

A Great Disappointment

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[0 : 00] But of all the Sundays of the month, I must honestly say that the first Sunday of the month is truly the one I look forward to the most. I look forward to it because we get to come to the Lord's table and also because our children are with us.

And when I'm preparing the sermon, largely my mind is on the children. I think about them being in the gathering and I want to make sure that the sermon is also beneficial to them.

And I was especially thinking about this particular sermon, which I want them to hear. So children, I encourage you to listen up. I don't know if you realize it, but we are living in a world where the truth is decreasing and being politically correct is increasing.

And I think the reason is obvious. Speaking the truth has a price. It will cost us. This has always been the case and it will increasingly be the case in our fallen world.

And when we think of speaking the truth versus being politically correct, for most of us, it really is the ordinary day-to-day things that we face.

[1 : 19] It's not like politicians who are out front of other public figures who are asked to comment on different things and they know how polarized the audience is.

And so they maneuver and they don't speak the truth. But for a lot of us, truth speaking comes down to ordinary things that we face.

A friend asks us our opinion about something. But we know that the honest answer would offend him or her.

Or maybe we observe or we hear something. Something we know is wrong. But we know that if we pointed it out to our friend or to our family member or even to our brother or sister in Christ, they might not like it and they might take offense.

And so what do we do? Do we give a truthful answer and risk offense? Or do we give a politically correct answer, which is really nowadays a euphemism for telling a lie?

[2 : 35] To avoid offense. But this morning as we are continuing our series in the gospel of Mark, we come to an event in the ministry of Jesus where Jesus makes a hard but true statement.

And the statement can be described by the title of the message this morning, which is a great disappointment. And it's found in Mark chapter 3, verses 31 through 35.

So if you have not turned there yet, please turn your Bible to the gospel of Mark chapter 3. We will pick up where we left off last time at verse 31.

We'll read through verse 35. Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 31. I'm reading from the English Standard Version. So if you have another translation, you also read slightly differently.

Mark chapter 3, beginning in verse 32.

[4 : 04] Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and my sister and my mother.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you this morning for your word and in particular for the gospel of Mark. Thank you for the way you are speaking to us as a church and individually from this gospel.

And Father, we pray that you would help us to hear the truth of these words of Jesus this morning. Lord, these are hard words. They were hard words for his family to hear.

And indeed, they are hard words for us to hear today. But Lord, they are true words. And they are words that can make the difference between an eternity in heaven and an eternity in hell.

And so I pray that you would help us all to hear them and heed them. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[5 : 17] Now, the context of this passage that we just read is that the family of Jesus thought he was crazy. They thought he was out of his mind. Because he was working so diligently in the ministry that he did not even have time to eat.

Look at verse 20 that we covered last time. Where we read, Then he went home and the crowd gathered again so that they could not even eat.

Verse 21 says, And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him. For they were saying, he is out of his mind. And so what we see is that they came to the house where Jesus was.

And they came to seize him. And understand how the gospels are written. Mark is not jumping to conclusions. Mark is telling us what they intended to do.

Now, it could be that Jesus' mother and brothers later disclosed that this is what they were intending to do. But this is what scripture says. They came there to seize him.

[6 : 35] To take him away from what he was actually doing. And they sent for Jesus. And what we see is in his response to their request, Jesus not only addresses them, but he addresses all who would hear him.

And here's what's clear from the response that Jesus gives. Jesus, only those who do God's will are the family of Jesus.

It doesn't matter who you are. It doesn't matter what your connection is. Only those who do God's will are the family of Jesus.

Jesus. I imagine these words were very disappointing for his mother and for his brothers to hear. Because the record of scripture in the other gospels where this is mentioned, he never went outside.

He did not go out to them, but sent this message to them. But these words are also disappointing for us.

[7 : 50] They're disappointing in our day. They're disappointing in a time where we have heard time and time again. People would say, we are all God's children. And to that, Jesus speaks these words.

And what Jesus says, no, we're not all God's children. Jesus identifies God's children as those who do God's will. And by extension, those who do God's will are the true family of Jesus.

