

## **Are We Related?**

(Mark 3:31-35)

(preached 11/2/14 Pine Grove BC; Sunday AM)

### **Introduction**

On July 22, 2013 at 4:24 PM, Kate Middleton gave birth to an 8 lb 6 oz baby boy named George.

Upon his arrival, he was given the name His Highness Prince George of Cambridge.

He was now third in line to be monarch of Great Britain.

Behind his grandfather Prince Charles and his father Prince William.

He is now over a year old, but he still has no idea of the great privilege that he enjoys as being born into the royal family.

Not only is the future king of England, he will never have to lift a finger if he doesn't desire.

All of needs and wants will be met with round the clock support from employees of the royal family.

He will never have to worry about his grades in school because he will go to the best school imaginable.

He will never have to worry about a job.

He will serve an easy job in the British military until it is time to wear the crown.

He will never have to worry over earning money for his family.

That is the privilege that comes with being born into probably the most famous family in the world.

And we see this in our own country.

Kids who were raised by famous parents.

They are given enormous privileges of cars, education and money.

And that even stretches to families right here in Fairview.

Maybe you were born into a family that had a family business that you took over.

Maybe you were born into a family with a lot of land and now you have built a house of that land.

Maybe your birth also came with other privileges.

On the other hand, maybe your birth brought no privileges.

Maybe you were born and never knew your parents.

Maybe your birth put you behind everyone else.

As you had to overcome a bad family name and reputation.

Or maybe your birth was just a normal every day to everyday people.

Either way, your birth was either privileged, disadvantaged or normal.

And your ties to family whether good or bad have influenced your life.

That is why family is important in many ways in our world.

God established the family, and we have been studying about the family on Sunday nights.

But never forget that the ultimate goal of your life is not for you to be a member of a good family..

It is to be a member of God's family.

Because when you stand in judgment, the question is not what kind of sons have you raised...

But rather what you have done with God's Son.

Prince George will have his every need met in life by his family....

Except his greatest need...

And that is the forgiveness of his sins.

His family can and will give him everything, but they cannot gift him with eternal life with the Lord.

That is something that only comes when you become a member of God's family.

And the same may be true for you.

You may be working your fingers to the bone to make a better life for your kids....

But no matter how many hours you work, you cannot provide them with eternal life.

Salvation is not found in your family name, it is found only in Jesus name.

And I want to be clear, I am for good Christian families.

They are a tremendous witness in this world.

The Bible speaks of the importance of family.

We have been learning how to be good family members on Sunday night.

I think God-honoring families will change our church, community and world.

However, if you are not in God's family, it really doesn't matter what your earthly family looks like.

No family is so privileged that they have enough money to pay for their sins.

And no family is too poor that they are not required to pay for their sin.

No family name is so good that you will get you a pass on judgment day.

And no family name is so bad that you have no hope of heaven.

The beauty of the gospel is that you can be born again into a new family.

At the moment of salvation, you are now privileged to be a son or daughter of the king of kings.

You are granted the forgiveness of sin.

You are given a place in heaven.

Those are but a few of the great privileges of being a member of God's family.

But how does this happen?

What is the way into God's family?

Is it simply a matter of chance?

It just so happened that George's great grandmother was the queen of England.

Do you simply need to be in the right place at the right time to become a member of God's family?

And then second, how do you know who is a member of the family?

It will be obvious who Prince George is if he is out in public.

There will be police escorts and armored cars.

But just how do you spot a member of God's family?

What is the obvious sign?

We will try to answer those questions this morning as we look at Mark 3:31-35.

This short section will close out chapter 3 of the gospel of Mark...

As we move through it verse by verse here on Sunday mornings.

We have been with Jesus for some time now in Capernaum.

Which is a small town on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee.

He has made this his home base for much of his ministry.

Though we know from the book of John that he spent some time around Jerusalem in his early ministry....

He calls his disciples and teaches and preaches in the northern part of Israel for many months as well.

He is far removed from Jerusalem here and the corrupt religious system located there.

