

Does Jesus Call You Family

Luke 8:19-21

August 12, 2018

Turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 8. We are moving through this great chapter verse by verse and following the organization and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who wrote this down through Luke. And following his, just his organization of even how the chapter lays out, we're coming into a section of scripture here, Luke 8:19-21, these verses are actually out of chronological, historical chronological order. Which is not Luke's typical style and there's a, there's a reason for that that will get into in a moment, but Luke 8:19-21 very, very encouraging section of Scripture.

And I'm really excited to bring this to you this morning. If you were here with us last week, you'll remember that we looked at verse, the previous section verses 16 to 18, which is essentially a promise of Christ to his true disciples that God intends nothing less than to reveal everything about the Kingdom of God to them. Powerful, powerful motivation to, as Jesus says, there in verse 18, to take care how we hear the truth.

When God promises to open up the floodgates of revelation, when he lights the lamp and then puts it up on the lampstand and tells us, then take care how you listen. This morning we're gonna find even more encouragement to do just that. And in this section of scripture, Jesus gets even more personal with us, even more intimate with us, and provides us with motivation for listening carefully.

Look at a, verses 19 to 21, 19 to 21. It says there, "Then his mother and his brothers came to him," and I just want to make a quick comment on that. "His mother and his brothers came to him," came to Christ. That sentence you need to understand refutes the false Roman Catholic doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary. And I just want to say that as a sort of an aside, sort of a footnote to the text, because I know that in our midst are many former Roman Catholics, and in talking to Roman Catholics and trying to maybe unseat their confidence in what the magisterium in the, the Catholic Church teaches this is so helpful to see that Jesus mother and his brothers came to him.

As it says there, it says his brothers is, there are sisters too by the way, according to Mark 6:3. These are brothers. They are not cousins, as is taught. They're not Joseph's other children, by the way, from a previous marriage, as they also will teach. Just as Mary is his mother, his physical mother. In the plain sense of the word, these are his brothers in the plain sense of that word. We have their names actually, Matthew 13:55 records them as James and Joseph and Simon and Judas. These are his brothers.

Okay, continuing. "His mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.' But he answered them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'" That text provides us, as I said, with another reason, for paying careful close attention to how we hear God's Word. Because of the implications about the nature of our relationship to God and very importantly about Christ's relationship to us.

It's very important we are careful with how we hear. Those with hearts of good soil, as it says in verse 15, they are the

ones who, verse 18, they "take care how they listen." And they show they have, have hearts of good soil and that they've taken care "how they listen" by the fact, verse 21, that they both hear and obey God's Word. The good soil, verse 15, "take care how they listen," verse 18. They "hear and obey," verse 21. That's a connection from the parable to the promise of light and to the identification of the children of light. Those whom Jesus counts as family.

And that really is the issue, isn't it? It's not about anybody's claim to belong to the family of God. It's not about what people say and profess about themselves. The more important question is what does Jesus profess about each one of us? Does Jesus consider us to belong to his family? So, the text, this passage, moves from divine revelation to human response and helps us draw a right conclusion about the nature of our relationship to God.

Is there a relational distance between ourselves and Jesus Christ? Or is there a relational closeness? Is there relational intimacy? And again, we're less interested in answering that question, we're less interested in how we feel about that. Our

subjective feelings really are not the issue at all? This is not about a subjective sense. We answer the question in a very objective way, an objective manner by comparing ourselves with how Christ judges relational closeness and relational intimacy. We're going to find here how Jesus defines his family and for the many of you here who are relight, rightly related to Jesus Christ, I think you're gonna find every reason to be encouraged this morning as we walk through the text. Let's get right into point one.

Point one you see, you see it there in your bulletin. The arrival of Jesus' family, the arrival of Jesus' family. Look again at verse 19, "Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd." This is one of the places in Luke's Gospel where, where he is not following as he records this account, he's not following a strict historical chronology. Both Matthew and Mark record the same section, but it comes before the Parable of the Sower, not after. And that's more strictly historically chronological.

Luke records it here though, and he records it out of strict chronological sequence because he's using it to

illustrate the point that Jesus has just made, the importance of listening carefully to what God has revealed. It has implications on your family membership. If we go with Matthew and Mark's chronology, there are very good reasons to do that. But if we go with their chronology, the arrival of Jesus' family, here as we read it, the arrival of the family was just prior to the occasion when Jesus delivered the Parable of the Sower.

So, his family arrived, desiring to see him, and then after that he delivers the Parable of the Sower. That's historical, that's chronological. According to Mark 3:20, Jesus and his disciples were, on this occasion, they were inside of a house, inside of a dwelling place. It says there in Mark 3:20 that Jesus "went home and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat." There were so many people gathered around, just crowding the kitchen they couldn't even prepare a sandwich it was so packed in the kitchen.

