also one of the few who remained with Jesus even at his death and didn't deny him. So, historically, she has **shown great faith**. But right here, she didn't quite see all of that...at least not yet, so she's coming to get her son cuz she thinks he's off his rocker a bit.)

But Jesus was on a mission from God and nobody, not even his own mother, was going to stop him from that. Let's be clear here, Jesus was *not* suggesting that believers **ignore** or **abandon** their families in

³ Abingdon, *The Interpreter's Bible: Matthew-Mark*, 694.

order to serve God...only that they put God's will above everything else in life. He says in Luke 14:26 that our love for God should be **so great** that our love for family would seem like hatred in comparison.

- Let's not be foolish and think that Jesus is suggesting we don't **care** for our families or **provide** for them⁴...he's just saying that **not even our family should stand in the way of our ultimate allegiance to God.**

See, especially in the west we have this view of family where **protection** and **preservation** are the **highest priorities**...which is great, but often our desire for **comfort** and **safety** comes at the detriment of what God might have called you to do. We see this all the time in our church:

- **Parents** don't want their **students** to go on mission trips out of fear of the unknown, even though God has called them to go.
- **We have men** who think it's more important to create a comfortable life for their families so they work 12 hours a day, but don't realize they are making themselves **absent as the spiritual leaders** of their households which is the main thing God has called them to do.
- **People in small groups** don't want to confront one another about obvious sin because they're afraid it will damage the relationship, even though God calls us to **hold one another accountable** and **build one another up.**
- **So many so-called "followers of Jesus" are only willing to be obedient as long as God's will aligns with their wants.**

LISTEN, I need you to hear this: we as Americans must **refuse to allow comfort** to become more important than our **calling** and **obedience** as followers of Christ. If we are truly following Jesus and allowing him to be Lord of our lives, we **will not** be living in neutral! You will be **seeking out God's calling on your life**...not what is the most comfortable place I can go to sit each and every week.

What Jesus is showing us here is that true family affection should never be a **deterrent** to God's call on your life... rather it should

actually be the greatest **encouragement** and **support** of service to whatever (and wherever!) God has called you..

One scholar says it this way: "A family should be a harbor from which the ship leaves to sail the seas, and not a dock where it ties up and rots."⁵

- What that means is that **one day, my daughter who got baptized a couple weeks ago--the one who declared, "I'm willing to go wherever God sends me to go and do whatever he calls me to do."**--one day God might call her to China/SE Asia/Afghanistan. God might call her somewhere where I, as her earthly father, am **absolutely terrified**...and my natural instinct is going to be to **throw my arms around her** and **"seize her and restrain her"** and say, **"NO, BABY, DON'T GO THERE! I DON'T KNOW WHAT AWAITS YOU THERE. DADDY CAN'T PROTECT YOU THERE!"**
- But she's going to have to kick back and say, **"Hey, I love you, dad, but my allegiance is to God my father first and he is calling me to share the gospel with UPG's and my job is to go wherever he calls me to go."**
- And my role, as her earthly father **but, more importantly, her brother in Christ who is** part of her **spiritual family**, is to support her in obedience to whatever God calls her to do.

Listen, God might not be calling you overseas or or to somewhere that is really hostile toward the gospel...

- God might be calling you **back to your home** to raise up the beautiful kids he's given you.
- God might call you as a **teacher** back to your classroom.
- God might be calling you, as a **single woman**, to be a **church mother** who loves, disciples, and prays for other women in the church.

For a lot of you, God might be calling you to finally **get off the sideline and get in the game** and **begin serving** here, right now, this weekend at TSC:

⁴ That would go against 1 Tim. 5:8

⁵ Abingdon, *The Interpreter's Bible: Matthew-Mark*, 695.

- There's an entire **UPG** called "**Summit Kids**" about 200 ft. from where I'm standing.
- There are people serving in our **prayer ministry**, who are praying right this very second over you, over this sermon, and over this service.
- Some of you were just **born looking happy**. You're like **Buddy the Elf**--smiling is your favorite. Go **serve** and **hold a door** and **smile** and **greet** people for the glory of God.
- You say, "*I'm not good with kids and I don't like smiling.*" Fine. Know where you don't have to fake smile? Parking team waving batons. Production team sitting behind a camera.
 - *Does that really make a difference?*
 - Ummm, helping the gospel go forth clearly in production...I'd say is pretty important.
 - Helping one of the 766 FTG's at this campus alone this year feel welcome? Ummm, yeah. I'd say that's pretty important.
 - The point is that **we need to stop prioritizing comfort over obedience** and **start serving one another as the body of Christ is called to do**.

