

New Relationships
Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Introduction

How would your life change if you could pick your family? If you could select who would be your brothers and sisters and choose who would be your relatives? Many of you would pass on the idea because you love your family just the way it is, but I know others would jump at that idea. You look at a family picture and see people you got "stuck" being related to, so you would think it wonderful to exchange them for other people you like better.

While I am not aware of anything in the Bible that explains how you can remove the blood ties to your relatives, we will be examining a passage this morning that explains how you can become related to people that are loving, kind, good, patient, gentle and joyful. You can become a brother or sister to people with the character traits you would like to have as brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. God has made a way for you to be able to choose your family, for if you are willing, then Jesus Christ can be your brother which would make you an adopted son or daughter of God.

Turn to Matthew 12:46.

A Family's Concern - Mt. 12:46-47; Mark 3:31-32; Luke 8:19-20

"While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, 'Behold, your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.'"

In verse 46 we find that Jesus was still busy talking to the multitudes of people that had gathered around Him inside a house. Notice that Jesus' mother and brothers were "outside." Luke 8:19 states that *"His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd."* It is understandable that there is a large crowd. Jesus had only recently returned to Capernaum with the twelve after proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God in the cities and villages of Galilee (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 3:20). Though it is unclear whether this is His house or another, when people learned that Jesus had returned, they gathered there and Jesus began to minister to them. As the news spread where Jesus was located, more people came. A demon-possessed man who was both blind and dumb was brought to Jesus and He healed him so that he could see and speak (Matthew 12:22). That prompted the people to begin wonder if Jesus was *"the Son of David,"* a title for the promised Messiah.

Jesus had become so busy with the multitudes that He and the disciples did not even have leisure to eat a meal. Jesus, full of compassion for these people, skipped eating in order to minister to them. Mark 3:21 records that when Jesus' family heard that He was not even taking a break to eat, *"they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, He has lost His senses."* Remember, Mary is a Jewish mother, so she is going to come with her other sons to protect Jesus from the crowds and make Him be more sensible. She will take charge and make sure Jesus eats right. She forgot that Jesus knew what He was doing and was keeping the priorities God the Father had set for Him.

While Mary and her sons are on their way, the Pharisees hear about what Jesus was doing and accuse Him of casting out demons by the Beelzebul the ruler of demons. Jesus confronts them on the issue pointing out their charge was illogical, inconsistent with their own practices, insurrectionary against God and inane. This was followed by a condemnation that there was no longer any hope of them being forgiven because they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Salvation only comes as a response to the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting a person of sin, righteousness and judgment so that they are brought to

the humility of repentance and then place their faith in God. Usually it is unknown when the Holy Spirit will no longer do this work in an individual and therefore leave them confirmed in their sinful rebellion against God. In the case of these Pharisees, they are blatant in their rejection of the truth and actually attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Jesus confirms them in their rebellion. They were now without recourse, and so they could not be forgiven.

More than likely, the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees only served to increase the size of the crowd. The scribes and Pharisees did not seem concerned by Jesus' condemnation of them. Instead, they calmly ask that Jesus perform a sign. The premise being that all the miracles He had already done had not proven His identity to their satisfaction. Jesus then used the opportunity to issue a strong warning to all those in the crowd that might agree with them.

The fruit of a tree determines whether it is good or bad. Jesus' fruits were good and the fruit of the Pharisees was evil. God would judge them by the very words they uttered. They had already been given plenty of signs, and the request for another was evil. They were in danger of descending into a worse condition than they were in before the outward reformations made at the preaching of repentance by John the Baptist. There would be a future sign given and their response to it would determine their eternal destiny. As Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster for three days and nights and then cast out onto land, so the Son of Man would be in the heart of the earth and then rise from the dead.

It is at this point that Jesus' mother and brothers arrive, but the crowd is so large that they cannot get through to Him. They arrive out of compassion and desire to protect Jesus, but it is also with some sense of unbelief. They thought Jesus had lost His senses and was making unwise choices in being so focused on ministering to the multitudes. Perhaps Mary was just acting motherly in wanting to make sure her son was taking care of himself, but she seems to have forgotten that Jesus is a grown man and also the Son of God and therefore quite capable of determining whether it was necessary for Him to eat or not and doing so if needed. John 7:5 makes it clear that Jesus' brothers did not believe that He was the Messiah until after His death, burial and resurrection.