The reference to home in Mark 3:20 is talking about Capernaum. Capernaum is home base for messianic operations during Jesus' Galilean Ministry and according to John 2:12, it's

actually likely that Jesus and his brothers had moved to Capernaum as well by this time. And as we've been seeing, the more popular and widely known that Jesus became, the more the crowds gathered around him, followed him, the more they thronged around him. At the same time as his growing popularity, as the rise of his stock you might say, the more overt was the opposition by religious leadership.

There's an inverse proportion, rising popularity, and declining appreciation by the religious leadership of Jesus and his ministry, especially among the scribes and the Pharisees, especially those who are fastidious about the law of Moses and law keeping. In fact, as we've already mentioned in our exposition of Luke's Gospel, some of the religious leaders were already conspiring together about how to get away with killing Jesus. Others though, were more subtle.

As we've seen at the end of Luke 7, like Simon the Pharisee, he feigned a friendship, inviting him over to dinner, but actually he was intending to entrap Jesus. In either case, the thoughts of religious leadership or of hatred toward him. Murderous, even. So, it's in the climate of this growing

hostility and particularly from respected religious leaders, respected opinions within the community which were very powerful. It's in the climate of that that Jesus' mother and brothers visit.

There are rumors of Jesus coming demise. And it's in this climate that Jesus' family tries to visit him, and in fact they are trying to intervene. Let me show you this by having you turn over to Mark's gospel and just get some helpful background. If you go to Mark 3:20, I just mentioned it, Mark 3:20. You'll see when you arrive in Mark 3, that Mark has actually in his record, in his Gospel, Mark has skipped over quite a bit that we have already covered in Luke's Gospel.

You've got a, Mark recording the appointing of the twelve there in Mark 3:13-19, and then immediately following the appointing of the twelve by Jesus there's the visit of Jesus family in verse 20. And we know from Luke's Gospel there's a lot wedged in between those two verses. Jesus has preached the Sermon on the Mount, he's healed the centurion servant, he's raised the widow's son, he's taught about John the Baptist, he's

taught a lesson on love to Simon the Pharisee; which is very impactful.

A lot has happened between verse 19 and verse 20 in Mark chapter 3. But then we read this again in Mark 3:20. "He went home, the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat. And when his family heard it, [look at that], they went out to seize him, for they were saying, 'He is out of his mind.'" So, I guess in that, CS Lewis trilemma of judgements about Jesus liar, lunatic or lord, at this time anyway, Jesus' family chose the lunatic option. He's out of his mind.

And you may think to yourself, how could Jesus own family come to such a poor judgment about him? Don't they know him? They've grown up with him. Didn't Mary know him? And they've seen his life from the most intimate of vantage points. Why would they say he is out of his mind? Well because, apart from being a very well-behaved child, Jesus was in every way human to them. Yeah, Mary knew about his divine origin. She knew about his miraculous conception. She knew all about his prophetic future. But Jesus' brothers grew up thinking about him as really nothing special.

It wasn't until the Holy Spirit brought Jesus to the waters of baptism to undergo that baptism. And by John the Baptist God sent the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove or like a dove to activate him into ministry. Send him into ministry and fulfill his messianic purpose. Remember immediately after the baptism the heavens opened, Holy Spirit descended like a dove, voice from heaven, "This is my beloved son with whom I am well pleased," and then the spirit drove him into the wilderness for that forty day period of testing.

That all happened when Jesus was about thirty years old. So, think about the previous thirty years. For thirty years Jesus appeared to his mother and his brothers as just another boy. Just another teenager. Just another man. Obviously, he probably seemed an ideal human. Trustworthy in every way, hardworking, diligent, respectful, kind, gentle, patient. An amazing human being, but nothing but a human being, to them, nothing special. And then. All of a sudden, as it were, from their perspective anyway. Jesus becomes this huge celebrity. He's, he's this man of notoriety. He's acclaimed and, and they're hearing about their brother from all these reports, all through Galilee.

All started when he caused a, a great offense in Nazareth, which almost got him killed. And then he moved to Capernaum, and he was in Capernaum. But then he was hardly ever in Capernaum because he's traveling all around Galilee. He's preaching and teaching and working miracles. He's got this huge following. He is this wildly popular and seemingly unconventional rabbi who's willing to go against the status quo and willing to speak against the leadership. He's thronged by eager disciples.

And there's also this controversy that starts swirling around his ministry. Controversy that he does not submit to the Law of Moses. That he eats and teaches his disciples to eat with unwashed hands. Then he defies the traditions of the elders. All these rumors are swirling around him, and some of them are pretty dark. You know you better watch out or he's gonna end up dead.

So, look at the next verse in Mark's account. Let me show you this by having you turn over to Mark's gospel, Mark 3:22 "The scribes who came down from Jerusalem [these are Jerusalem scribes and they] were saying, 'He is possessed by Beelzebul,'

and 'by the Prince of demons he casts out demons.'" Now we understand that's easily refutable. There's nothing about Jesus that speaks of the demonic. And Jesus handily refutes the charge in the verses that follow.