Jesus challenges a **standard assumption**...he asks a **strange question**...and now he's going to make...

3) A Shocking Statement (v34)

³⁴And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, "**Here are my mother and my brothers!**..."

Again, don't lose sight of who Jesus is talking to here...these would have been **radically offensive words** to the Jewish crowd he's speaking to.⁶ I mean, these were *the Jews*: **God's special people**. The **chosen ones**. This was the group who **thought they were the only ones** who could *really* be in a relationship with God because they

were **Abraham's descendants**...**salvation** and **favor** and **blessing** were their birth rights!

But Jesus hits them with this shocking statement **to make clear that family heritage does not matter**. To show them that the new family he's building is not made up of **descendants of Abraham** but of **believers in Jesus**.

You need to know, it's not those who are part of the **right family**, or the **right race**, or **culture**, or **church**, or w/e...there's **no physical connection that gets** you an **automatic bid** into God's family.

The only family that truly/eternally matters is the **spiritual family** of God, **entered into by faith in Jesus Christ alone**...the family that is open to any and all who would call upon the name of Jesus for salvation...the family that welcomes **Zealots**, and the **religious elite**, and **tax collectors**, and **sinners**, and **thieves**, and **drunkards**, and **liars**, and **cheats**, and **legalists**, and **churchgoers**, and **prostitutes**, and the **self-righteous**, and the **proud**, and the **depressed**, and the **prisoner**, and all sorts of other **sinners** just like you and me.

What I don't want you to leave here thinking is that you must *do* something in order to earn your way into the family of God. It's so easy to believe our sense of belonging is based on something we do rather than from someone. To slide back into thinking that your worth is defined by your **social class** or **friendships** or **networks** or **moral goodness** or w/e it may be.

Honestly, for 21 years that's why I thought I was a believer: Great family. "Better" than most. Right grades. Right manners. Went to church. Went through confirmation class. I only slept with the girl I was dating. Sure, I partied a ton and could drink and cuss right alongside a sailor, but I wasn't doing hard drugs or anything. My sense of belonging was based on **something** rather than **someone**. I thought **God owed me salvation** based on my **background** and **upbringing** and **church attendance** and **morality**...

⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 120–121). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

THAT'S NOT THE GOSPEL, that's **works based righteousness!** In fact, **the only thing I'm owed is condemnation—>BAD NEWS.**

- But that's they the gospel is such **GOOD NEWS:** because **even though we could never measure up, Jesus measured up for us.** That when you and I **sin** and **fall short** every single day, Jesus made provisions for that sin by **living the life we should have lived and dying the death we should have died.** And then to prove ultimate victory over sin and death, he rose again three days later. That's the gospel. You can't earn it. You don't deserve it. Yet God, out of love for you, sent Jesus **for you!**
- Now we who have been **saved, born again, regenerated, welcomed** into the family of God, w/e phrase you want to use!, have done so **solely based on what Jesus has done for us.**
- Not on **biological** or **political** or even **church affiliation**; not on good **works**, good **resumes**, or good **behavior**. No...

*Naught of good that I have done,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*This is all my hope and peace,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;
This is all my righteousness,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

*Oh! precious is the flow
That makes me white as snow
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

Church, I'm not presenting a **standard you must live up to**, I'm presenting a **Savior you have the opportunity to bow down to**...a Savior who then **lifts your head** and instantly welcomes you to become a part of his family!

No matter **what you've done**, no matter **what's been done to you**, no matter what your **abusive parent said about you**, no matter what **hell**

you've endured, no matter how many times the **brokenness of life has threatened to break you** ... there's a place where you can belong and it's called the church of Jesus Christ.

Is the church perfect? No.

Is it full of sinners? Yes.

Is it full of those who mess up and will let you down? Yes.

Is the church going to be your perfect preference of music and preaching and fellowship and service? No.

So, yeah, it's dysfunctional, which means you should feel right at home!

But even in its **imperfection** and **dysfunction**, you know what? The church is going to be the **divine-albeit-dusty body of Christ**, the true **family of God**, brothers and sisters in Christ rallied around one thing: the gospel of Jesus Christ. And that body of believers is called to **rally** around one another, **care** for one another, **serve** one another, **pray** for one another, **support** one another, **love** one another, and **speak truth and encourage** one another every single day.

