

Pastor Casey Wilkerson

August 29, 2021

Questions Jesus Asked, Part Twelve

Mark 3:31-35

Read God's Word, know God's Will.

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It is so great to be here, back at church. If you have started coming this summer, you may have not met me, I'm the children's pastor. And I've been on a sabbatical this summer. Part of my sabbatical was a road trip with my family. We drove to the east coast so we could see the NYC firework show on July 4. We met with friends and family, I got to connect with pastors and read. I could talk a lot about my trip but we don't have all day. It really was incredible though, and I would be happy to tell you more about it, if you want to talk later. I got to experience so many beautiful things with my family. We drove 9600 miles over 6 weeks...35 states. You learn a lot about your family when you're in a car that long. Today, we are going to learn about Jesus and his family from Mark 3. Will you stand for the reading of Mark 3:31-35 as we look at the question Jesus asked? Jesus was in a house teaching and here is what happened next:

Mark 3:31-35...Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

If Jesus was in my family, and he didn't come when he was called, he'd be hearing his middle name called after that. When my parents called me, it was my job to see how fast I could get there. As I studied this question Jesus asked, at first glance, it looks like dishonor. Jesus knows better than that though. He never sinned and he knows we are to honor our father and mother. So I dug a little deeper into this passage to see why Jesus would respond to his family in this way. Backing up to verse 20 in Mark 3, we realize that this was not the first time his family was trying to get his attention while Jesus was teaching others.

Mark 3:20...Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

So Jesus' family is concerned for him. Maybe he's working too hard, he's always teaching, he's never home to rest. Sometimes he doesn't have time to eat. So they go looking for Jesus to take charge of him, or to take custody of or control of. We see here that Jesus' biological family didn't always understand him. His family thought he was crazy sometimes, so if you have some crazy in your family, just know that Jesus did too. If you think your family has no crazy, it probably means you might be the crazy one.

Jesus did honor Mary and care for her though. One way he honored his mother was while in pain right before his death.

John 19:26...When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

So Jesus did care for and honor Mary, let's not miss that. But the point of his question (who is my mother and brothers?) is to show that He was focused and doing what our heavenly father had brought Him to do. He answers his question with an answer that is also an invitation to us all.

Mark 3:35...Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

It should encourage us to know that God's family is open to anyone. Church is open to anyone, the love of Jesus, eternal life, His death was for everyone. Jesus invites us to be part of His family. If we do God's will, we are brothers and sisters, and aunts and uncles, and grandparents in God's family. We as a church, if we commit to doing God's will, are family. I met a guy in Kentucky this summer, his family was also on a road trip. He had some strict rules about who was considered family. For instance, if your parents divorce and remarry, their new spouse is not called a grandparent. His wife's mom remarried, and their kids called the man by his name, not grandpa. They had been married longer than the kids were alive, but not called grandpa. I felt bad for his children. I know the blessing that comes from having multiple role models to look up to even if they aren't biological family. Growing up, my neighbors, Grandpa and Grandma Jack let me help them in the garden during the summer. My Uncle Victor married Julie when I was a kid, and her parents became known as Grandpa and Grandma Fischer. I met a lady this summer from a Nazarene church in Boston and we called her Grandma Shelia. Our church is a family. Our kids in church are not just learning about Jesus on Sundays, but they are learning that they have people who care about them. Adults and teens they can look up to. People who pray for them. When you see church as family, you really miss it when you're gone. I know we did this summer. Jesus invites us all to join his family. He misses us when we're busy.

Mark 3:35...Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

So whether you come from a good Christian family, or everyone is against Jesus and the church, or when you think about family, you get sad because you don't have good memories of the family you had. Whatever your family situation, we can all be part of a family, a good family, God's family.

If all we have to do is God's will in order to be part of God's family, then we better know where to start; if we read God's Word, we will know God's will.

Read God's Word, know God's Will.

So let's do it now:

Romans 12:1-2...Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

How are we going to know God's will? His good, pleasing, and perfect will? Let's start by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice, let me explain. In the Old Testament, they worshiped God by sacrificing an animal. It cost money for the animal, or if they raised the animal it still cost time and energy caring for it. Sacrificing an animal as an act of worship, would cost you something. Some money, food, maybe a few hours to head down to the temple. Following Jesus costs us too. Being a living sacrifice is an even greater cost because it effects our entire lives and how we live every day. Sacrificing an animal once a week, or giving God 1 ½ hours on a Sunday isn't being a living sacrifice, and it isn't costing us much. Seahawks aren't even on. It will be hard to not conform to the sin of this world when we give the world more time in our day than we give God. You can't transform your body by dieting once a week, or exercising once a week. You can't transform your mind by going to school once a week. If we are going to spiritually transform our lives and renew our minds so that we will know God's will, it'll take more than once a week. Think of the things that most often get the attention of your mind. The pandemic, social media, vaccines, Afghanistan, finances, politics, the Mariners... just me on that one? Our minds are pulled in so many directions each day, even in one hour. Even since I've been up here, I bet your mind has been in a couple places already. It's ok, my feelings aren't hurt. My mind does it too. Even Jesus, knew that distractions are everywhere, which is why we need to listen to his words all the more in Luke 9:23.

Luke 9:23...Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.

Daily denying ourselves what we want or deserve and choosing to follow Jesus first is really hard to do. If it was easy, everyone would do it. It should encourage us to know we are not the only ones learning to follow Jesus. We need each other, our church, our family, our brothers and sisters in Christ. If we daily deny ourselves and allow God to renew our minds, that will lead to understanding God's will. We'll start seeing our circumstances through His eyes, we'll start seeing people through His eyes. We'll realize some of the things we care about or worry about do not really matter. Not in the scope of all eternity. We'll see what God desires most. Here is what Jesus said about God's will:

John 6:40...For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life.

Jesus came to earth to save us from the sin in our lives. He came to heal the broken world we live in. God wants to save everyone. The exciting thing is He wants to use us, his followers, his family, as well. He wants to make saving the world a family event. One of our goals as a church is to *introduce people to Jesus*. For years and for all ages, it happens every Sunday. Baby dedications, baptism, kid's church, adult church, all of them help our church introduce people to Jesus on Sundays. Introducing people to Jesus can't just be something we do on Sunday though. Not if we are going to be a living

sacrifice. Not if we are going to deny ourselves and put Jesus first, each day. Paul told the Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:1...Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children.

Imitate God in everything you do because we are His children.

There's a challenge for us. When is it easy for you to imitate God? Around Godly friends or family? At church? When it is difficult to imitate God? At work? In some of our conversations? When driving? Online? If we want to be a living sacrifice, then we are to be living reminder to all others of God's grace and love in our lives. The grace God extends to us, He freely gives to others too, all others. Because we are all his dear children. God's will is for all who see Jesus to believe. Imitating God means people see Jesus in us. And because they see Jesus in us, they will believe. So what do people see in you? Do they see Jesus? His brother or sister? People see lots of things in us, some good and some bad. What do they see first? What do they see most? I know what my prayer is today, for every day, will you join me.

Prayer

Mark 3:35...Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

We are all invited by God to be part of His family. Go imitate Jesus. Go let other's see Jesus in you, see what happens. Read God's Word, know God's Will.