But think about how ominous that judgment would sound to Jesus' family members. They have a family affection for him. They have a concern about their family reputation. And these are the scribes of Jerusalem, no less. They're experts in the law. They are full of wisdom. You might consider them on par today with, with, with the so-called mental health experts. Public intellectuals, and they have all come to the conclusion together that Jesus is possessed.

How do you think that judgment would stir the anxieties of Jesus' family? His brothers didn't believe him in, him anyway, John 7:5. And here his mom is worried about him. I mean, messianic pretensions are one thing, but this is getting way too serious. This is going a bit far. No one wants him to die for all this controversy. Which has to be due to some kind of misunderstanding. So, his brothers Ja, James, Joseph, Simon, Judas they, they decided to take action.

They decide to head over to his residence in Capernaum. Find out where he is, seize him, Mark 3:21, and they do that for his own good. The word seize means to grasp hold of, to arrest, to put under restraint. They intend to grab him, restrain him, take him back to their house, out of the public eye where he can come back to his good senses. Like the kid that they knew growing up. Become the reasonable lad that they knew when they grew up with him, not this would be Messiah who's stirring up all the good folks of Galilee. We want to get him home, away from the controversy, away from the danger for his own good. But surely didn't Mary hold a different point of view?

She did. She clearly did as Elizabeth had said thirty years earlier by the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:45 "Blessed is she who believed", that's Mary, "Blessed is she who believed there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." There's nothing in any gospel record that would lead us to conclude that Mary had stopped believing what the Lord told her would be fulfilled. So why here does Mary come along with the boys? Why does she come with the four brothers? She comes not because she agrees with her other sons that he's out of his mind. But really, she comes because she's very, very concerned.

You mother's know, when there's a potential for conflict among the boys, you're gonna be there to be on hand to make sure no one gets hurt. Hard for boys to pile on too hard when mom's watching. She's crying, carrying on like mothers do. If you're gonna seize my first born seize him gently. Right, so she's there as a mother. Her affections are stirred and probably with the four brothers there leaning on her, voicing their opinions and concerns, perhaps she started to become concerned herself. Well, maybe it is better he takes a rest a little bit.

So, if we can understand in the most benefit of the doubt, gracious terms, the reason why Jesus' family arrived on the scene, or at least one reason. And say they came for his own protection. At least they thought so. They came for his own good. His brothers didn't believe in him, so the only sense they could make out of him. The only way they could explain his itinerant lifestyle, I mean, not even, he's not even making any money off of the deal.

The only way they can understand any of this is he's lost it. Maybe the heat has been getting to him. Maybe he's working

too hard. I mean he's all over the place. In any case, he's out of his mind. Let him, let's get him out of the heat. Let's get him out of the public eye, away from the controversy, away from all this. Let's let him get a little R&R back at our house. So, if you're still in Mark 3:22, "Jesus mother and brothers [they] came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him."

Go ahead and turn back to Luke 8:19 now. "Standing outside they sent to him and they called him." But in Luke 8:19, Luke abbreviates that and just says, "His mother and his brothers came to him, but they couldn't reach him because of the crowd." And you'll notice that Luke hasn't provided any of the background that Mark gave us or that Matthew gave us, and that's purposeful on Luke's part. He knew the full story, he'd done his research, but he chooses here to focus our attention on the deeper point.

For him, the deeper point is that this is an illustration of Jesus' exhortation in, in verse 18 of Luke 8, "Take care [therefore] how you hear." Luke has a purp, purposefully here, stepped away from his usual chronological development. To insert this account and direct our attention, on this point, the issue

of relative proximity. The issue of relational proximity. Let's put it this way. This is Jesus' family, right? It's his natural mother and his natural brothers and they would say that they are coming to Jesus, basically to rescue him from himself. Why? Because they would tell you he's our brother. We love him. We care for him. We don't want him to get hurt.

But if they love him. I mean, if they truly love him, that is to say they love him by understanding him, by knowing him, knowing him for who he really is. Not just according to human judgement, but according to who he really is. If that's true that they truly love him, then what are they doing outside of the house? Why would they need to come to him if they love him, shouldn't they already be there? Don't the people who know and love Jesus stay close to him? Don't they abide in him and stay as close as possible to him?

That folks, is what Luke wants us to see. So, Luke brings us into the scene without historical context to demonstrate the incongruity of the fact that Jesus own family is outside of the circle. As John wrote in John 1:10 and 11, "He [that is Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made through him, and yet

the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him." Look, Jesus' family had lived close to him, probably closer than anybody could. I mean, his mother, imagine her taking care of him from a young, young age, nursing him, caring for him, raising him, weaning him. All the rest; they knew him intimately. They had lived close to him while he grew up among them.

