

**Text:** Matthew 12:46-50 (see also Mark 3:31-35, Luke 8:19-21)

**Title:** Christian Family

**Truth:** The most important family you have is the household of God.

**Date/Location:** Wednesday December 8, 2021 at FBC

## **Introduction**

The family of Christ is set out here in stark contrast to the enemies of our Lord who blasphemed His Spirit and were critical of His every move. They were as far away from “doing the will of God” as a person could be.

### **I. The Occasion, 12:46-47**

- A. Jesus’s mother and brothers were outside of the house / building where He was, and wanted to speak with Him. On the surface, this seems normal enough.
- B. This text does not tell us what they wanted to speak about, but Mark 3:20-21 gives us a clue:  
“Then the multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when His own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind.’”
- C. In Mark 3:21, the phrase “his own people” is probably a reference to His family, not to the Jewish people generally, nor to his disciples or friends. They were staging an intervention for a guy who was in over his head—so they thought! Evidently, they were deeply concerned for His physical well-being since the apostolic team and Jesus were so swamped with people they could not even eat a meal. The family did not understand that He had to be about the Father’s work, the mission for

which He had been sent forth (Luke 4:43). Also at this time, his brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5).

- D. Note that Jesus *did* have (half-)brothers. Their names were James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55). He also had (half-)sisters (Matthew 13:56, Mark 6:3). Since they are presented as coming along with Jesus' mother Mary, we reasonably understand that these are indeed siblings. They were not cousins or from a prior marriage. These close family relations had some natural concern for Him, but it was misplaced because of a lack of understanding of Who He was and what He was on earth to do.

## **II. The Lesson, 12:48-50**

- A. The response by Jesus is at first seemingly dismissive. The Lord Jesus asked a question: "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" He has not forgotten them, nor their names, and He is not disrespecting them. But compared to the work He was doing, those family relationships receded to a less important level. He was not separating Himself from them or disowning his family.

This was certainly true if the family members thought that Jesus was a bit touched and needed their help to make it through the day. They were ignorant of the truth of what He was doing. Perhaps we could say they were naively trying to be helpful.

- B. What was more important for Jesus was to be about cultivating the relationships that He had with the disciples who were among the crowd that followed Him.

- C. The **relational idea** mentioned above is very important. These non-blood relatives, as we would call them, were now truly related to Jesus because they, like He, were those who do the will of God in heaven. They could be truly called brothers and sisters of Christ, and of one another.
- D. We too can be brothers and sisters of Jesus, in effect, if we (a) trust in Him and (b) therefore come into a relationship (c) which we demonstrate by doing the will of God.
- E. The “family” relationship with Christ is closer and far more important than blood relations. You know that—you are closer to God and Christ and even some of your fellow Christians than you are to your biological brothers and sisters.
- F. Remember to whom Jesus said this. He spoke “to the one who told Him” about his family present outside looking for Him. At least some of the others listening to Jesus would have heard this, and all of us reading it now are hearing it as well. Maybe the person who brought this information thought it worth interrupting Jesus’ teaching because family was very important to Him, closer and more significant than the audience to whom He was speaking.

We too might tend to think that the more special and precious relationships of Jesus were with his earthly family. But to the person who thinks so, the Lord says that His disciples *also* have a close family-like personal relationship with Him. He should be excused for ministering to the crowds because they stood in dire need of His words. His biological/adoptive family already

knew Him and knew of the truth of God. The crowds did not. Family could wait for a little bit until He was finished.

This stands in contrast to those who hate Jesus, who do not do the will of God, who do not believe in Him, who demand a sign but refuse to believe the signs they already have, who are hyper-critical of Jesus and His disciples, etc.

G. About the importance of discipleship relative to family, see Matthew 10:37. The reward of becoming a disciple even at great cost, Matthew 19:29. Jesus calls people His brothers, Matthew 25:40.

H. Women can take heart because *sister* and *mother* are mentioned in the last part of verse 50. This is not added by modern translators to make the text more egalitarian. In fact, there were women in the audience of Jesus and among His disciples, and they have a similar familial relationship with Him as the men do.

## Conclusion

Bottom line: Earthly, biological family is important. One's relationship with God through Christ is even *more* important. Jesus's family is much bigger than His biological family.

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