

Gospel of Matthew

12:46-50

family



We are not told why Jesus' mother and brothers come to where Jesus was. It must have been an unspecified family matter. His brothers (we're not sure how many brothers he had because the gospels leave that detail out of the record) – and we also do not know if this was all of them or some of them. It could be two, four, or it could be six, but we just don't know. Four of the half-brothers of Jesus are named – James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Jude) [Mark 3:20,21; 6:3; John 7:3-5]. There may have been more. We also do not know how many sisters he had, but we had at least two (unnamed). The brothers eventually believed



What we *do* know from this is that Mary was not a perpetual virgin as a certain branch of the Christian church has taught. That contradicts the scriptures themselves! She was the mother of Joseph's children! But something is going on here, some family dynamic. They are trying to call a family meeting and they are including Jesus in it. Something tells me it is about Jesus Himself but there is no way of knowing for sure. Certainly Jesus knew what it was about, and He is obviously not interested in dealing with them! Family issues can be fraught with pettiness, jealousies, old grievances that go all the way back to childhood!

Certainly Mary had told her sons that Jesus had been conceived unnaturally/supernaturally. But if not Mary, then their father Joseph had told them at some point. After discovering that Mary was pregnant - and not by Him – He had had that startling encounter with an angel that had completely convinced Him that Mary's pregnancy had been divinely orchestrated – and had nothing to do with her being unfaithful to their as yet unconsummated marriage! But after Jesus was born then they had normal husband and wife intimacy because that IS how you have *that many* children!

So the story opens up with Jesus speaking to a crowd of people per usual when He is told that His mother and brothers are outside waiting to speak to Him. Jesus was giving a lecture to a crowd of people in some kind of a large room, because it says that Jesus' family was "*outside*" waiting to speak to Him. I guess "outside" could also mean that they were on the outside edges of the crowd, possibly in an *outdoor* setting. I think larger crowds tended to pack together, trying to get as close to the speaker as possible because, of course, there were no electronic sound amplification systems in those days! So, whether indoors or out, there would be no working one's way through a crowd in those days!



So what the family of Jesus was basically asking Him to do was to shut down His teaching to talk to them. The interesting thing is that it appears that Jesus ignored them!

He used the situation to make a point about family. The brothers of



Jesus may not have believed in Him at this point. They possibly even had some negative influence upon His mother, as strange as that may seem. The brothers, it appears come around in the end, but they struggled for a

while with the idea of Jesus being who he said He was! His hometown too – Mk. 6! Jesus did not fit within the messianic framework that the Jewish theologians had constructed for the messiah. So everyone was looking for one thing, and Jesus was not that thing. He was quite different! And even the family of Jesus had fallen into that mentality. He couldn't be the Messiah because He didn't fit! Jesus knew very well what the expectations were for the Messiah, and He purposefully, unapologetically, went *against* the grain of what everyone thought! Yet, He was well within the prophetic descriptions of the messiah provided in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament - and He was continually pointing this out to His disciples. But the human mind is strange in this way. Once we get a fixed notion or point of view in our mind, it is hard to shake it loose. It is a part of our truth grid, woven in, and very hard to get out, even when proven false. It almost always has to be violently ripped out! The tremendous crisis of the cross and the shock and awe of the resurrection would be those exceptional moments that would complete that mind-changing task!

So the brothers and His mother, Mary, came to talk with Jesus. And when they arrived, they send a message, passed from person to person, I suppose, up to the front of the crowd, until it is finally told to Jesus. And He either ignored them or He made them wait. One thing He did NOT do was shut down the meeting and go out to talk with them! Again, He uses the occasion to make a point to his audience. He says to the crowd that if they believe in Him they become His family! That means that even His genetic family must believe in Him to be His true family! This is an argument that will in time resonate with the disciples so that when they eventually become apostles, leaders of the newly minted church of Jesus Christ, they will come to understand that the gospel was not just for Israel but the family of God was coming out of the entire world!



[Romans 4:16,17 / 9:6-8]

If Israel was the genetic family of the Son of God, it was only through true **FAITH** that any one of them also became the *spiritual family* of God. Without **faith** they were just another fallen and cursed human being - genetic connection with the Son of God, or not! Their sins still separated them from a pure and holy Creator/God! Faith is what brought them into the spiritual family of God, and only faith! Spiritual family is what matters to God most. Not that genetic family doesn't matter – but it is of no lasting consequence to God as far as I can determine in the scriptures.