But now, they're not in the inner circle. They're not in the outer circle. They haven't been hanging out at it, even at the perimeter of the spectating crowds. They've been living away from him. And now they have to come to him. And when they arrive on scene, they can't reach him because of the gathered crowd. And listen, their physical proximity is a picture of their relational proximity. They're not close where it counts.

That takes us into our second point. The report of Jesus' family. Second point in your outline there in your bulletin, the report of Jesus' family. There in verse 20, Jesus was told, or you could say it was reported to him. "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." That is, he's on the inside. They are on the outside. They're standing

outside of the circle of the followers of Jesus, and so he had to receive this news of their arrival by this report.

It actually says in Mark 3:31 that his family "sent to him and called him." They are the ones who initiated this report. Why do they want to see him? Remember their intentions. They basically intend to arrest him. Take him back to their house. They don't want, they don't want to actually themselves come into the house where Jesus is to be with him. They're not coming to see him in the way that any of the rest of these disciples, any of the rest of the crowd is. His family is standing outside and they're staying outside and they are sending for him, calling for him, wanting to see him but outside where they are.

Where they're standing, they've come to take him away. Like embarrassed, concerned family members, enough is enough. The crowd of disciples around Jesus, in the house, packed in, even standing outside. They don't know that. They don't know what their intentions are. So, when Jesus' family arrives, you can imagine their excitement. A report of their arrival and request came from outside where Jesus' brothers were. They're there outside the crowd, outside the house, and they're sending word

inside the house. And so, if you picture it, the report passed from person to person, from the outer perimeter, then inside the house and then through the stack of bodies that covered every inch of floor space, and finally the word made it to Jesus.

So, by the time Jesus hears the report, everyone in the home and outside of the home, they all knew, that Jesus' family had arrived. And that they wanted to see him, and again, no one knows why they came to see him. That the family thinks that Jesus has lost his mind and they've come to take him away from them. Everybody knows what's reported here in verse 20, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.

So, what do you think the gathered crowd on that occasion would expect Jesus to do? How do they, you think they would expect him to respond to this news that his family's arrived? As you consider that. Let me inform your thinking just a bit by showing you what's really plain in the text, in, but easily looked over. Notice the repetition here. Verse 19, verse 20 and verse 21. The repeated identification of his mother and his brothers. His mother and his brothers, your mother, your

brothers, my mother, my brothers. Why the repetition of that same phrase over and over just a change in pronouns. But why?

How about, how about some variation from Luke here? I mean, why not use the word family? There's actually a word family, patria, in the Greek. He could use that word, for instance, in the first instance and maybe a pronoun in the second instance, they, them, they're here. And then spell it out at the end, my brother, my mother and my brothers, why? Why do you see this repetition of the phrase?

Look whenever you find repetition in the text, pay attention because its often intentional. There's a reason for the repetition. It's not just that Luke was tired and ran out of creativity. Couple reasons for the repetition really. Let me just give you one of them for now. By repeating the phrase, "his mother and his brothers" in verse 19, and then "your mother and your brothers" verse 20, and then "my mother and my brothers" in verse 21. Luke emphasizes the significance of relationship. Heightens the sense of expectation among the people.

In fact, even trace the pronouns, "his mother and brothers," third person right, third person, "your mother and your brothers," second person. Let me get to the first person, "my mother and my brothers." Heightens the sense of expectation here among the people. The reader is going to assume a certain kind of response on Jesus' part. Expects Jesus to act a certain way. How should Jesus respond with the arrival of his family? With eagerness right? We expect him to readily receive his family members and to receive them immediately.

Biblically, we have that expectation. To go back to the Old Testament, it's as basic as the ten commandments. Exodus 20, verse 12, "Honor your father and your mother." That's repeated by Moses in the second law, the Deuteronomy, there in the reiteration of those ten Commandments. Deuteronomy 5:16 "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you." Why? So that "your days may be long, and it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

Apostle Paul ref, reinforced the same truth, didn't he? In the New Testament, Ephesians 6:1-3 he points back to this ten Commandments truth, "Children obey your parents in the Lord, for

this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' this is the first commandment with a promise [Paul says] that it may go well with you and you may live long in the land." The duty to honor one's parents was instilled in Hebrew children from the womb upward all the way through life.

How did that command, that basic command to "Honor your father and honor your mother" come a number of stark warnings in the law? If you honor your father and mother, you're not going to commit acts of physical violence against them, Exodus 21:15. According to Exodus 21:17, you're gonna, not gonna show any verbal dishonor toward your parents or disdain for them. Leviticus 20:19 says the same thing. In fact, you're not to treat them with any lack of dignity according to Leviticus 18:7.

