

## THE FAMILY OF THE LORD (MATTHEW 12:46-50)

Context is everything; can't understand the newspaper, movies, conversation without it.

Scripture is the same; context is not the only tool for understanding the Bible, but without it, the others don't matter.

The context of Matthew 12:46-50.

In Matthew 12 Jesus provokes a controversy over the Sabbath.

His disciples pick and eat grain on the Sabbath.

He heals on the Sabbath.

He proclaims Himself Lord of the Sabbath.

He fulfills the OT promises regarding the Messiah/Christ.

He is the King whose works announce the Kingdom of God.

Jesus clearly identifies His enemies.

They were ignorant of the Scriptures.

They sought to destroy Jesus.

The Pharisees blaspheme the King's person and power.

They commit the unforgivable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

They were an evil and adulterous generation.

**TRANSITION:** But who are Jesus' family? Friends?

## JESUS' MOTHER AND BROTHERS ARRIVE (MATTHEW 12:46-47)

Jesus' family

Jesus' mother: **Mary**.

Mentioned in all four Gospels and Acts.

Mary was a sinner, a child of wrath, like the rest of mankind. It's easy to assume that when Jesus was born she understood what was happening, but she didn't.

In John 2 she wants Jesus to do something to prove Himself; He refuses.

Jesus' brothers: named in Matthew 13 and Mark 6.

**James** (named for Jacob).

Became a leader in the Jerusalem church.

Spoke profoundly at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.

Wrote the letter of James, probably very early in the life of the church, shortly after the first bout of persecution.

Had a strong influence in the Jewish church, but perhaps put too much legalistic pressure on Gentiles.

Never boasted about being Jesus' brother; calls himself "a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1).

**Joseph.** Only mentioned in Matthew 13 and Mark 6.

**Judas** (named for Judah).

Wrote the letter of Jude, probably in the very late 60s after the death of Peter.

**Simon** (named for Simeon). Only mentioned in Matthew 13 and Mark 6.

Jesus also had sisters (Matthew 13, Mark 6) who are never named in Scripture.

Jesus' step-father **Joseph** is only mentioned in Jesus' infancy and adolescence; he is not mentioned after Jesus is twelve; he does not come with Mary and the rest here, and so it is presumed that he died sometime before.

We know that **James** and **Jude** were converted, but we don't know when.

John 7:5 tells us that none of Jesus' brothers believed during His earthly ministry.

**TRANSITION:** Why have they come to see Jesus at this point?

### **WHY DID JESUS' FAMILY SEEK HIM OUT? (MARK 3:21)**

Mark 3, like Matthew 12, describes how people responded to the words and works of Jesus.

Many were fascinated by Him, and sought Him out for healing.

The scribes and Pharisees hated Him, and sought some way to destroy Him.

Mark 3:21 says His family "went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, 'He has lost His senses.'"

Their response is understandable from a human point of view.

Jesus had declared war on the Pharisees and their traditions.

He declared Himself to be the Lord of the Sabbath.

He said the Kingdom of God was manifested through His power.

He pronounced judgment on those who blasphemed the Holy Spirit, and called them an evil and adulterous generation.

C. S. Lewis: "*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** — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the **Devil of Hell**. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.*"

Jesus is either telling the truth, which makes Him the Lord of Glory.

Or else Jesus is deeply mentally broken, insane, mentally deranged.

Or else Jesus is Satan incarnate, because He leads people astray. This is exactly what the Pharisees said.

Jesus' family did not believe that He was the Lord of Glory; neither did they believe that He was the Devil; they decided that He was deeply and tragically mentally ill; for mercy's sake they wanted to save Him from Himself.

**TRANSITION:** So why is this passage here? Not to fill up space. All Scripture is given to us "for our **instruction**, so that through **perseverance** and **the encouragement of the Scriptures** we might have **hope**" (Romans 15:4). What is the encouragement of these particular Scriptures?