With that said, I think I probably need to clarify what faith actually is! *Reminds me of the Sunday school teacher that asked her class what they thought faith was. No one wanted to answer so she called on little Johnny. Johnny hesitated before answering.

“Teacher, faith is believing something you know ain’t true!”

Actually those words echo what a lot of people believe. But that is not true faith. That is a self-punishing brand of faith! It is a formula for getting involved, at a soul level, with absolute foolishness!

Faith is belief, but it is much more than that in this case. There is “*saving faith*”

Saving faith is belief and trust in the leadership of Jesus, but it is also a welcoming in, and an embracing of His purposes! It is an all-surpassing love of Christ and the things of Christ that drives us on! Jesus had an all-surpassing love, a purposeful love, that drove Him to the cross and kept Him there until pain, weakness, and finally death overwhelmed His mortal body! That’s how



He loved us! You see, the nature of love is that it obligates us. If someone you love were to, God forbid, fall into the water and disappear under the surface, your love for them obligates you to jump in after, to save them – even though in doing so you are putting your own life in danger! But you know you couldn’t live with yourself if you didn’t at least try with everything you have! So you ignore your instinct for self-preservation – one of our strongest instincts – and jump in and try to save them! When we love Him with a consuming love, we don’t have to die on a cross. We don’t have to die for our sins - He did that because He loved us and was trying to save us! BUT we must *carry* our cross! The cross we bear is that we must continually “crucify” the self – the desire to serve ourselves before serving Jesus! No one can follow Jesus without carrying the cross of self-denial – and that’s not my words but His [Luke 14:25-35]!

Jesus is calling for real faith, not superficial faith. He does not have need of those that are not serious about following Him. We must believe enough that it's okay that we are no longer our own #1 priority! Jesus has taken over that spot, and our faith speaks to us and tells us that this is a good thing, a necessary thing – something that we want to happen more than anything! When that is our mindset, the result is a life of faith!



But we don't follow Christ alone. We are meant to follow Him together. ***Together*** is God's design! That is why He instituted the church! Following Jesus is a team sport. It is not just God and me! It is God and me and you! You are an integral part of my walk with God! When we are living a life of faith ***together***, then we are drawn together by our mutual love of Christ! We are family in Christ, often more unified, often more at peace with each other than we are with our genetic family! Most importantly, we share a common purpose! We are pulling in the same direction toward a goal given us by Christ! Everything we do at church, ***everything*** in the church is to somehow contribute to meeting that goal – and His stated goal, the ultimate goal of church, is for us to reach our part of the world for Him, one person at a time!

[Galatians 2:20]



So at church we practice the “fruit of the Spirit” – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Even this has a purpose. *For instance, if you practice the fruit of the Spirit in your marriage, you will fall in love all over again - guaranteed! It’s true! If we practice the fruit of the Spirit in our church, guess what – it will be **easy** to love each other! If we love each other, we can work together! This is a volunteer organization. If we do not like each other, we do not have to participate, or even attend. So it is up to us to act well, especially under pressure, or especially when someone is NOT acting well. I know it is hard to believe, but even in the church, people are people, and not everyone practices the fruit of the Spirit all the time. That is when it is terribly important for others to practice the fruit to defuse the situation so it doesn’t get out of control. If you have two people and neither is practicing the fruit, you have a fight on your hands, a mini-church split. But if you happen to remember what the Lord Jesus instructed His followers, you realize that the forward progress of the purposes of God in your church are more important than you winning the dispute! You will work to resolve the situation rather than win the fight!

[Eph. 4:1-16]

- The key work of the Holy Spirit – Unity through the creation of peace. But it is not *all* Him
- “Make every effort” – it is an act of your will that is given strength by your core values. Your core values are His core values – Love me, Love people, win the world for me! Want a healthy church family? Be a contributing family member!
- Vs. 4 – the verse of “**ONE**”!
- Vs. 15,16 – “*we*”
- [Ph’p 2:1-5] – *One love,.. like-minded,.. one spirit,.. one purpose*
- [Col. 3:12-16] – “*...clothe yourselves...*”
- [1 Thess. 4:9,10] – “*brotherly love,.. more and more*”