But interestingly, Capernaum would be about 50 miles from his hometown of Nazareth as well.

Surprisingly, Jesus doesn't make an area near his family his home for ministry.

So, when we pick up in verse 31 of Mark 3, we find Jesus teaching in Capernaum.

He has just talked about the unforgivable sin....

So, now let's read Mark 3:31-35...

***<sup>31</sup> Then His mother and His brothers \*arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around Him, and they \*said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.”***

***<sup>33</sup> Answering them, He \*said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?” <sup>34</sup> Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He \*said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! <sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.”***

I divided this small section into 3 parts...

In verses 31-32....

We will see FAMILY DRAMA.

In verses 33-34....

We will see FAMILY TIES.

And then in verse 35...

We will see FAMILY MANNERS.

Let's begin where we all live....

And that is in verses 31-32 with ....

## I. FAMILY DRAMA (31-32)

Verse 31...

***31 Then His mother and His brothers \*arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him.***

If you were here last week, you remember that Jesus family is on the way to Capernaum from Nazareth.

Look back at Mark 3:21....

***21 When His own [i] people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."***

Word has reached Jesus family that he was being surrounded by people to such an extent that his life was in danger.

We know that he couldn't even eat because of the crowds.

That people pressed around him on all sides just to see what they could get from him.

It has been a mad house 24 hours a day.

Even when Jesus is able to get away for a while to call his disciples...

Once he returns to town, the crowds show up.

The news about Jesus spreads fast and it eventually reaches the ears of his family in Nazareth.

And I mentioned last week that Jesus family would include his half brothers and sisters that Mary and Joseph had after Jesus was born.

If you flip over in your Bibles just a few chapters to Mark 6...

You will meet these siblings of Jesus.

Mark 6:1....

***6 Jesus went out from there and \*came into <sup>[a]</sup>His hometown; and His disciples \*followed Him.***

***<sup>2</sup> When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such <sup>[b]</sup>miracles as these performed by His hands?***

***<sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of <sup>[c]</sup>James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?" And they took offense at Him. <sup>4</sup> Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in <sup>[d]</sup>his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household."***

So, we know that Jesus had four half brothers....

James, who eventually wrote the book of James..

Judas, who wrote the book of Jude..

And Joses and Simon...

And that he also had sisters.

Mary is his mother.

And Joseph was his father, even though he isn't mentioned here.

And most likely was dead at this time.

Now, you can flip back to Mark 3.

This would have been the family that had finally arrived in Capernaum to take Jesus back home.

And though we know that Mary knew the identity of Jesus.

None of the siblings at this point believed that Jesus was God's Son.

So, they came up with the best possible explanation for his behavior....

By simply saying that he was insane and then they set out to go get Jesus and bring him home.

Now to be fair to this family, they all come to believe in Jesus as Lord...

In the first chapter of Acts after Jesus has gone back to the father...

All the believers in Jesus gather in a room in Jerusalem...

And according to Acts 1:14....

Mary is there and so are his brothers.

And I think it is safe to assume that his sisters most likely believed as well.

So, they eventually get it right about their brother...

But right now in their unbelief, they have arrived to take Jesus back home.

This is a family intervention. This is family drama.

Jesus is bringing shame to the family name, and they simply need to get him back home.

Since Mary knows who Jesus is but is able to convince her other children,...

She probably goes to keep the drama from erupting.

She is also very concerned about her son, but not in the same way as the siblings.

And so they arrive in verse 31...

And then they call for Jesus in verse 32...

***<sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around Him, and they \*said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You."***

Jesus is teaching here, as evidenced by the people seated around him.

Though the crowds may still be large, the mob seems to have calmed as people are now sitting around Jesus listening to him teach.

And someone interrupts his teaching to tell him that his family is outside.

The assumption is that Jesus would go rushing outside to see them...

Introduce them to his audience.

Make a special place for them near him.

Hey, Jesus. Your family is outside.

Maybe you need to go outside and invite them in.

For a Jewish man like Jesus, family would be the highest priority.

It still is in many Jewish families.