### **JESUS' TRUE FAMILY (MATTHEW 12:48-49)**

Jesus has clearly identified those who are not His; His enemies, those who hated Him, those who rejected Him, those who blasphemed the Spirit and rebelled against the Father.

Now Jesus identifies the unique relationship between Himself and those who are His.

Family was as important then as now.

Children didn't grow up and move hundreds or thousands of miles away.

Most people lived in the same town, often the same house, where they were born.

Sons joined their father at work, and eventually took over that work.

The most important people in your life were your family.

Marriages were arranged because it wasn't just a man marrying a woman; it was a family taking in a new member; even the in-law families became joined.

Jesus says that HIS family – those closest to Him – were not His blood relatives, but His spiritual relatives; those who have been called and reconciled and adopted by God.

Not that Jesus didn't love His blood family.

No child loved parents more.

No brother loved siblings more.

No one loved aunts, uncles, cousins more.

But those who do the will of God are closer to Him than any physical family.

Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. (John 15:13-15)

Following His resurrection He said to the women in the garden,

Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and report to My brothers to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me." (Matthew 28:10).

This is not James, Judas, Joseph, and Simon.

This is Peter, Andrew, James, John, the other disciples and those with Him.

Hebrews 2:11 says,

For both He who sanctifies [Jesus] and those who are being sanctified [Christians] are all of One; for which reason He [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them [Christians] brothers (Hebrews 2:11)

After Jesus had so thoroughly rebuked and condemned the scribes and Pharisees, His disciples must have wondered what He thought of them.

As far as the people were concerned, the scribes and Pharisees were the height of righteousness in that time; they were experts in righteousness.

If Jesus condemned the most righteous people around, what would He say to His own disciples?

He says that they are His own family; brothers, sisters, even mother; He loves them with pure devotion and joy; they are closer to Him than anyone else.

**TRANSITION:** Why did Jesus speak this way?

### **THE WILL OF GOD (MATTHEW 12:50)**

Nothing mattered more to Jesus than the will of God.

His food was doing the will of God (John 4:34).

He came down from heaven to do the will of God (John 6:38).

He laid down His life in submission to the Father's will (Matthew 26:42).

He even raised Himself from the dead in agreement with the Father's will (John 10: 18).

During this time Jesus' blood relatives were in rebellion against God's will; even His own mother was opposing God when she decided that Jesus was out of His mind and needed protection.

They had the same sin nature as every other person born.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to embrace the will of God.

Jesus teaches us to pray for God's will to be done as perfectly on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10).

He says that calling Him "Lord" is worthless; only those who live in obedience to His Lordship, doing the will of God, will enter heaven (Matthew 7:21).

Prior sins don't matter; neither do trying to be a good person.

Tax collectors and prostitutes who repent of their sin and believe in Jesus will have eternal life.

Self-righteous people who reject Christ will not (Matthew 21:31).

"This is the work of God," Jesus says, "that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (John 6:29).

**TRANSITION:** Let's bring this home.

### **BRINGING IT HOME**

#### **PERSONALIZATION**

What would Jesus say to you and me?

Are we believers in Jesus Christ?

Are we submitted to the will of God?

Are will, as John says, living in the light of God and His Word?

Are we consistently confessing sins, repenting of them, longing for forgiveness and cleansing?

Are we trusting in Jesus alone as our defender and champion with God?

We aren't very different from the disciples.

Just as prone to look at outward behavior, think that others are better than us, or that we are better than them.

Good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation.

Good works are the fruit, not the root, of conversion.

### **APPROPRIATION**

We need to confess the sin of feeling better because we act better: "Lord, I feel safer with You because I did a good thing; please forgive the sin of doubting Your promise, and trusting in my own goodness. Forgive me for thinking that I must earn Your approval or love."

We need to trust in the character and the promise of Jesus. If your heart is to love and do the will of God, Jesus considers you His own precious brother or sister.

The best application of this passage is to commit yourself to the will of God, regardless of the short-term cost, and trust in the promise of the Lord Jesus to love you as His own.