Let me make a quick footnote here for those of you raised in Roman Catholicism and taught that Jesus did not have blood brothers and sisters. Roman Catholic doctrine has attempted to elevate Mary to a goddess-like stature and one of the ways it has tried to do so is claim that Jesus was her only child and that she remained a virgin all her life. The truth is that Mary and Joseph had many children who were half brothers and half sisters to Jesus. Matthew 13:55 even records the name of Jesus' half brothers, *"Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"*

I think it is safe to say that it was out of a concern for Jesus that His mother, Mary, and His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon and Judas, have come to see Him. In some manner they want to rescue Him from His current situation. Perhaps they wanted to persuade Him to leave and go to a place He could have more peace or even to come home with them where they could protect and take care of Him. But Jesus does not need rescuing, does He? Jesus uses this opportunity to teach an important truth. Jesus has a family related by blood, but He also has a greater family.

A Greater Family - Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 8:21

The news was given to Jesus that His mother and brothers were outside and wanted to see Him. Jesus' response is recorded in verse 48, *"But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold, My mother and My brothers!'"*

By asking and answering this question Jesus demonstrates that spiritual ties are more important than blood ties. Jesus was not renouncing His physical family in any way. He loved them much more than they loved Him as proven even on the cross when He carried out His responsibility to His mother as the

oldest son in providing for her by directing the Apostle John to care for Mary (John 19:26,27). It is through Jesus' continual love that we find that His half brothers eventually come to believe in Him as their Lord and Savior. We find Mary, His mother, and His brothers in Acts 1:14 as part of the assembly in the Upper Room after His ascension to Heaven devoting themselves to prayer while they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus loves His family and found the blood ties to be important, but here He teaches that a blood related family is not nearly as important as a spiritually related family. Eternity in heaven is not gained because of blood ties. If you think you will make it to heaven because some relative of yours is a fine Christian, then think again. The Jewish leaders of that time thought they merited heaven simply because they were blood descendants of Abraham. They were wrong. Here we find that even Jesus' blood relatives are not part of His spiritual family until they come to Him personally and place their faith and trust in Him as the Messiah.

In this passage we find an invitation to everyone to become part of Jesus' family, but there is a qualification that must be met to become His spiritual relative.

The Qualification - Matthew 12:49-50; Mark 3:35; Luke 9:21

Notice first that Jesus did not refer to the whole crowd in Matthew 12:49 as *"His mother and His brothers,"* but only to the disciples. Jesus elaborates on this in verse 50 saying, *"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

The call to salvation is universal as expressed here as *"whoever does."* Salvation is not limited by blood line, sex or social position. The invitation is made to all, but only a few will meet the invitation's requirements and be Jesus' *"brother and sister and mother."*

What are those requirements? Jesus said it is *"whoever does the will of My Father who is in Heaven."* The parallel passage in Luke 8:21 expresses this as, *"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the Word of God and do it."* That causes some people a great pause because it sounds like salvation by works instead of salvation by God's grace, and Ephesians 2:1-10 makes it very clear that salvation only comes by God's grace through faith and not by works. Isaiah 64:6 states our righteous deeds are as filthy rags before our Holy God. You do not and cannot earn your way to heaven. You cannot make yourself meritorious enough to become Jesus' spiritual relative.

What then does Jesus mean? What does it mean to do the will of God? Turn to John 6:28-29 where we find Jesus being questioned by the multitude about what they should do to *"work the works of God"* and gain eternal life. *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.'"* Faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah sent from God is the will of God and is part of your response to the working of the Holy Spirit on your soul in which you do the will and work of God. To believe in Jesus requires you to recognize and repent from your sin and turn your faith to Him alone for salvation from your sin. Is that a *"work"*? Yes, in the sense that you did something by responding to the working of the Holy Spirit in your life. But no, it is not a work in any sense that you earned anything. All you have done is obeyed God's command. Obedience to God's commands is what should be expected and not the basis of a reward.

