

# JESUS' IMPACT UPON HIS OWN FAMILY: FEELING JESUS IS AN EMBARRASSMENT MARK 03:31–35

## *Introduction — The Family of God*

Tongues were buzzing and rumours were flying about Jesus (See *Response to Jesus Christ*, Mk. 3:20-21). The rumours reached Mary and her relatives back in Nazareth. They became extremely concerned over Jesus' welfare and were somewhat embarrassed over Jesus. So they struck out to get Him and bring Him home before something terrible happened. When they arrived and Jesus was informed of their presence. He made a shocking claim: there is a greater family existing than the human family — a family that has supremacy over blood relationships. It is the family of God, the family of all those who do the will of God.

- I. Jesus' family (vv. 31-32).
- II. True kinship is not just blood relationship (v. 33).
- III. True kinship is based on a common relationship with God (vv. 34-35).

## **I. *Mark 03:31–32 The Concern of the Family***

Jesus' family came to take Him home. His family had not been with Him at this time. They had probably been back in Nazareth. Note the facts given.

1. They were “standing outside,” apparently embarrassed, not wishing to approach Jesus in front of the crowd lest a scene be created.
2. They “sent someone in to call Him” to take Him home.
3. The crowd informed Him of the family's presence outside, and note: they added the words “looking for you.” The crowd was apparently aware of the family's embarrassment and thoughts that He was “out of his mind” and needed to be taken home (v. 21).

Something significant had happened that brought Jesus' family to get Him and take Him home. What happened that caused Mary and His brothers to come for Him? What was so serious that they would send someone else inside to get Him instead of going in themselves or at least waiting until the meeting was over? What would cause them to seek to interrupt and stop the preaching of Jesus? What would cause Jesus to proclaim such shocking words at this time (vv. 34-35)? There seem to be three reasons.

1. The public, even some friends of Jesus and the family, were saying, “He is out of his mind,” mad, insane (Mk. 3:20-21). Two things caused this charge.
    - a. He was working very hard, in fact so hard that He was “not even able to eat” (Mk. 3:20). He was so swamped by people to the extent that He was forced to skip meals and do without rest. His refusing to leave the frenzied atmosphere in order to eat and rest — such behaviour going on day after day and month after month — led some to wonder if He were mad, abnormal in craving the attention and adulation and frenzy of the crowds.
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- b. He was proclaiming Himself to be the Son of God. He made many claims that were so unusual that He was thought insane.
2. The rulers, both political and religious, were increasingly opposing Jesus. The family was alarmed and feared for His life (Mt. 12:1-50; Mk. 3:22-30).
3. The news of His *claim* to be the Son of God reached the family, and the neighbours were saying that such a claim was preposterous, utter insanity. In addition, the neighbours and friends were whispering about His insanity and about His conflict with the leaders of the nation. All this did to Mary and the family what such news would do to any family: it caused concern and stirred a mother's deep love and responsibility for her Son. She left immediately to go for Him, to bring Him home in order to save Him from harm and the family from further embarrassment (Mt. 12:14; Jn.7:1f).

**Thought 1.** Some penetrating questions need to be asked and answered by all of us.

=> How many are embarrassed by Jesus?

=> How many are ashamed to stand up for Jesus and His claims?

=> How many fear what their neighbours and friends will say if they take a stand for Jesus?

=> How many want to take Jesus home and lock Him up in a room where His claims will not bother anyone?

At this point a legitimate question needs to be asked: How could Mary not believe Jesus' claims after her experience with God concerning the birth of Jesus? The answer is given in an honest and open-hearted study of the Scripture.

1. Mary was a wonderful woman, the woman chosen for a very special mission: to be the person through whom God would send "His one and only Son" into the world (Jn. 3:16). But it must always be remembered that Mary was *only human*. She was a very special woman, yes; nevertheless, she was still only human. Her being special was only in that she was *highly favoured* by God (Lk. 1:28). Her being special was not because of any virtue or merit of her own. It was because of God, because of His mercy and His grace alone.
2. Mary's deep experience with God had happened some thirty years before. Thirty or more years is a long time for human creatures to maintain the reality and meaning of a religious experience. Human emotions rise and fall almost daily.
3. As a mother, as flesh and blood, Mary had a difficult time (as anyone in her situation would) understanding the mission and Messiahship of her Son Jesus.
  - a. Mary had believed God's messenger (Lk. 1:45), but she had not fully understood. She apparently "treasured up all these things [to herself — wisely, we might add], and *pondered* them in her heart" (Lk. 2:19).
  - b. Thirteen years later Mary had difficulty understanding the mission of her twelve year-old Son when He was found in the temple having been lost for two days. When they

found Him, He was engaged in a most unusual questioning with the temple priests. Jesus asked His mother, "Why were you searching for me?...Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" (Lk. 2:49).