Be careful that you're not brought up on charges of rebellion as a child in your parents' home, Deuteronomy 21:18-21, because those kids who rebel against their parents totally dishonoring him, them and tot, not obeying him. They get rocked to sleep and they never wake up. The whole community gathers to stone rebellious children to death. So, Leviticus 19:3, "Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father." There's a

final warning. Before they entered into the promised land, it was a curse, shouted from the slopes of Mount Ebal. Deuteronomy 27:16, "Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"

So, when his mother and his brother show up in verse 19. And the report comes to him in verse 20, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." What does everybody expect Jesus to do? Whether it's the people present on this occasion or the readers of Luke's Gospel starting with Theophilus and beyond in the first century and today as well, everyone expects Jesus to treat his family with the utmost deference and regard and respect and honor.

Every reason in the world to expect Jesus either to go out to them as they've requested, or to tell his disciples to make way, make a hole everyone, make a pathway, get them close to him because that is what families do. When the arrival of Jesus' family produces this report about their arrival, makes its way to Jesus and there is an expectation about the, from the people that are there that day, there's an expectation for us as we read. But here's where the needle comes off the record. Here's

where you might say someone sings a flat note and sings it very loudly. But then fingernails dragged down the chalkboard. I know all these metaphors come from a pre digital age so fill in your own metaphor of discomfort and metaphor of discomfort in the first century world. The folks here are in for a bit of a shock.

Third Point, the identity of Jesus' family. Look at verse 21, look at how Jesus answered the report about his family. Which, as we said, everyone had heard that report by now, everyone. But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." What is Jesus saying here? Is he saying I no longer have a physical family? No, he's not saying that. Is he dishonoring them by what he says? No, he's not.

He's saying, quite simply, there is a closer relationship and intimacy among those who hear and believe and obey God than there is among those connected by mere family ties. There is a closer relationship among believers in a spiritual family than there is among any in a physical family who are unbelievers. Physical family ties are less of a priority than spiritual family ties. That's what Jesus is saying here. And again, it's

not that physical family ties are unimportant. Bear that in mind. Jesus has not dishonored his mother here. But the Bible does put a higher priority for believers on the family of faith than it does on flesh and blood family members.

Again, it's not that your physical family is not important, it most certainly is. But the physical family is less of a priority than spiritual family. Let me give you a few examples of that. I'm going to give you a couple of examples while you're turning to John 19, John 19. I'm gonna mentioned a couple others though while you're turning there so you can jot 'em down.

At the end of Galatians, Galatians 6:10, Paul commands believers not to grow weary in doing good, but as they do good, they are to prioritize doing good to fellow believers. Paul says Galatians 6:10, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, [Ah, but] especially to those who are of the household of faith." A similar idea over in Paul's pastoral letter to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 4:10, where Paul again prioritizes the spiritual over the physical.

This is based, by the way, on how God makes these very distinctions. He tells Timothy, Paul does, "We have our hopes set on the living God [and the living God is] the savior of all people, [ah] but especially of those who believe." That is to say, God saves all people, all humanity, but in a common grace way you say? You say how is that? How does he, how is he the savior of all people? Listen, every single moment that God restrains his hand of judgment and wrath against our sin. It's in evidence that God is the savior of all people.

Literally, he's rescuing every single human being who offends his holiness every single day in thought, and word, and deed. Sins of omission and commission against his holy law, against his holy character, against his kindness and grace to them. They don't honor God or give thanks and instead of snuffing them out of existence in a moment. God stays his hand of judgment and he's patient and loving.

Not only that, but he piles grace upon grace in giving to them and giving to them and giving to them. Not just a plain, vanilla, tasteless existence. He gives them abundantly joys, sunrises, sunsets, family, pleasures, all the rest. He's very

kind and he doesn't snuff out their existence in a moment as he really by all rights could and should.

So, he's the savior of all people, but there's a salvation of those who believe. Which saves them fully and finally from the penalty and the power and one day from the very presence of sin. There's a particular grace for his elect, and that's how God is the Savior, especially, of those who believe. It was just a couple of places, Galatians 6:10, 1 Timothy 4:10, where you can see a priority on believers over unbelievers. It's not to dismiss our duty and responsibility to love all people, even our enemies. Those who persecute us as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount.

It's just to say there's a higher priority in our love to the household of faith and the one I want you to look at now is in John 19, where we, we see that priority of believers over unbelievers even reaches into the home. It even reaches into physical family, natural family relationships. We mentioned earlier the repetition of the familial phrase in verse 19, "his mother and his brothers," and then in verse 20, "your mother and your brothers" then verse 21, "my mother, my brothers." The

change in those three phrases are the pronouns depending on who's using the phrase.

But notice in all three repetitions of family relationship. Where is Jesus' father? No, why does no one even mention him? Not Luke, not the ones reporting it, not even Jesus mentions his father here, right? So where is Joseph? It's very likely that Joseph had died by this time. We have no record of his death in the Bible, but we do believe he died at some earlier point in Jesus' life. Very likely before he embarked on his public ministry.

