

“The True Family of God – Part 1”  
Mark 3:31-35  
(Preached at Trinity, February 17, 2010)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After calling His disciples Jesus returned to His home base in Capernaum. He once again found himself surrounded by the multitudes. Some wanted to hear Him teach, others wanted to see him perform some miracle. Some came because of a need for personal healing. More and more people were coming. The crowds were so large Jesus didn’t even have time to eat.
2. Some of those close to Him were beginning to think He’d lost His mind.  
**Mark 3:21** – “And when his friends heard of *it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.”
  - A. Mark doesn’t give us the identity of these friends. The Greek simply uses a preposition παρά meaning “beside.” They were those on His side. They could have been close friends or they could have been family. John records that even His own brothers didn’t believe in Him.  
**John 7:5** – “For neither did his brethren believe in him.”
  - B. However well intentioned they obviously had little understanding of who Jesus truly was and of His mission.
3. At the end of the chapter Mark returns to this subject and records Mary and the brothers of Jesus coming to Him. It is likely that they too had come to rescue Jesus from Himself hoping to take Him back to Nazareth where he could be protected from His mania.  
**Mark 3:31** – “There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.”
4. Apparently the crowd was so large they couldn’t get through to Jesus. The crowd soon took notice and informed Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are here.”
  - A. The crowds surely expected Jesus to defer. What Jesus did instead would have surely been unexpected.
  - B. Jesus used the interruption as an opportunity to teach on an important principle of the Christian life. It must have been strange to the ears of the multitude. It is also strange in the ears of people today.
5. Jesus seems almost rude to us as He seems to reject His own family in favor of His disciples. He declares that His true family was made up of those who did the will of God. The teaching for us is this: Our true family is comprised of those who are united to Christ. Was Jesus rejecting this woman who had nursed Him and raised Him to manhood; who was now coming to Him in love and concern?
6. Tonight I want us to look at this passage and the great ramifications for us.  
First, we’ll look at what Jesus was NOT teaching.  
Second, we’ll look at what our Lord WAS teaching.  
Third, we’ll look at how this works out practically in the lives of believers today.

- I. First, we'll look at what Jesus was NOT teaching.
- A. Jesus was not teaching that Mary was not among the believing disciples
1. The Bible demonstrates that Mary was a woman of faith
    - a. She was singled out by God for His blessings – especially in being the mother of our Lord  
**Luke 1:28** – “And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.”
    - b. By her own words she trusted the Word of God  
**Luke 1:38** – “And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”
  2. It completely removes any Catholic teaching that Mary was immaculate or sinless.
    - a. Jesus was always quick to correct her misunderstandings concerning His work. We also see this at the wedding feast at Cana in **John 2**  
**John 2:3-4** – “And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine. <sup>4</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.”
    - b. Mary, too, was in need of a Redeemer.
  3. She was not only our Lord's earthly mother but she was also a spiritual sister and thus a part of His true family.
  4. We also know that His brother, James, believed and was martyred for his faith in Christ.
- B. Jesus was not teaching that as Christians we may reject our earthly family
1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment teaches us to honor our parents  
**Ephesians 6:1** – “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”
  2. Fathers and mothers are to have a high regard for their children  
**Ephesians 6:4** – “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”
  3. The Bible places great importance upon the family. It was the poor parenting of the patriarchs that caused many of their problems. It was Jacob's lack of oversight over his daughter and sons that led to the debacle with Shechem.
  4. Pastors are judged worthy of their office by their oversight of their families.  
**1 Timothy 3:4-5** – “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; <sup>5</sup> (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”
  5. We have far too many fathers today who have abrogated their responsibilities of overseeing their families.
    - a. We have the duty of religiously training our children in the disciplines and doctrines of Christ.
    - b. Many souls are being abandoned to the fires of hell

6. Few today place importance upon the training of children as previous generations. But we might be surprised at what they saw as important.
- a. For the Puritans the first 5-6 years of a child's life were relatively carefree but a course of labor followed.  
*Puritan Family* – “Probably most children were set to some kind of useful work before they reached seven. Certainly Puritan spokesmen emphasized the dangers of idleness more than permissibility of play. “Idleness in youth,” said John Norton, “is scarcely healed without a scar in age.”
  - b. For girls 6-7 years old training began at once in household duties
  - c. Boys began their apprenticeship at 12-14 years of age. This meant they moved in with their master. If their parents lived nearby visitation was usually allowed on the Lord's Day. Masters could recover damages from overfond parents who detained their child from his work.
  - d. No parent saw their chief role as merely spending time with their children that is so prevalent today. Our fascination with sports would have been abominable in previous generations.
7. We owe to our children proper care – Paul wrote what this care looks like  
**Ephesians 6:4** – “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”
- a. “provoke not your children to wrath”  
Balanced discipline. We provoke them when we are either too harsh or too lenient or inconsistent
  - b. “bring them up” - ἐκτρέφω  
This refers to nourishment – both physical and spiritual
  - c. “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”  
This refers to the complete training and discipline of the child
- C. The Bible teaches that Christian piety begins at home  
**1 Timothy 5:4** – “But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.”
1. The word for “piety” is εὐσεβέω which means worship. It indicates our true position of submission before God.  
True piety must begin at home
    - a. The word for “requite” is ἀμοιβὰς – it is a noun meaning a repayment  
Children owe a debt to their parents which should be repaid should the need arise
    - b. Paul gives the reason we owe this duty:  
“for that is good and acceptable before God.”  
We owe care to our parents because we owe it to God.

2. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for neglecting their parents while trying to appear pious.  
**Mark 7:10-13** – “For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.
3. Jesus demonstrated care for His own widowed mother  
**John 19:26-27** – “When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.”

D. This is what is good and acceptable before God – it is obedience to His commands

**Ephesians 6:1** – “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

1. The Ephesians passage gives us the reason why we must honor parents  
 “For this is right”
2. There were stiff O.T. penalties for disrespect of parents showing God’s displeasure towards the disrespect of parents.  
**Proverbs 30:17** – “The eye *that* mocketh at *his* father, and despiseth to obey *his* mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”  
**Exodus 21:17** – “And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.”
3. To refuse to provide for our own family is to deny the faith  
**1 Timothy 5:8** – “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
  - a. It is to be worse than an infidel.  
 The word for “infidel” is ἄπιστος – an unbeliever
  - b. In other words, even those among the pagan world have seen this responsibility  
**Aristotle** – “It would be thought in the matter of food we should help our parents before all others, since we owe our nourishment to them, and it is more honourable to help in this respect the authors of our being, even before ourselves.”  
**Plato** – “Next comes the honour of loving parents, to whom, as is meet, we have to pay the first and greatest and oldest of debts, considering that all which a man has belongs to those who gave them birth and brought him up, and that he must do all that he can to minister to them; first in his property, second in his person; and thirdly in his soul; paying the debts due to them for their care and which they bestowed upon him of old in the days of his infancy, and which he is now able to pay back to them, when they are old and in the extremity of their need.”

4. We have a God given duty to provide for our families. To turn our back on them is the worst of wickedness.

Conclusion:

1. We cannot set aside our duty to care for our families. This includes spouses, children, and parents as well as extended family to a lesser degree.
2. Care must be given, however, in how we view our families. Too often in our generation people turn their families into idols.  
“Every earthly loyalty, if it is made central, becomes idolatry.”
3. The Bible teaches that we have a responsibility for our earthly families  
But more so for our spiritual family, which is our true family.  
Next time we will look more particularly at what our Lord meant when He said,  
**Mark 3:35** – “For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”