For the sermon this morning, I have two simple points. And I don't expect this to be long at all.

The first one is a natural claim asserted. A natural claim asserted. That is what we see the family of Jesus doing.

Because they saw Jesus as their brother and the case of Mary as her son. They thought they had a claim to him and they were asserting that claim.

[8 : 54] They thought he was out of his mind. They thought that what he was doing was not sustainable. It didn't make any sense. He was getting carried away with religion. And so they went to seize him.

And they felt they had the right to do that. They felt they had the right to assert that claim on him because he was family. I want you to just imagine for a moment this scene.

The family of Jesus arrived. Mary is there. His brothers are there. And from all the accounts that we see in scripture, the place was crowded. People on the inside.

People on the outside. And you could rest assured that if you were one on the outside, you wanted to get on the inside. That's where the action was. But people stayed as close as they could get.

But when Mary and her boys arrived, they have an edge. Even though they can't go inside, they could send a message to Jesus and say, Come out here.

[9 : 59] We want to see you. And so they assert this claim that they have because they're in the same family. This is my son. This is my brother.

And just imagine, it didn't matter to them what Jesus was doing. It didn't matter that he may have been teaching.

It didn't matter that he may have been healing. It didn't matter to them. They said, Come, and he was supposed to come. But later they find out that the claim they thought they had to Jesus was a false claim.

The authority they thought they had with Jesus was based on a false connection to him. And the sad reality is, is that what we see is that they are in what we would call a contradicting place.

Jesus is Mary's son. Jesus is their brother. And rather than being on the inside, around him, seated at his feet, as many others were, they were on the outside, thinking he's crazy, and wanting to rescue him from himself.

[11 : 25] What is clear is that they had a very different view of Jesus. They didn't see him as the Messiah. They didn't see him as the promised king that God sent into the world to be the savior of

the world.

They just saw him as family who was out of his mind. And so they felt they had the authority to order him to come on the outside.

They felt they had a claim to him. And you know, the truth is, this morning, all of us gathered, I believe, in some way in our minds, believe that we have some kind of claim on Jesus.

For some of us, that claim comes through having submitted our lives to Christ, having trusted in him as savior and lord, having received the forgiveness of our sins, and we claim him as lord and as master.

And as Jesus himself says, that we are his brothers, and he is not ashamed to call us brothers. But there's some of us this morning, that would not be the claim that we have on Jesus, but in some way we still believe we have some kind of claim.

[12 : 44] It may be because we grew up in a Christian family. It may be because we attended church regularly and still do. Maybe because we serve in the church. Or maybe because we're just a good moral person.

And compared to other people, it's like light and darkness.

It's like night and day. And one of the times that we really assert this claim on Jesus is when we are in difficulty, when we are in trouble.

We call on him, and he's supposed to help us. But Jesus not only evaluates his family's claim in his response, he also evaluates our claim.

He evaluates whether we have the right to claim him as our own. And this brings me to my second and my final point this morning.

[13 : 56] And it is a natural claim denied. A natural claim denied. Look again at the response of Jesus to this call from his family.

In verse 33. And he answered, Who are my mother and my brothers? And looking at those who were around him, who sat around him, he said, Here are my mother and my brothers.

For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and my sister and my mother. Again, this had to have been a disappointing response that the family of Jesus received when it was taken to them.

Jesus said to them that his true family was God's family. And God's family are those who do God's will. And in essence, what Jesus was really saying to them is, You're not doing God's will.

And though I may be biologically related to you, though I may be circumstantially related to you, that's how I came into the world. But my true family, those who I am connected to, those who are connected to me, they are the ones who do God's will.

[15 : 31] This is startling, an upsetting statement. In particular, if in your heart you know, I'm not doing God's will.

Jesus spoke this to his own family. He spoke this to his mother. He spoke this to his brothers.

Now here's what's obvious from the response of Jesus. Not everyone does God's will. That is clear. Not everyone does God's will.