Sometimes the *"free"* nature of salvation can be emphasized so much that there is a failure to also mention that there are qualifications that God places on those who will receive His gift of eternal life. There are pastors and evangelists who have become so paranoid of *"works"* in relation to salvation that they have forgotten that God does give commands and make demands upon those who will partake of eternal life. Some may think that heretical, but it is the clear teaching of the Scriptures. I find it strange that those who emphasize grace to such an extreme that salvation is reduced to something that requires no change of life lest there be some *"work"* involved are often the same people who will invariably point to some physical action to find assurance that a person is saved. This would include such things as walking the aisle or raising their hand at an evangelistic meeting, praying the sinners' prayer, asking Jesus into their heart or being baptized.

I want to be very clear on this point. Salvation is God's gift and He grants it to whom He desires according to whatever conditions He wants to set up. That God places conditions upon those who will accept His offer of eternal life in no way changes that gift from being one of grace to one of works. The fact that He grants salvation demonstrates it is a gift of His grace and mercy for we deserve eternal punishment, not eternal life with Him. The fact that we cannot meet God's conditions without His empowering us to do so demonstrates that it is not something received based on our work for we cannot earn it. All we can do is respond. Jesus says that those who are in His spiritual family are those who "*do the will of God,*" those who "*hear the Word of God and obey it.*" I have already pointed out from John 6:29 that the work of God is to "*believe in [Jesus] whom God has sent.*" What are some of the other marks of those that are Jesus' brothers or sisters?

The New Testament has many commands that are stated to be God's will for us. Quite a few are in the book of Matthew alone. Jesus' ministry began with Him preaching, "*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matthew 4:17). Jesus explained the nature of true righteousness in Sermon on the Mount and described the character traits of those who are part of God's kingdom in the Beatitudes which include the declarations: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven,*" "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God,*" "*Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" In Matthew 10:32 Jesus said, "*Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven,*" and in the verses that followed Jesus said that those who deny Him will be denied by Him. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus gives the invitation, "*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*"²⁹ "*Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.*"³⁰ "*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*" In Matthew 18:1-4 Jesus explains that in order to enter His kingdom you must come be converted and become humble like a little child. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:4-5 in Matthew 22:37-38 in explaining that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord God with all your heart, soul and mind.

Other New Testament books add to this. "*Repent and be baptized*" in Acts 2:38; "*For there is not other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved*" in Acts 4:12, and "*Believe in the Lord Jesus*" in Acts 16:31. We are told in Romans 12:1-2 that we are to present our bodies as living and holy sacrifices to the Lord and not be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds. Romans 12, 1 Cor. 12 and Ephesians 4 all explain we are to use our spiritual gifts for the glory of God and building up the body of Christ. Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit that should be displayed in our lives while 1 Corinthians 13 describes key aspects of the nature of love that marks true spirituality. 2 Corinthians 6 calls us to be separated from the world in accordance with our changed nature and purpose in life. Philippians 2 commands us to have the same attitude of humility that Jesus had in leaving heaven to become a man and die for our sins. In Colossians 3 we Christians are told to set their minds on things above, not on the things that are on earth by considering our bodies as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed and putting aside all anger, wrath, malice, slander and abusive speech from our mouths. We are instead to speak the truth in love, saying what is good for building up a person in their walk with Christ (Eph. 4). We are told in Hebrews 4 that we are given the privilege of approaching God's throne of grace and so we should pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5). Hebrews 12:1-2 commands us to "*lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith . . .*"

All these things are the stated will of God, and Jesus said that the person who does such things would be His brothers and sisters. Perhaps you might object at this saying, "*Wait a minute! I can't do all that. That would require me to be a different person than who I am.*" You would be exactly right. This would require you to be a different person for it does require a complete change of lifestyle from one bent toward sin and selfishness to one of holiness centered in God's will.

Someone might object, “*But I thought God accepted me just the way I am now.*” No, God does not accept you the way you are now if that is sinful. Certainly God loves you despite your sinfulness, for that was proven at Calvary when Jesus died for you while you were still a sinner (Romans 5:8). But God’s love also requires repentance and obedience to Him. The idea that love accepts a person in their sinfulness without any requirement of repentance and pursuit of holiness is a lie from the pit of Hell.

