

Mark Ch3v31-35 - Members Of The Family

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] If you've got your Bibles there, would you please turn to Mark's Gospel, Chapter 3.! We're going to be reading that in just a sec.

Thank you.

Thank you.

We've been looking at members of the kingdom. Last week we looked at members of the family. Last week members of the body and today we're looking at members of the family.

And just as a reminder that as a follow-up, we meet on Wednesday evening across the road in the Lion's Centre where we get to follow up on what we've been looking at on the morning time.

[1 : 29] So we're going to have a specific focus on Wednesday on baptism and the Lord's Supper and how they are connected and how they relate to church life.

So please come along and a great opportunity to discuss in small group and ask your questions together. Father, we're going to pray first and then look at God's Word.

Father, thank you for your good gifts to us.

Thank you for your word and thank you for your spirit. And we pray that you would speak to us afresh, helping us to see what it means to be members of the family.

In Jesus' name. Amen. A couple of questions to start with. Did you come here this morning with family?

[2 : 37] Did you come here with family?

Or are you coming here to meet with family? Or are you here alone? Or are you gathering with brothers and sisters?

You see, how we answer those questions will tell us a lot about how we understand church and how we relate to church.

You see, the Bible uses many different word pictures to describe the church. So the church is like a kingdom and Jesus is our King who rules over us.

We saw last week that the church is like a body and Jesus is our head who is the source of all true life. The church is like a bride and Jesus is our husband who in love gives his life for us.

[3 : 52] But there's one picture, there's one description that is deeper and richer than all the rest. And it gets to the very heart of what it means to be church.

And it's simply this. The church is a family. The church is a family. The Bible doesn't say the church is like a family.

It's like a kingdom, like a body, like a bride. But the Bible says we are a family. Consider with me what Jesus said about the church and family.

And get ready for a surprise. Look at Mark chapter 3 verse 31. Mark chapter 3 verse 31.

Jesus had been in a discussion with some of the religious leaders and his own biological family arrive. Let's pick it up in verse 31.

[5 : 04] Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call for Jesus.

A crowd was sitting around Jesus 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 the circle around him and he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

Isn't that surprising? Jesus redefines our understanding of family. He shows us that our true family are those who do the will of God.

That is, those who are of the faith. Jesus. Or have a look at Mark chapter 10. And verse 29.

[6 : 16] Mark chapter 10 verse 29. Here, Jesus has been talking about what it means to follow Jesus. The cost. So sometimes when we follow him, it means that people will go against us.

So pick it up in, sorry, we'll pick it up in verse 28. Then Peter spoke up and said to Jesus and the others, We have left everything to follow you.

Truly I tell you, Jesus replied, No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, that is all their resources for me and the gospel, will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age.

Homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, along with persecution and in the age to come, eternal life.

Did you see that? If we follow Jesus, it may mean that our family will fall out with us, but we gain a hundred times more in terms of family.

[7 : 47] You see, Jesus is making it crystal clear. It's not biology that connects us, but our relationship and commitment to Jesus. So to go back to those questions we asked at the very beginning, if we are Christians, we have come primarily to meet with family.

If we are followers of Jesus, we are gathering with our brothers and sisters. Now that doesn't mean to say that our biological families are not important and that we should dismiss them.

They are vitally important. And the Bible has a lot to say about our families. Parents, if you are a parent here today, you are to nurture and care for your children, to teach them God's word and to remind them of what the Bible says.

And children, if you are a child, you are to obey your parents, to honour them. In fact, if we don't care for our families, if we don't look after our families, it's a sure sign of unbelief.

Look at the screen here, this verse from 1 Timothy. Anyone who does not provide for their relatives and especially for their own household or their own family has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

[9 : 30] You see, our biological family responsibilities and our duties and care for one another are not to be in competition with the church family. Rather, our biological families are there to point us towards our true family, our ultimate family, the church.

One writer put it like this. This changes everything about what it means to be in a family.

For those with healthy, close families, it lifts their eyes to an even greater reality. For those whose families are dysfunctional or are lonely, abandoned, orphaned or divorced, it is a warm invitation into a real family.

You see, our biological families, yes, they are a gift from God, but they are not an end in themselves. They are to point us to our true and greater reality, our real family.

So how do you and I, how do we get to enjoy this greater reality? How do we experience this true family?

[11 : 03] Well, turn with me, please, to Hebrews chapter 2. Hebrews chapter 2.

Haven't got a page number. 1,202. 1,202.

