

Who Is My Mother?—A Question of Family Ties

Matthew 12:46-50 (Mark 3:31-35)

Mary, the mother of Jesus, will be mentioned during the next few weeks more than any other time of the year. Christmas is about the virgin birth of Christ. You cannot talk much about His miraculous birth without making some reference to His mother Mary.

Since Jesus' mother played such an important role in the birth of Christ, I want us to consider the question Jesus' asked in Matthew 12:48, "*Who is my mother? and who are my brethren*" (repeated in Mark 3:33). **It is a question of FAMILY.**

BACKGROUND OF QUESTION (see Mark 3): Jesus has had very busy day:

1. Healing multitudes (vs. 10-11)
2. Ordained the 12 apostles (vs. 14-19).
3. Enters a house where more people come to Him (vs. 19b-20). Can't even eat.
4. Accused of being crazy and in league with Satan (vs. 21-30).
5. Finally His mother and brethren show up seeking Him (v. 31).

➡ Our text reveals Christ has two families.

I. **The EARTHLY family of Christ** (Mt. 12:46-48).

➡ The Bible records the names of four of Christ's step brothers and mentions He had at least two sisters (Mk. 6:3). NOTE: This truth refutes the Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary (cf. Mt. 1:18-25).

A. The INTERRUPTION of Christ's family (vs. 46-47).

- ➡ Jesus was teaching some great spiritual truths when His family sought to interrupt His teaching.
- ➡ We do not know the exact reason why Jesus' family wanted to talk to Him.
 - Were they concerned about what He was teaching?
 - Were they confused about the claims He was making?
 - Were they worried He may be over working Himself?

- Were they embarrassed that His behavior was leading people to think He was crazy (Mk. 3:21).

B. The INQUIRY of Christ's response (vs. 48).

➤ Jesus responded with a strange question—“*Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*” Was Jesus ignoring His mother or showing disrespect? No. It is obvious He cared about His mother by making sure she would be taken care of after His death on the cross.

➤ Jesus could have reacted in a number of different ways.

1. This was a perfect opportunity to exalt Mary above everyone else, as in Roman Catholicism. But Jesus doesn't do that. Mary, was not more important than anyone else in the house.
2. If Jesus would have dropped everything He was doing and submit to the wishes of Mary, He would be showing Mary had more influence in His life than the ministry God called Him to do. The fact that Mary was Jesus' earthly mother, did not give her greater access to Jesus than anyone else.
3. Notice **how Jesus controlled the situation**. Christ turns the interruption into an opportunity to teach a great spiritual lesson—Besides a person's relationship to his earthly family, there is also an eternal family that is more important.

II. The ETERNAL family of Christ (Mt. 12:49-50). Earthly relationships are temporal, but spiritual relationships are eternal.

A. The SPIRITUAL lineage of Christ. Jesus viewed His lineage as being, not of this world, but from eternity.

1. Jesus first referred to His eternal family when He was 12 years old. His parents found Him in the Temple after missing for Him for three days. Jesus says to them, “*How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about **my Father's business?***” (Luke 2:49). He was not talking about His step father's business as a carpenter. He was talking about His heavenly Father's business in the Temple.

2. That event in Jesus' life as a 12-year-old is now replayed in our text 20 years later. Jesus' concerned family comes looking for Him. And when they find Him, what is He doing? "His Father's business." And doing God's business always takes president over earthly business.
- B. The SUPREMACY of spiritual family. This incident demonstrates our **spiritual family** is our primary relationship in the will of God. Spiritual relationships are more important than physical relationships.
1. There is no greater earthly relationship than a family that is united by their relationship with Christ. But when an individual in a family does not share the same desire to do the will of God, that family will be dysfunctional at best.
 2. That is why Jesus said, "*A man's foes shall be they of his own household*" (Mt. 10:36). Jesus experienced this in His own family when His step brothers did not believe on Him.
 3. Any spiritual union doing the will of God, will take president over any physical union doing earthly business.
- C. The SIGNIFYING of spiritual family (vs. 49-50). "*He stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren.*"
1. This motion of Christ indicates Mary is no better than anyone else who does the will of God.
 2. Doing the will of God is the distinctive characteristic that identifies a true member of God's family from the devil's family (cf. Mt. 7:21; John 6:40).

SUMMATION: Are you a member of God's family? Is God your heavenly Father? How does one enter God's family?

In the birth of Christ we have a glimpse of the miracle of the "new birth" Jesus mentioned to Nicodemus (John 3:1-7). By being "*born again*" **God joins us in this life**—*Emmanuel...God with us!*

As we sing in the Christmas carol, "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*"—
O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin and enter in, *Be born in us today.*

- As God took on human form at the birth of Christ, it put Him into a new family—The earthly family of the human race.
- As your physical birth put you into an earthly family, being “born again” puts you into God’s family.

A person who enters God’s family by the new birth receives a whole new batch of spiritual siblings. It has been truly said, “You can pick your friends, but you can’t pick your family.” That is equally true about God’s family as well! We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

Just as in an earthly family, siblings sometimes clash in their personalities. Likewise, brothers and sisters in Christ may rub each other the wrong way! But, like them or not, you still got to love them. They are your kinfolk. You are going to spend eternity with them, so deal with it.