- c. Some seventeen years after the temple experience, Mary called upon her Son to help at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. Jesus saw in the request an opportunity to begin familiarizing His mother with just who He really was, the Son of God. She was slow to grasp His purpose, so He gave her a mild rebuke, "Dear woman, why do you involve me?...my time has not yet come" (Jn. 2:4.)
4. Mary had known Jesus as her child and as a young man for some thirty years. She had known Jesus only in a day-to-day family setting, in a day-to-day routine environment. Then all of a sudden He pulled up stakes, left home, and left what was apparently a flourishing carpentry business. The events that occurred from the moment He left happened so rapidly over the next few months and were so dramatic that Mary was bound to feel bombarded and perplexed. She and all the others who were close to Jesus were having to learn that He was not just a man, but the Son of God Himself. (Mk. 3:21)

## II. *Mark 03:33 True Brotherhood*

*True kinship is not just blood relationship.* Note two facts.

1. Jesus is not downgrading the family or human ties to blood relatives. He was not reacting because He was hurt by their disbelief. Jesus held His family close to His heart just as He did every soul and every home. This is clearly seen in Scripture. His thoughts were tenderly upon His mother and her care while He was dying upon the cross (Jn. 19:27).

In this passage Jesus is not disowning His family nor relegating the family to a position of less importance, nor teaching that the human family matters little to God. What, then, is He doing? He is proclaiming the existence of a unique family — a spiritual family.

*1 Tim 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

**Thought 1.** Note several things.

- 1) Jesus was preaching when His family interrupted Him. Think of the different ways He could have reacted, yet notice how He controlled the situation. Every servant confronts interruption sometime. We should control our reactions when we are interrupted, as difficult as it may be.
- 2) Jesus' family felt close enough to Him to interrupt Him. Easy access and familiarity do breed less respect and esteem.
- 3) Jesus uses the interruption to teach a great lesson: God is building a unique family — a spiritual family.

**Thought 2.** Jesus' family had the opportunity to be with Him daily, the privilege of supporting Him and of learning from Him, yet they were not with Him. Why? Easy access and familiarity often breeds...

- less respect
- unbelief
- less esteem
- contempt
- neglect

We often neglect that which we can have anytime we desire it: parents, children, spouse, friends, worship, Bible study, prayer.

**Thought 3.** Opposition, even from our family, should not cause us to forsake our calling and mission. Christ continued on fulfilling all that God had called Him to do.

**Thought 4.** Disruption to our ministry often, comes from friends. It may be unintentional; nevertheless, it is still disruptive. Friends feel close enough to interrupt and say a quick "hello" or to extend a personal invitation, and they expect personal responses. Such often interrupts the ministry, whether preaching, teaching, or preparing to minister. Note that Christ switches the interruption into an opportunity to teach.

No one was ever more devoted to the family than Jesus. This is seen in...

- His care of Mary throughout His life (see Jn. 19:26-27).
- His teaching and the teaching of His disciples throughout Scripture (see Eph. 5:22-6:4).
- His impact upon society's treatment of women, children, and the family (Mk. 10:5; see Col. 3:18-21).
- His own half-brothers who eventually became disciples ( Mk.6:3-4).

2. Jesus is saying that human genes, family blood and traits, are not enough to create and make a genuine family. *A true family, a true kinship* does not exist just because some people have common blood and traits. This is clearly seen in the pages of family histories every day. Too many families are in turmoil, divided, and torn apart. Too many families are in constant conflict ranging from mild verbal assaults to murderous assaults. There is...

- parent against child
- sister against sister
- child against parent
- brother against brother
- husband against wife
- relative against relative

Now picture the scene. Jesus is standing before the crowd. He has just been told that His mother and brothers are outside "looking" for Him. In the event He sees a unique opportunity to teach a much needed lesson. Stretching out His arms toward the crowd He cries out, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" He is proclaiming that blood relationships, family genes and traits, are not enough to create true kinship. Something more is needed.

**Luke 3:8** *“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”*

**John 1:12-13** *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God — children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

**John 8:33** *They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?”*

**John 8:39** *“Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did.”*

**John 9:28** *Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses!”*

**1 Pet 1:21** *Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

### **III. Mark 03:34–35 The Family of God: Believers**

*True kinship is based on a common relationship with God.* True kinship is a spiritual relationship. God is Spirit, and those who would know and follow Him must be in spiritual union with Him. True kinship is a matter of the spirit, heart, and mind (Jn. 4:23-24). All who are in *spiritual union* with God become sons and daughters of God and brothers of Jesus. They comprise the true family of God (2 Cor. 6:17-18; Rom. 8:29).