Biblical Christians are frequently accused of being hateful because we do not accept, welcome and celebrate the sinful lifestyles that have become so common in our society such as fornication, open marriages, homosexuality and other sexual perversions. The open persecution of Christians in America because of this is getting worse as evidenced by the backlash against the recent Religious Freedoms Restoration Bills in both Indiana and Arkansas. I not only reject those accusations as false, but I contend that it is only Biblical Christians that truly love those involved in those sinful activities. Why? Because as true Christians we follow our Lord’s desire to see them repent and live according to God’s will. You would have to hate a person to leave them in such depraved lifestyles with all the diseases, shortened lives and psychological damage they cause in this life and condemnation to eternal Hell in the next.

While it is understandable that sinners love their sin and want to freely practice their sin and be accepted by society, it is not understandable that people who profess to be Christians accept such perversions and do not call sinners to repentance. I do not believe it is because they are ignorant of the Scriptures but rather that they have chosen to ignore the Scriptures as irrelevant for they no longer believe the Bible is the inspired word of God. But the Scriptures are clear with strong warnings to those who continue in sin without repentance. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 states, ⁹ *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,* ¹⁰ *nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Revelation 21:8 adds that such people will be cast into the “lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”*

Praise God that He truly loves and has provided a way for man to be radically changed. It is by His grace that 1 Corinthians 6:11 follows the verses listing so many sinful lifestyles that result in condemnation saying, *“Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”*

It is by God’s grace that believers are radically changed in heart and action. God does not save us because we change, but He saves us so that we will change (Ephesians 1:4; 2:10). It is the Holy Spirit that does all the work that brings us to the conviction of sin so that we will repent (John 16:8) and makes us spiritually alive so that we can believe (Ephesians 2:5-8) and respond to the Father drawing us to Christ (John 6:44). From the human view point, we meet God’s conditions of salvation by response to the Holy Spirit’s work in repentance, belief and obedience to God’s will. That is what regeneration is all about, and that is what Jesus is talking about here. It results in a radical change of relationship in which our blood relationships are no longer the strongest ties, but instead our spiritual relationships as part of God’s family. We are adopted into God’s family and made brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

A Blessed Adoption

Have you considered the blessing of being adopted into God's family? Look at Ephesians 1:3-6, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."* Before this Earth was even created, God chose us and predestined us to be adopted into His family as His sons through Jesus Christ, and all of it because of His goodness, kindness, mercy and grace. None of it was because any of us in any way deserved or merited such favor. That is supreme love.

Romans 8:12-17 explains more blessings of being adopted. *"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him."*

Notice again the emphasis that the true adopted children of God are those that are led by the Holy Spirit instead of yielding themselves to living according to the flesh. But note as well the wonderful truth that as adopted children of God we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. I love the way the Apostle John expresses his joy over this fact in 1 John 3:1, *"See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are!"*

What is our inheritance as joint heirs with Jesus Christ? Salvation (Hebrews 1:14); Eternal life (Matthew 19:29); an interest in the kingdom of God (Matthew 25:34); an imperishable body (1 Corinthians 15:50-54); the promises of God (Hebrews 6:12); God's blessing (1 Peter 3:9), and a place in heaven where God Himself will comfort us and provide for us (Revelation 21:7).

What wonderful promises! What a glorious adoption to be a child of God, a brother or sister of the Lord Jesus Christ! But how was this adoption brought about? As we have already seen in so many of the Scriptures read this morning, it comes through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Have you been redeemed from your bondage to sin by faith in person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ who shed His blood as the payment for your sin? If so, then rejoice! You are an adopted child of God, a joint heir with Jesus. If not, then today is the day of salvation. Seek the Lord while He may be found. Confess your sin to God, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and ask Him to forgive you. Tell Him you do not want to control your life anymore and ask Him to send the Holy Spirit to change your heart and lead you. God will do so, for He is always true to His promises.