And since that is clear, the other part of it must also be clear. Not everyone is in God's family. Not everyone belongs to God.

Yes, everyone belongs to God in the creator sense. He is the creator of all, but he's not the father of all. He's father only to those who have been adopted into his family.

[16 : 41] Those who belong to him. Now, when we think about this idea of doing God's will, what is that?

What does it mean to do God's will? Well, the first thing that must be said about it is that it's not natural. All of us were born into this world.

We were born into this world with rebellion in our hearts. We came into this world self-willed. We wanted to have our own way and do our own thing. That's the way we were all born.

None of us were born with any desire to do God's will. And in order for that to change, in order for it to change from us doing our own will to doing God's will, we have to change.

We need a radical change to move from being self-willed to being one who does God's will.

[17 : 46] And in the language of Scripture, what the Bible says is to be able to do that, we need the new birth. We need to be born again. And that's what Jesus tells Nicodemus in John chapter 3.

He has this conversation with Nicodemus. And it's interesting when you study this conversation, Jesus never tells Nicodemus to do anything. He never tells him to do this good thing or stop doing that bad thing.

He never tells Nicodemus to do anything. As a matter of fact, Nicodemus outwardly was perhaps one of the most moral men you'd have seen in all of Israel.

He was a Pharisee. He kept the Ten Commandments. He kept the other commandments that the Pharisees added. And his life from an outward expression would have been perhaps one of the lives to be emulated.

And Jesus said to him, Nicodemus, that's not enough. Jesus told Nicodemus, Nicodemus, you don't need to do something, but you need to have something done to you.

[19 : 04] Nicodemus, you need to be born again. And the same way that none of us gave ourselves natural birth, the same way that none of us can credit to any degree our presence on planet Earth, it's the same way that none of us can credit spiritual birth.

Spiritual birth is something outside of ourselves. And it is only that which will enable us to do God's will. Jesus said, you need to be begotten.

And one of the literal translations is you need to be born from above. You need to be begotten from above. You need to be begotten by the one whose will you need to do.

The one who you need to obey. He needs to re-gen you. He needs to put His genes in you so that you may desire to do His will.

Spiritual birth is the only way where we can be transformed from spiritual death and disobedience to God to spiritual life and obedience to God.

[20 : 30] Spiritual death we desire to do our own will. Spiritual life we desire to do God's will. And that is how we grow in our understanding of even what is God's will and what God requires of us.

Until we experience that new birth and until we experience that change you have no desire for that. And so what God does is He takes every single human being who was born into this world who will become a part of His family and He gives them new birth and it's that new birth that brings them into God's family.

And so in the case of Jesus and His family although circumstantially and biologically they were all in the same natural family that did not automatically make them connected to Jesus.

It is only through being born in God's family with God's Son that we become related and connected to Jesus.

And until we're born again we have no we don't even have the desire to do God's will. There's no desire to do God's will. And once we are born again and we have the desire to do God's will the way we know God's will is through God's word.

[22 : 01] Here's how the Apostle Paul describes it in Romans 12 verses 1 through 2. He writes I appeal to you therefore brothers by the mercies of God to present your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. Notice that by testing you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The new birth enables us to desire to do God's will and it is through the process of renewing our minds on the word of God by the spirit of God that we are able to discern what God's will is.

Clearly we see God's will revealed to us in the Ten Commandments that we are studying right now but it is through the renewal of our minds not being conformed to this world that we are able to know what God's will is for us.

And then the Holy Spirit being at work in our lives enables us to do that will enables us to be able to carry out God's will. Now does it mean that those who are doing the will of God that we must do the will of God perfectly in order to be in the family of God and to be connected to Jesus?

[23 : 38] Does it mean that we do it perfectly? Thank God the answer to that is no because if we had to do God's will perfectly God would have no one in this family because no human being is perfect.

But we who are born again have a sincere desire to serve God and to please God by doing his will and there are times that we fall short. there are times when we sin and times when we disobey but part of the evidence that we belong to God is that we will experience godly sorrow and godly sorrow will lead us to repentance and we will seek God's forgiveness and we will grow in obeying and doing God's will and none of it surprises God when we do God's will less than perfectly God is not shocked or surprised.