By the time we get here to the end of his ministry, John 19:26, and Jesus here is hanging on the cross. Situation is very clear that Joseph has died. And Jesus is pictured in this text, carrying out a responsibility to honor his mother, to care for her. And since he'll no longer be there for her. No longer present physically to take care of her needs. Not just with his death, but after his resurrection. He's around for a while, but then he ascends into heaven bodily. He's not going to be there for her.

So, what does he do? Transfers his responsibility to care for his mother, to John, the son of Zebedee. Look at verse 26 John 19, "When Jesus saw his mother" and, again, he's on the cross, he's on the cross in excruciating pain, he's in agony. There's a lot going on here before God, as God turns away and does not rescue his son from the cross. He's bearing the sins of all those who will ever believe. What does he do? He attends to something very important here.

"When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom Jesus loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, 'Woman, behold your son!' [And] then he said to the disciple, 'Behold, your mother!' From that hour the disciple took her into his own home." He cared for physical connections, physical relationships. He cared. It's not unimportant. But notice even the distance. He doesn't say, mom, behold your son, he says "Woman, behold your son" because her relationship to him is different. He is her Messiah; he is her Savior.

Now, this transfer of responsibility to John, the son of Zebedee. That wouldn't have been necessary had Joseph been alive, right? But note the fact that Jesus, while on the cross.

He doesn't put Mary's care into the hands of his unbelieving siblings. He doesn't count on James and Joseph and Simon and Judas. We see here that Jesus considers John to be a closer family connection than any of the brothers in his physical, earthly family.

As he said in Luke 8:21, you can go back there now as we're walking through that section, Luke 8:21. He said there, made the point repeatedly throughout his ministry. He made this point. "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." And the language here you have to understand is emphatic.

Here's the, let me give you a literal translation. Answering, he said to "them", that's plural. He's speaking to the entire crowd. He's not speaking to an individual that gave him a report. He's speaking to everyone. Answering, he said to them all, he's talking about the entire crowd, he's talking about his own twelve apostles. He's talking about the women, eh, from a, Luke 8:2 and 3, the faithful women who follow and attend to him. He's talking about other, other true disciples, and he's answering the question. Jesus said to them all, "My mother, my brothers are these; the ones who are characterized by hearing

the word of God and doing the word of God, and doing so continually.”

The verbs in that sentence are participles. They're not finite verbs, hearing and doing they're participles. The grammar here in those participles emphasizes the character of those whom Jesus calls family. They are the ones who are characterized by hearing the word of God. They are the ones who are characterized by doing the word of God. That is the criteria that Jesus uses for considering someone to be members of his family. Again, notice this is not about our subjective feelings. This is not about a decision that was made a long time ago. This is not about signing a card, getting baptized, attending church. The criteria here is what Jesus thinks.

Notice first of all, that Jesus family members are identified as those who are characterized by hearing the word of God. That is to say. All the members of Jesus' true family, his spiritual family. They have ears to hear. What does that mean? Means they're born again. They've have been regenerated under new life. They've entered into the life of God that Jesus

himself possesses. John 1:4, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Second thing, Jesus' family members are identified as those who are characterized by doing the word of God. That is to say, his family members have ears to hear, eyes to see, and then a heart to respond to what they hear and see. That means they possess first of all, believing affections. They love new things, the things of God, the things of his word. They hate certain things. They hate the things of this world. They hate sin, they hate unrighteousness. They hate anything that prevents them from coming near to God.

They have believing affections and so what do they do? They do what they want to do. They live in obedience to God in his word because, that's what they want to do. They long to do that. They love God as Jesus loves God, and they fear God as Jesus fears God, and reveres him and loves to do his will.

In Hebrews 10:17 we read these words, and in fact Hebrews 10 verse 7 if you write that, write that down. You'll see that in, even in red letter Bibles they're not written in red

letters, but they should be. "Then I said, [this is Christ speaking], then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as is written of me in the scroll of the book.'" Jesus said John 5:30, "I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me." And John 6:38, "I've come down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

Why did he do that? Why did he obey the will of the Father? Was he pushed into it? Was he forced into it? Well, I gotta do my duty, gotta be this perfect sacrifice on the cross so I could forgive the sins of all people who believe and, and trust in God and trust in God salvation that gotta, I just gotta obey. I can't, I can't leave any, any command un, un not obeyed.

So let me grind this obedience out. No. Why did he obey the will of the Father? Because he wanted to. Think about that for yourself. Do you want to obey? Is your deepest joy and longing? It was Jesus' joy. It was for the joy that was set before him that Jesus endured the cross. Despising the shame and now having accomplished the Father's will, he has the reward of resurrection. He now sits at the right hand of the throne of

God, Hebrews 12:2 and what does he keep on doing? The Father's will, 'cause he longs to.