For all of you who feel like you don't have a place in the world, *this is your place!*

- If you're here today and you don't know what it's like to have a family, don't be discouraged because **Jesus welcomes you into his family.**
- If your family is full of dysfunction, that's okay because **Jesus welcomes you into his family.**
- If you feel like you've never been able to "do enough" or be "good enough" to be a part of God's family, here's the good news: **faith in Jesus is the ONLY prerequisite to being in God's family!**
- ...and when you enter into that family, you instantly inherit a **Heavenly Father** who loves you, the **Holy Spirit** who dwells inside of you, a brother and friend in **Jesus** who constantly prays for you, a **cloud of Christian witnesses** who have gone before you, and a whole slew of **brothers and sisters in Christ** right here in this church who would love to walk beside and

encourage you. Because **your shared commitment to Christ means more than genetics ever will.** It has absolutely nothing to do with the family you're born into, but everything to do with whether you've been **reborn** into the family of God!

Which brings us to our last way that Jesus challenges our thinking, with...

4) A Significant Truth (v35)

This is where our **belief** meets our **behavior**. Jesus says...

³⁵For whoever **does the will of God**, he is my brother and sister and mother."

Take a minute to let that sink in: Those who obey the word of God are more blessed and precious to Jesus than even his own biological mother.

Those who **put faith in Jesus** and then **demonstrate** that faith by **doing the will of God** and **obeying his commands**, *that's* who is in the family of God.

To be very clear: Obedience does not start a relationship with Jesus (faith does!); but obedience is a sign of it. **Gospel obedience is always first a result of gospel transformation.**

- When Jesus becomes your Lord and Savior, **God's story becomes your story. God's mission becomes your mission.** Doing God's will becomes your **delight** and **desire**. Because the gospel is not just the power to obey, it's the power that **makes you want to obey!** (when my wife got saved she used to always say that God changed her "want-to's")...and your want-to's change because in the gospel you realize **Jesus did for you what you could never do for yourself** and that makes you **want** to obediently follow him.

The entire Bible draws a clear distinction between who is part of Jesus' family and who is not:

- **John 8:31**, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples..."
- **1 John 2:4**, "Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him..."
- **James 1:22**, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."
- **Mark 3: 35**, "Whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

You will only know the **will of God** inasmuch as you know the **Word of God**. But that begins by knowing the One who the Word of God is about – and his name is Jesus. When you believe on Jesus, you receive the **Spirit of God**, thus enabling you to understand the **Word of God**, which then shows you the **will of God**, and then empowers you to carry out the **ways of God**.

What is the will of God?, you ask. Well, look in the Word of God.

- Love God above all else.
- Serve one another through love.
- Commit to being a contributing, thriving member of a local church who is in relationships and community with other believers.
- Embrace your calling in sharing the gospel as an **ambassador of Christ** and a **minister of reconciliation**.
- Follow in the footsteps of Jesus by **humbling yourself**, seeing others are more important than yourself...**serving, praying, loving, giving, and going**...all for the glory of Jesus and the advancement of God's kingdom.

— (VAMP) —

That's the million-dollar question:

- 1) Have you ever experienced and accepted the love of God in by receiving Jesus as your Savior and becoming part of his family?

- a) Nobody in here was born a Christian; it's not by biology, **only** by **belief** and **faith** in Jesus Christ.
- 2) If you are part of the family, then you shouldn't be in neutral.
Where is God calling you to take your next step of obedience as part of this family?

CONCLUSION

~~Four-star general General Colin Powell~~ tells the story of when an ABC News was giving a report in Desert Storm on the eve of a battle. They pulled this young **African American soldier** in a tank platoon over and the reporter asked, "How do you think the battle will go? Are you afraid?"

- The soldier responded, "*We will do OK. We're well trained and...*" – he began gesturing toward his army buddies of all sorts of **ages, colors, and races**, and continued by saying – "*I'm not afraid...I'm not afraid because I'm with my family.*"
- The other soldiers shouted, "*Tell him again. He didn't hear you.*"
- The soldier repeated, "*I'm not afraid because this is my family and we'll take care of each other.*"

If that's not the creed of the local church then I don't know what is:
"This – this collection of people from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all skin colors, and cultures, all political parties - this is my family...and we'll take care of each other." ...because we are united by one thing – the MOST IMPORTANT thing – Jesus Christ.

There is ONE NAME this church will declare: **Jesus**.

There is ONE THING this church will prioritize above all else: **the gospel**.

And as we march forward on this mission, we will not be afraid, because--*look around*--**this is your family and we'll take care of each other**.