Hebrews chapter 2. And we're going to be looking at verse 10, just a few verses. But in this chapter, we see God's plan and God's design for humanity.

What God longs for, what he's working towards. And there's three things that I want us to notice and to pay attention to the language that is used.

The first thing to notice is that God is our Father and we are his sons and daughters.

[12 : 10] God is our Father and we are his sons and daughters. God's plan, verse 10, is to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

that he would have many sons and daughters in his kingdom. Well, how does God do that? Well, God sends his own son, Jesus, to be the one who brings many sons and daughters to the Father.

Jesus is our pioneer. That's the phrase to focus in on on verse 10. Halfway through, it talks about Jesus being the pioneer of their salvation.

Now, a pioneer is someone who goes where no one has gone before. They cut their way through so that others can follow.

Well, Jesus is described here as the pioneer of our salvation. He represents us. Jesus goes before us and dies the death that we deserve for our sin.

[13 : 27] Jesus goes before us and lives the perfect life that we could never live. Jesus paves the way. He cuts a path for the sons and daughters to be able to come to the Father.

You could think of it like this as we imagine a huge big forest and in the centre of the forest is the king in his castle.

But surrounding it is this thick forest unpenetrable no way through. But one is able to who cuts a path through that jungle to the castle to the king to bring the lost sons and daughters back to their king.

Well, that in a sense is what Jesus is doing. He's cutting through. He's paving the way for sons and daughters to get to their father king.

So how do I know if I am a child of the king? How do I know I am a son or daughter? Well, it's the sons and daughters who follow Jesus.

[14 : 48] So if you are following Jesus today, if you are trusting in him, you are a son or a daughter of the Father.

And as we walk with Jesus, we have the awesome privilege of calling God our Father. Jesus cuts a path so that he may bring many sons and daughters to glory.

God is our Father and we can be his sons and daughters. But there's a second picture and that is Jesus is our brother and we are his brothers and sisters.

Because God is our Father and we are sons and daughters. Look at the end of verse 11. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

You see, if you are a son or a daughter of the Father, Jesus is your brother. Jesus delights over us.

[16 : 12] He's not ashamed of you, it says in verse 11. No matter what we've said or done or no matter how many times we turn, he never is ashamed of you.

He loves you deeply. Jesus is your brother. In fact, Jesus praises the Father for the new brothers and sisters he has received.

Look at verse 12. He says, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters. I will tell your sons and daughters, I will tell them that we are of the same family, we have the same Father.

I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters in the assembly. I will sing your praises. It's like a child who's been told they're going to have a new brother or sister in their family.

Well, they can't help but tell everybody, I'm going to have a brother or I'm going to have a sister. They delight in sharing that.

[17 : 28] So Jesus in the same way longs to delight over us. He longs to tell us and reassure us that God is our father and Jesus is our brother.

He is the true brother who gives his life for us so that we might enjoy and experience life in his family.

Look at how it's put at the beginning of verse 11. Both the one who makes people holy, that's Jesus, he's the maker of people to make them holy, to put them in a right relationship with God, and those who are made holy are of the same family.

Isn't that wonderful? God is our father, Jesus is our brother. And the third picture that we'll see is that the spirit is our bond.

That is the church is now our family. You see because God is our father and Jesus is our brother we are now brothers and sisters of each other.

[18 : 48] That's the work of the Holy Spirit. uniting us and bringing us together. Paul puts it like this in Romans 8. Is that right? No.

I'll just read it. The spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

It's the spirit who unites and brings us together. So now look at how the author of Hebrews now writes to this local church. Look at the language that he uses.

Because we're of the same family, God is our father, Jesus is our brother. Look at chapter 3 verse 1. Therefore, holy brothers and sisters who share in the heavenly calling, those who are sons and daughters of the Father, fix your thoughts on Jesus.

look at verse 12, chapter 3 verse 12. This is what we're to do together. See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God, but encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

[20 : 16] or have a look at chapter 10, verse 19. This is the bond of the Spirit uniting us together.

Chapter 10, verse 19, therefore, brothers and sisters, and he goes on, because of what Jesus has done for us, verse 23, let us together as brothers and sisters, hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful, and let us, the brothers and sisters, consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging the brothers and sisters and all the more as you see the day approaching.

Or chapter 13, verse 1. Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters.

You see, the Spirit of God unites the children of God to be the family of God. The Spirit of God unites the children of God to be the family of God, and it radically changes how we now view each other and how we see each other.