He's interceding according to the will of God for us. It's the same attitude of those Jesus calls family members. They're characterized by hearing and obeying the word of God. They are born again. They possess new affections. They listen because they love God. They can't wait to hear his voice. Read his word. They're eager to hear it. And they obey not out of grunting out a life of, I gotta get there. They obey because they love God. Because they recognize his word is perfect and good and wise and they rejoice to do all that's good and perfect and wise, and so they want to obey. So, they're characterized by hearing the word of God, they're characterized by doing the word of God.

So, third way Jesus' family members are identified. In the fact that they keep on hearing, and they keep on obeying God's Word. These are present tense participles, which portrays the action as habitual and continuous and repeated. So, in other words, because of God's regenerating work in them, regenerating them, causing them to be born again to new life. Ever since the day they believed. Jesus' family members are characterized by

continuing in hearing and obeying, by enduring to the end, by persevering faithfully in bearing fruit and in hearing and obeying.

Listen again, you just have to ask yourself, is this me? Or do I just hear when I come every Sunday? Is it throughout the week that I am like the man in Psalm 1, delighting to meditate on God's Word and doing it and obeying it? Is that my joy? Is that what I count as more enjoyable than any private entertainment or vacation or trip or ambition fulfilled? Is it more important to you than your business? It's more important to you than your job. Is it more important to you than your reputation?

To hear and to do, and to keep on hearing, and keep on doing. This is where we need to make a very important family connection abundantly clear. We already pointed out in the three repetitions of Jesus' family relationships verse 19, verse 20, verse 21. We notice in those repetitions the absence of Jesus' father. No one mentioned Joseph, because Joseph was in all likelihood, he was dead. We need to be more clear and line up

our thinking with Jesus thinking because Jesus actually does mention here his father.

Look again at verse 21, "'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word [of whom? They hear the word] of God and they do it.'" God is his Father. God is his Father. Ever since they looked for him when he was lost at the temple, Luke 2, end of the chapter, Luke 2. "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" God is his Father.

And those who are characterized by hearing and doing the word of God they share in the same parentage with Jesus Christ. They hear God's Word because they are born of God. As Jesus is. They obey God's Word because they love their heavenly Father. Just as Jesus loves his Father and listens to him and obeys him. That's why Jesus calls them family.

So, we find right in John 1:12 and 13, the world doesn't know him, verses 10. Jesus' own people the Jews and even his own family members didn't receive him, verse 11. "But all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the

will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but [of whom] of God?."

Let me give you a few words to encourage you and then a few words to challenge you. Few words to encourage you and a few words to challenge you. First, the encouragement. When Jesus says here, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." Notice the expressions there of intimacy. And, beloved, if this describes you, you need to pay close attention, because this is so profoundly encouraging.

And by the, by the way I know that there are those right here in our midst, those who will listen later online, that being a Christian has cost you. It is hurt as family relationships sever themselves from you. As they condemn you. As they judge you, calling you judgmental. Ultimate irony, right? But they hurt you, they malign you, they slander you, they persecute you. Some of you, for some of you this relationship to Jesus Christ has cost you.

Look at the terms Jesus use here. The terms mother and brothers. He's using terms that describe the most intimate of

human relationships, because if you are characterized by hearing and obeying God's Word, then Jesus considers you to be relationally closer to him than physical mother and brothers. You are as close to him as an intimate family member. To Jesus, you're as close as his own mother.

Think about the kind of affection you have for your own mother and then remove all the sin from that relationship, right. Take away any history of **can**, family conflict, family strife, etcetera. That is the kind of love and tender affection that existed in Jesus' heart for his mother Mary. Never sinned against her. He always loved her. He was always gracious toward her fault, her weaknesses, her struggles. He loved her, dearly. Not just her affection for him, think about his affection for her.

Think about mothers. How many times you've done laundry over and over and over again? How many times you picked up the dirty socks? How many times you've cooked meals over and over, and what does a kid do? Plays with his peas, feeds it to the dog right? Kind of respect is that? You know how hard I've worked? The thankless work and tasks I've given to you over and over,

and all through your life. Jesus ate every pea. But think about Jesus always honoring her, always thanking God for her. Always caring for her, having a heart of affection and tenderness toward his mother, always honoring her perfectly.

And what Jesus is saying here is he has that kind of a heart, the same kind of affection for all of you who hear and believe and obey his word. Not only that, but to Jesus, you who hear and obey as close to him as his brothers. Jesus possesses a close affection for his brethren. We only need to think back to biblical example here. Like the affection that David and Jonathan had for one another, they were the closest. They weren't true brothers, but they were closer than brothers. 1 Samuel 18:1, read "The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." The affection was mutual when David lamented the death of Jonathan, he said, 2 Samuel 1:26, "I'm just distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; [Jonathan died] very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women."

He had a deep, deep affection for his friend. Those of you who've served in the military. Gone into combat. You understand

the kind of close affection men can have for one another. And when the affection is deep and that camaraderie is tight, you know the term they use for one another? Brother, they call it a brotherhood. It describes that fraternal affection that goes deeper than any natural family ties.