And it still is in a lot of southern families.

We hold family in highest esteem.

And again, there is nothing wrong with that.

Family should be high on our priority list.

But Jesus the teacher uses any opportunity to teach a great truth...

And his family's arrival is just that opportunity.

And remember, at this point, these family members with the exception of Mary, do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

And so, Jesus responds to the question in verse 33...

As we move from possible Family Drama...

To Jesus teaching about.....

## II. FAMILY TIES (33-34)

Verse 33....

<sup>33</sup> *Answering them, He \*said, “Who are My mother and My brothers?”*

This is not meant as an insult to his family that arrived but a very probing question to those around him....

The question is....

What relationships are the ones that I cherish the most?

The truth that Jesus aims to teach to his listeners is this....

That there are family ties that are higher than flesh and blood in the world.

Listen to what Jesus says in Matthew 10:34....

<sup>34</sup> *“Do not think that I came to <sup>[ac]</sup>bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; <sup>36</sup> and a man’s enemies will be the members of his household.*

***37 “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me***

Those are hard words to listen to for people who love their families.

Those were hard words for Jewish ears in Jesus day...

And those are equally hard words for Southerners ears as well.

To think that Jesus brings division to families is more than a lot of people can bear.

Many people want to have nothing to do with Jesus because they don't want to see their family destroyed.

That's why you can't talk about religion or politics at the family reunion.

Because they are divisive topics, and mama doesn't want the family fighting.

However, Jesus is divisive.

Because truth is divisive.

That doesn't mean that we aim to split up our family over Christ.

No we are called to be peacemakers, and we want to have relationships with people who need to hear the gospel.

But if it is a matter of choosing the truth of Jesus or peace in the family, the choice is always the truth of Jesus.

At this point, Jesus has even brought division in his own family.

Most of them think that he is crazy.

And so when they arrive, Jesus asks the question...

Who are those closest to me?

Who is my family?

Well, it can't be my brothers since they are coming to seize me...

Would those closest to you want to take you away from doing the work of God?

That doesn't make sense...

So he answers his own question in verse 34...

***<sup>34</sup> Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He \*said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"***

Matthew adds that he was pointing his hand at his disciples...

Those men that we met a few weeks ago...

And he calls them his family...

They are the ones closer to him than his family from Nazareth....

And in his answer, we find the first clue about how to identify those in God's family.

**They are the ones who have a relationship with Jesus.**

The greatest indicator that the disciples were closer to Jesus than his family was that they were near him.

His family had been in Nazareth.

They were not with him every day.

They were not there listening to his teaching.

They were not there learning from him.

They were 50 miles away in Nazareth.

Now, obviously, distance is not always a determining factor.

But it does make relationships easier.

How do you know that Tonya, Anna, Ally and John Andrew are my family?

Well, they hang around me.

They are under my feet.

Under the same roof.

We spend time together nearly every day.

How do you know if you are in God's family?

You have a relationship with Jesus.

You talk to him every day.

You read about him every day.

You spend time with him every day.

You are near him every day.

And that is the truth that Jesus is teaching here.

The ones who are with me and near me everyday are my brothers and sisters.

Not my half brothers who walked from Nazareth to capture me and take me back.

You may think that they hold a special place in my life,....

But my closest relationships are with these disciples who have given up everything to follow me.

Does he love his half-brothers and sisters?

Oh yes. He loves them because he eventually calls them to faith in Him.

But at this point in his ministry, the disciples are his family because they are near him.

They are with him.

They are following him.

They are listening to him.

His family wants to silence him and arrest him and remove him from ministry.

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And let me add a word here for all of us that relates to what Jesus is teaching here.

IF you are a true believer in Jesus Christ this morning, you are surrounded by people who are your true family.

Or you should be surrounded by your true family.

They will be there when your earthly family deserts you.

They will pray with you when no one else will.

They will care for you when no one else will.

Or they should.

Pine Grove Baptist Church is not a collection of random Christians who happen to live near each other...

And get together on Sundays and Wednesdays,,,

No, we are the family of God that has a reunion every Sunday and Wednesday.