The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, who is a young pastor, helps him see how he should view his congregation, how he should think about people in the life of the church, and I think it applies to us as well.

[22 : 15] You can follow it on the screen. Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.

So if there's an older man here, somebody older than what you are, you are to treat him as your father. brother. If you're a young man, treat younger men as brothers.

And the older women, treat them as your mothers. And the younger women, treat them as sisters with absolute purity.

You see, it changes the whole dynamic, doesn't it? So whatever our experience as a family, if it's been a healthy family, it points to a greater family.

If it's been painful and a hard experience, it points beyond that to a better family, a family where we are united together by the Spirit to be the family of God, where we are joined together to encourage one another to keep on in the faith, to keep following Jesus.

[23 : 35] Jesus. Well, you may say, well, that sounds great, but you know what?

That hasn't been my experience. You see, some of you may feel hurt by the church. Maybe someone was critical and spoke harshly to you.

Maybe you experienced rejection or maybe being ostracized or being left out and you're screaming inside saying, well, I don't trust the church.

Well, I want to acknowledge that for some that might be the case. But before turning our back on the church, I want us all to think about our expectations of the church family.

First, family life is messy. Family life is messy. We often say, if you're looking for the perfect church, you won't find it here.

[24 : 48] And if you think you're perfect, don't bother coming along because you'll be very disappointed. You see, none of us is perfect. We all fail and we all fall.

We've all said things. I know I've said things and done things sort of upset people. When we do our marriage preparation classes, one of the questions I love to ask is, to the two who are sitting there, what happens when two lovers come together in marriage?

Of course, they always say, love, deeper love, greater love. Well, the answer, of course, is conflict and division.

Why? Because we are lovers of self. And when you bring two lovers of self coming together, well, you get conflict and division.

And that's what can happen in the life of the church. We're a bunch of sinners coming together. Yes, we have been saved. Yes, God is our father.

[25 : 55] Yes, we're brothers and sisters, but just as we do in our own biological family, say and do things that hurt, so within the church family, there's a whole bunch of people coming together, and we can get it wrong.

Rather than serve others, we can love self. That's why we have all these encouragements in the Bible that we read in Hebrews. Love each other.

Forgive one another. Carry each other's burdens. Be patient with one another. Spur one another on to love and good deeds. Let's not give up meeting together.

Well, if the church was perfect, we would never have these commands or correctives. But it's because we get it wrong that we're reminded of who we are to be.

So can I encourage us all to adjust your expectation and bring it down some notches because family life is messy and we're all broken.

[27 : 05] So having adjusted down, I want us now to ratchet up and have a great expectation because not only are we messy, family life is graceful.

you see, the church is a family where broken and messy people like us find grace. We are people who walk together back to the cross.

Here we remember our true brother Jesus Christ who gave his life for us so that we could be sons and daughters of the father and together we lean in on the spirit strength and power to live as we should.

James puts it like this. This is a great thing we can do for each other if we drift or fall away.

My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this, whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

[28 : 19] You see, when conflict happens, when fallout happens, when we say and do the wrong thing, we don't pull away from each other, we come together and go to the cross and we receive the grace and mercy that we need.

Together we're committed as brothers and sisters to bring each other back to God. Now, the way we do this as a church is through a church covenant.

It's a commitment to one another. Just as God is committed to us and never turns away from us, so we as a church strive to be gracious to one another, to not give up on each other, but to pursue life with each other.

A covenant may be a new word to you, but it's simply a promise between two parties into a committed relationship. So think of a marriage.

A man and a woman come together to make promises, to be loyal to one another, to love each other. They give rings, and here's me looking for my ring now, and I haven't got my ring.

[29 : 43] Don't worry, our marriage is good, just don't have it on. So there we have it. Yes, I'm totally lost now, aren't I?

So it is for the local, oh yeah, thanks. So here we have the local church. We're committing to one another, and our covenant, our church covenant that we have recognizes it, that as believers coming together, we submit to one another, and support each other.

So I want us to go through it. You might have it on your notes if you got this sheet this morning. If not, you can see it on the screen. Yes, we are a family who are broken and messy, but we are a family who are graceful, and here's how we show that grace to one another by committing to each other.

You can follow along on the screen. Recognizing our own unworthiness and inability. Isn't that great?

Our own unworthiness and inability. We're a mess, we're broken. So we come in total dependence upon God. We now covenant to give ourselves first to God, and then to this local church.