Jesus points out two facts.

1. True kinship is based upon being a true disciple, a true follower of God. Note the words, “He looked at those seated in a circle around him.” Mathew says that the persons Jesus was looking at were His disciples (Mt. 12:49). He was saying that His true family was the disciples, those who had accepted Him as Lord and Master. It was their acceptance of Him in spirit and heart that bound them together. He was saying that all who follow Him are spiritually united. They constitute a kinship that is based upon having the same Lord and Master, a true kinship that will last forever. (See *Fellowship*, Acts 2:42.)

**John 1:12** *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

**Rom 8:14-17** *Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear; but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

**2 Cor 6:17-18** *“Therefore come out from them and be separate,” says the Lord. “Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,” says the Lord Almighty.*

**Gal 4:4-6** *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba. Father.”*

**Eph 2:18-19** *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.*

**Eph 3:14-15** *For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.*

**Heb 2:11** *Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.*

2. True kinship is based upon doing the will of God. Jesus had given Himself to do God’s will. The disciples had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Master. Therefore, they were committed to do exactly what their Lord did: the will of God. The will of God became the objective and drive of their lives. All true disciples of Jesus have the same objective: to do the will of God. Therefore, it is the spiritual commitment to do the will of God that binds all believers together.

All men who focus their lives upon the will of God are bound together spiritually, bound together to do the will of God. Jesus is saying no greater kinship exists.

**Thought 1.** The will of God is the law of God.

**Psa 40:8** *“I desire to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”*

**Rom 12:1-2** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**1 Th 5:18** *Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.*

**1 Pet 2:15** *For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.*

**1 Pet 4:2** *As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.*

**1 Th 4:3** *It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality. ■*

## ACTS 02: 42 FELLOWSHIP

*Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 02:41-42*

The fellowship wrought by the Spirit of God means more than the association existing in secular groups such as civic clubs and community bodies. There is a vast difference between *community participation* and *spiritual participation*. *Community participation* is based upon neighbourly association. *Spiritual participation* is based upon a spiritual union wrought by the Spirit of God.

The distinctiveness is this: the Holy Spirit is within the Christian believer. The Holy Spirit creates a spiritual union by melting and moulding the heart of the Christian believer to the hearts of other believers. He attaches the life of one believer to the lives of other believers. Through the Spirit of God, believers become one in life and purpose. They have a joint life sharing their blessings and needs and gifts together. Note several things about fellowship that are taught by this passage.

1. Fellowship is being experienced by the new believers because they join other Christians in learning the Scriptures (apostles' teachings) and in worship (prayers and celebrating the Lord's Supper, Acts 2:41-42).
2. Fellowship forbids an unattached Christian life. Their fellowship is maintained because they "are devoted" in the Scriptures and in worship. An unattached Christian life is just impossible.
  - a. Christianity is first an individual matter, but then it becomes a social matter. The Christian is attached to Christ individually, but he is also attached to other believers. He walks with other believers in the Scriptures and in worship.
  - b. Christianity is first a spiritual organism, but then it becomes a spiritual organization. The Christian has an *inward life*, but he also takes on an *outward form* of life. He becomes a living organization with other Christian believers. He sits at the feet of the apostles' teaching and joins right in with other Christians as they worship together.
  - c. Christianity makes the true believer a saint (one who is set apart unto God), but Christianity is made up of *saints* — plural. Christianity is not just one person; Christianity is many persons — *saints*. The word is often used in the New Testament, but it is never used in the singular. Christianity is Christianity because the saints *study the Scriptures together* and *worship together*.

- d. Christianity demands that a believer personally live out such virtues as kindness, long-suffering and love; but the believer can do this only in association with others.
  - e. Christianity means that the Spirit of God has entered the believer's life, but it also means that the Spirit of God has placed the believer into a corporate body (the church), into Christian society itself. The Spirit of God indwells the corporate body of believers as well as the individual (see 1 Cor. 3:16).
3. Spiritual fellowship faces two dangers.
- a. Fellowship and society can be over-emphasized — to the point that individual salvation is missed. An individual must “accept His message” (Acts 2:41).
  - b. Individual salvation and individual worship, whether through nature or by any other means, can be overly stressed — to the point that Christian fellowship and society can be missed (Acts 2:42; see Heb. 10:25).

*Acts 2:42* They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**Rom 12:5** So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

**1 Cor 10:17** Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

**Gal 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**Eph 4:13** Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**Heb 10:25** Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

**1 John 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

**Psa 119:63** I am a friend to all who fear you, to all who follow your precepts.

**Mal 3:16** Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name. □