Sermon Notes: *New Relationships*
Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Introduction

You can't pick your family, but you can become related to people who are _____

A Family's Concern - Matthew 12:46-47; Mark 3:31-32; Luke 8:19-20

Jesus' mother and brothers are _____ and can't get to Him because of the crowd

Jesus was so busy He was skipping _____ - His family came to intervene (Mark 3:20-21)

The conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees escalates when they _____ the Holy Spirit

Jesus condemns the Pharisees and warns the crowd about the _____ of their request for another sign

Jesus' mother and brothers may have had good motives, but it did not _____ Him as the Son of God

Jesus had at least _____ half-brothers and _____ half-sisters - children of Joseph & Mary (Matthew 13:55)

Jesus does not need rescuing, but He takes the opportunity to teach something about _____ family

A Greater Family - Matthew 12:48-50; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 8:21

Jesus loves His family as demonstrated by His _____ for them over the years

Blood ties are important, but not as important as a _____ related family

The Qualification - Matthew 12:49-50; Mark 3:35; Luke 9:21

Jesus specifically refers to His disciples in vs. 49, but extends an _____ to all in vs. 50

Salvation is offered to _____ regardless of blood line, sex or social position, but _____ will meet its requirements

The offer is to *whoever* _____ *the will of My Father who is in Heaven - who hear the Word of God and do it*

Salvation comes only by God's _____ through faith and not of works (Ephesians 2:8-9, Isaiah 64:6)

John 6:28-29 - *This is the _____ of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.*

To believe in Jesus _____ you to recognize & repent from your sin and turn your faith to Him alone

Emphasis on the "free" nature of salvation may not _____ God's commands and demands for believers

Salvation is God's gift to grant to whomever He desires according to whatever _____ He sets

_____ has many commands and statements which reveal God's will to us

The other New Testament books have many commands and statements which reveal _____ to us

The natural man will _____ or obey God's will - it is foolishness to him (1 Cor. 2:14)

God loves you though a sinner (Rom. 5:8), and that love compels Him to _____ you to repent and obey

Biblical Christians are accused of being hateful for not accepting people in their _____ lifestyles

Christians must follow God's will, and it is _____ to not call people to repentance and leave them in sin

The Scriptures are clear that sin _____ in death and eternal damnation (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Rev. 21:8)

God's grace enables man to radically _____ in nature and follow Christ (1 Cor. 6:11)

The Holy Spirit convicts & _____ the spirit so that you can repent, believe and obey God's call

A Blessed Adoption

Ephesians 1:3-6 - God saves because of His own _____ character and not any merit in man

Romans 8:12-17 - God's children are led by His _____ instead of yielding to their flesh

We inherit _____, eternal life, an interest in the kingdom of God, an imperishable body, God's promises and blessings, a place in heaven where God will comfort and provide for us.

Adoption into God's family comes through _____ by Jesus Christ - do you believe in Him to obey?

If you are not yet in God's family, _____ Him now, confess your sins, and ask Him to change your heart

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word "grace" is said. Talk with your parents about how God's grace enables you to believe and obey Jesus.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What kind of people would you choose to be in your family if you could? Why was there such a large crowd at the house where Jesus was in Capernaum? Describe how busy was Jesus because of the crowd. Why did this cause Jesus' mom and brothers to come to Capernaum? What miracles did Jesus perform there? What was the reaction of the Pharisees to this and people's reaction to it? What was Jesus response the Pharisees? Why did they ask for a sign? What was Jesus' response to their request? Why couldn't Jesus' mother and brothers get inside? What is the importance of a blood-related family? Did Jesus love His family? Explain. Why is a spiritually related family more important? What qualification does Jesus set out for those that want to become His relative? What does it mean to do the will of God? Does doing the will of God constitute work by which you can earn your salvation? Why or why not? Does salvation from sin require obedience to God? Why or why not? List some of the commands and statement in the New Testament that reveal God's will for you. Does love accept (approve) of someone living sinfully? Why or why not? How does godly love respond to those living sinfully? Why? What do the Scriptures teach about what will happen to those that continue to live in sin? How does God's grace bring a person to salvation? What is the Holy Spirit's work and man's response in each step to salvation? According to Ephesians 1:3-6 - when did God choose? What was the purpose of His choice? What does this reveal about God and salvation? According to Romans 8:12-17 - what are the differences between someone who is a child of God and someone who is not? What are some of the things the believer inherits as a child of God? How does a person get adopted into God's family? Are you adopted into God's family? If not, what needs to change?

Your Own Notes: _____