Over in Hebrews 2:11-12, we me, read more of what we've just been talking about, namely this that the God "who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source." That's what we're saying here. One source for Jesus, and all those who follow him. And that is why Jesus, Hebrews 2, that's why Jesus "is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying [and this is Jesus speaking] 'I will tell of your name to my brothers; and in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.'" Now I have sung a lot of songs that I don't ever want to repeat again in my life with military brothers. Sung a lot of songs. There could be a hearty camaraderie and fun and joy on a human level singing with your brothers.

When Jesus brings us all before the throne of God you know what he's gonna to do? He's gonna sing with us. And it's not a drunken military song. It is filled with joy and purity and

holiness and strength and affection for one another, before the throne of God. Let that be an encouragement to you. If you are someone who so rejoices and delights in the Word of God that as we said in the last sermon, you esteem it highly, you believe in it absolutely, you fear it deeply, you obey it regularly. Then you know what, Jesus counts you as a closer family member than his own mother and his own brothers. Let that encourage you, especially when the world treats you so poorly. When your own family members turn against you.

Let me challenge you too. Let me provoke you here to reflect about your relational priorities and how in, you invest your time and energy and resources. As we read in Luke 8:19-21, Jesus' physical family members they were more distant from him relationally than believers, and that's even pictured by their distance in proximity. It's not just those who are close in physical proximity. Anyone who's characterized by hearing and obeying God's Word is nearer to him. No matter where they are geographically, historically, socially, culturally. Jesus is relationally closer to believers than his physical family.

And, as is pictured here in our text, the arrival of Jesus' physical family our unbelieving family members are also standing outside of the household of faith. They are also coming to wrong conclusions about us as believers yes, but about our Lord and savior. They're ready to intervene because they too think we are out of our minds. Just as Jesus was judged by his unbelieving family to be out of his mind. Jesus is relationally distant to those who do not hear and obey. He was very open about that, wasn't he? He was willing to speak about it openly and publicly. He said it here in the hearing of everybody in the room.

In fact, that was part of him lighting a lamp and setting it on the lampstand. Everyone needed to know that Jesus' family did not have special access to him just because they're family. Special family privilege just because of physical family ties. Everyone needed to know the deeper spiritual reality that those who receive Jesus, who believe in his name. It is to them and to them alone that God has given the right to become children of God. It's not a matter of natural birth, nor of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor the will of man. It's a matter of spiritual birth which is of God.

So, what about you? Do you prioritize the family of faith? Or do you prioritize your own natural family? Are you relationally closer to Christians or to non-Christians? Are you as clear with your own family members, unbelieving family members about their true spiritual condition as Jesus is here about his own family members? Because if you're one of those whom Jesus calls family. Then you're going to be increasingly like him, and you're going to be near to him. You're not gonna be running around on the outside of the circle.

Listen, beloved. I know this is hard, but you need to be courageous in this and leave the results to God. Don't think that by spending all your waking moments running around after the agenda set by your unbelieving family members that that's gonna win them to Christ. We know Jesus' brothers are not believing in him during, not during his earthly ministry. Did he change his agenda for them? No. But later on there's at least some of them who did join the family.

They align themselves with their mother, Mary. They believed they obeyed God's Word. We actually know the names of two of them because they wrote two of epistles of scripture. One

is Judas, who wrote the little letter Jude, the Epistle of Jude. He called us to "contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Powerful little epistle of scripture. The other brother of Jesus is James, and by the time James wrote his little epistle called the "Proverbs of the New Testament" he had reflected on what Jesus had taught on this occasion.

Remember, James is one of those who had come to rescue Jesus from himself. He's one of those who wrongly judged his older brother to be out of his mind. And now, reflecting on what Jesus had taught, now reflecting and thinking about it through believing eyes and ears, James wrote this; "But be ye [what], doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [...] The one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, [that is the continual aspect of hearing and doing], and perseveres being no hearer, who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

Therefore, beloved. Take care of how you hear. Be those who are characterized by hearing and doing. And doing it for a lifetime. Be encouraged about how Jesus thinks of you. Counting you to belong to his family. Relationally closer to him because

of your spiritual connection with him to the Father. Tender affection like a mother and brothers. That's what you are to him. Be courageous then in being clear with your own family members, prioritizing your believing relationships over your unbelieving relationships. I don't say neglect your family, neglect your unbelieving relationships. Just don't overemphasize them to the neglect of your spiritual family. Give yourselves to God's will, God's priorities and leave the results to him. He can, and he does save. Let's pray.

We thank you, our Father, that we can call you Father because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for all who believe. We thank you for forgiving us of our sins, covering us in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for your glory. We thank you for all the prev, privileges that come with believing, that we belong to the family of God. We love you, we give ourselves to you. That we might rejoice in the affection that Jesus has for us in the privilege that it is that he calls us family because of your will, for your glory. In his name we pray, amen.