And we use those opportunities to catch up with one another and love one another and pray for one another...

And learn more about our one Father in heaven.

And Jesus is saying in verse 34...

That those who are following him with their lives are his real family....

And I would say to you that the believers around you here this morning are closer to you than some of your family.

Blessed is the man who has a wife here with him  
and a son and maybe even a believing grandson..

When families are united by their blood and Jesus'  
blood, it is a blessed family indeed.

But even if you are here alone this morning, you  
have a bigger family than you could possibly  
imagine.

Because you are part of God's family and you have  
family members scattered all over the globe.

That's why some of you have more in common with  
a Chinese Christian than you do with an unbelieving  
mother, sister or brother.

And Jesus is telling us in verse 34 that membership  
in God's family is first determined by your  
relationship to him.

IS that true of you?

Are you near Christ every day?

Do you talk to Him every day?

Do you learn more about him every day?

And more importantly, does He know you?

But it is not only your family tie to Jesus that indicates if you part of God's family...

We also see another evidence of if you are in God's family in verse 35...

And this is your....

### **III. FAMILY MANNERS (35)**

Verse 35...

***<sup>35</sup> For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."***

How many times has someone said to you....

Wow, you look just like your father or mother...

Sometimes, your identification with a family is known just by your looks.

If I had a nickel for every time someone has asked me if I was Brad Pitt's brother....

Just kidding.....No one has ever mistaken me for Brad Pitt's brother...

You know why?

I look nothing like him.

And here in verse 35, Jesus is giving us the second way to identify who is a part of God's family....

**They begin to resemble their Father in heaven.**

And how does that happen, well you start by doing the Lord's will for your life.

And what is the Lord's will for your life?

First and foremost, God's will for your life is to repent of your sins and trust in His Son.

And then, God's will for your life is to start acting more like Christ.

And when you become more like Christ by obeying His word, you start looking like the Lord.

The truth of the Scriptures is that people who are truly saved are easily identified..

Because they are known by their fruits.

We just finished reading through 1 John a few weeks ago...

And what did John say was evidence of salvation?

Obedience to God's Word.

And this is all throughout the Bible.

Your membership in God's family should be seen in your actions.

John 8:31...

***<sup>31</sup> So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine"***

What did James write?

Don't be just a hearer of God's Word...Be a doer or you have deceived yourself.

Deceived yourself how?

Into thinking that you are a Christian and a member of God's family when in fact, your aren't.

And then in what should be one the most frightening verses of the Bible....

Matthew 7:18

***<sup>18</sup> A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. <sup>19</sup> Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>20</sup> So then, you will <sup>[m]</sup>know them by their fruits.***

***<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.***

The truth of the biblical gospel is that your membership in God's family is evident by your life.

You are not saved by your good works, but you and the world will know you are saved by your good works.

Who has heard the saying?

Don't bring shame on the family name.

That means there are certain expectations for how you are to act if you are part of the family.

Well, let me tell you very clearly..

There are expectations for your life if you call yourself a member of God's family.

Salvation does not give you license to sin and act like the world.

And how dare people walk an aisle and say that they are part of the family of God...

And then go into the world and shame the family name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus words here are very clear....

The true members of his family are those who have a relationship with him...

And those who obey him.

IT is just that simple.

## **Conclusion**

This is a hard passage to examine in the south where family ties run deep.

But the truth is more important than our traditions.

The message of Jesus is that although our relationships with others are important,....

There is nothing that rises above our relationship to Him.

I have shared the gospel with people who thought that their mama's name would be all they needed to get to heaven.

Or they would say that their daddy was a preacher.

You will not ride someone else's coat tails into heaven.

Mama and Daddy will not be standing by God's side begging him to let you in.

There is but one person by God's side on that day...

And that is the person of Jesus Christ.

On that day, it won't matter how much you loved mama, it will only matter how much you loved your Messiah.

And if you obeyed his will for your life.

And that begins with your repentance and faith in  
Jesus alone to save you.

Let us pray.