[31 : 12] And here's the commitment. First, that we will endeavor to walk in holiness and brotherly love, being concerned to honor God in our lives, and encourage one another to love and good works, and to pray for one another, and to bear each other's burdens.

Two, that we will at all times be loyal to each other, being patient with one another's weaknesses and failings, seeking to maintain unity and avoid all causes of division.

Three, that we will endeavor to meet together on the Lord's Day and at all the other meetings of the church, as we have opportunity, encouraging one another by our attendance.

And then fourth, to pray for and encourage the officers, the elders, and the deacons of the church in their responsibilities or in their discharge of their duty.

Do you see this covenant, this member, membership, committing to one another to be faithful and loyal?

[32 : 46] It's a commitment to be graceful. So yes, we bring our expectations down, we are messy and broken, but we also raise the expectations up to be a graceful family.

The church family is where sons and daughters come to the Father together to receive his grace. And the church family is where brothers and sisters of Jesus come to give grace.

And the church family is where we depend on the Spirit's help to be graceful to one another in our words and in our deeds. The church family is not just an idea, a picture in our minds or something in the Bible to be read.

It is something to be lived out and worked out. that's why we've been doing these series together and I want to encourage us all that if you are not yet a member to consider what it is to be a son and daughter of the Father, a brother and sister of Jesus, a brother and sister of one another.

the church is family. Let's just take a moment in the quietness before I pray to think about what our response is to what we've heard this morning.

[34 : 25] and Thank you.

Let's pray. Our Father God, thank you.

Thank you for sending your son Jesus to be our pioneer, to cut a way through, to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

Thank you that as we follow Jesus, as we trust in him, we can talk to God as our Father. But not only that, you have adopted us into your family, giving us greater brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers and children.

And we ask and pray that you would help us in our messiness and brokenness to be graceful to one another, that we would lead each other back to the cross to receive the mercy and the help that we so need to be the kind of people that you call us to be.

[36 : 07] I thank you, Father, for this church, for the gathering that is here today, for your faithfulness to us over so many years, for the people you have welcomed in, for the people who you have changed.

And we pray and ask, Father God, that you would add to this family, that you would be pleased to see many others from the community of Carragoline come to know you and trust you, to know you as Father, Jesus as their elder brother, and to know one another as brothers and sisters in Christ.

we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Before we sing, there are some, are there some books, Ralph?

I'm looking for Ralph. Are there books? No? They'll be there Wednesday, won't they? Yeah, sorry. That's right. We've got some books for you Wednesday. I have a few other little booklets as well, which are all talking about the church.

If you want to pick one of them up, it may help you to think about these things. Or talk to myself or Ralph or Jonathan or Alex afterwards.

[37 : 44] We'd love to do that. Let's sing, what is our hope in life and death? Christ alone. If you're a brother or sister in Christ today, you will want to sing this out, that Christ is our hope in life and death.

Let's stand together as we sing. And you're happy with you.! What is our hope in life and death?

Christ alone, Christ alone. What is our only confidence? That our souls to Him belong.

He holds our days within His hands. We come to fight from His command. The path will keep us to the end.

The love of Christ in which we stand. Our hope will sing Alleluia.

- [39 : 20] Our hope's great, eternal. Oh, sing Alleluia. Now and everly confess.
Christ our hope in life and death. God is good, God is good.
Where is His grace that could be strong? In our great Redeemer's blood.
We're pain when fears arise. Who stands above the stormy trials? Who stands away?
That bring us life unto the shore. The rock of Christ. Oh, sing Alleluia.
- [40 : 33] Our hope's great, eternal. Oh, sing Alleluia.
Now and everly confess. Christ our hope in life and death. Christ our hope in life and death.
And what reward will heaven bring.
Everly confess. Everly confess. Everly confess. And we will rise beneath the Lord.
And sin and death will be destroyed. And we will be upon endless joy.
- [41 : 36] When Christ our hope in life and death.
Now and everly confess. Now and everly confess. Christ our hope in life and death.
Our Father God, we thank you that we can say we have life in Christ today. And even when we die, we have life eternal.
That we will gather together with your church, your family from throughout all times and all ages. We will gather together with our brothers and sisters. We will gather together with our brothers and sisters.
And with our brother Jesus. United stronger by the Spirit's power. We look forward to that day. And we pray that you would help us as your family to encourage one another on day by day.
- [43 : 02] Day by day. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. If you want any of those little booklets I mentioned, just come to me afterwards and ask.
And I've got a few so I can give you a few.