He lovingly convicts us and where it necessary disciplines us. He grants us the grace of repentance and enables us to turn away and to forsake our sins.

Jesus was willing to speak truth to his family. He was able to tell them you're not in God's family, you're not doing God's will and listen, Jesus knew.

Jesus wasn't ignorant of what their plan was to come and seize him and their view of him and how they understood him.

[25 : 29] Jesus knew all of that. And so he spoke the truth to them and he said to them, you're not my true family. My true family are those who do God's will and I'm putting words here and if you were part of my true family, you'd be here.

as a matter of fact, if you think of the chronology of it in terms of how things developed, his family had the first angle on him in terms of being a part of those who would first believe in him.

But we know that connection to Jesus doesn't give an advantage of coming to Jesus. From the biblical account, what we know is that Jesus, that the mother of Jesus and the brothers of Jesus eventually did become followers of him.

Luke records for us in Acts chapter 1 verse 14 that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were in the upper room waiting on the day of Pentecost, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit after Jesus had been crucified and buried and resurrected and he descended into heaven, he told those who followed him, I want you to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. Scripture tells us there were but 120 gathered. And the wonderful thing about that is by no stretch of imagination you would have considered that a crowd compared to all the other people who followed Jesus.

[27 : 13] But at that moment, the mother of Jesus and the brothers of Jesus had evidently now become a part of the family of Jesus through their connection and relationship to God and they were among those, the faithful ones, who were waiting for the promise of Jesus.

But it came by way of a great disappointment. husband. We have no way of knowing what went on in Mary's heart and what went on in his brother's heart, but this had to come home in a rather acute way.

It had to really affect them. That Jesus did not even give them the dignity of coming outside and besides said something to them that many would see as insulting.

you're not my family. Here's my family. Those who do the will of God. But it took helping them to see the reality and the truth of their lives to realize where they really stood and what they really needed to do.

And friends, we're no different. Some of the best things that could ever happen to us are the hard things we hear and the difficult things we walk through because of the lessons we learn and because the things that we were taught as a result of them.

[28 : 44] And perhaps some of you this morning who are gathered are being caused to think of your own life. When Jesus would say, only those who do the will of God are my brother and my sister and my mother.

and you would know in your heart of hearts that you're not doing the will of God. You're doing your own thing. You're living for yourself. You're doing what is right in your own eyes. And Jesus says, you don't belong to me.

And it's a wonderful practice to come to church, wonderful practice to be here. God's But if we do this long term and we don't belong to Jesus through doing the will of God, through having been born again to be able to do that will, what's the point of all of this?

Well, as disappointing as those words would have been to Jesus' family, Jesus tells us that there's even a greater disappointment that awaits some people who claim to belong to him.

As he was concluding the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7, 21 through 23, Jesus spoke these words. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

[30 : 15] for the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name?

And I will declare to them, I never knew you. Not, I used to know you and you turn and never knew you.

Never, ever knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. This, friends, is the greatest disappointment that will ever be uttered in the history of mankind because it is final.

people. There are many people who get distracted by this statement of Jesus and they begin to wonder, well, I wonder who these people are who prophesied in the name of Jesus, cast out

demons in his name and who did all these mighty works in his name.

And we get caught up with that. We don't need to. Here's what we know. That group of people is smaller than another group of people who Jesus addresses.

[31 : 37] Our attention, brothers and sisters, needs to be on verse 21. Jesus says, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

We need to meditate on that. We don't need to be distracted about how could a person cast out demons and not be connected to Jesus. How could a person do mighty what?

We don't need that distraction. What we need is the sober reality that Jesus communicates in verse 21, that it is those, not those who call on his name, Lord, Lord, Lord, but it is those who are submitted to doing the will of his Father who is in heaven.

And as I said earlier, the only way that we can do God's will is to be born from above. To be begotten from above. To have something happen to us. To have God to act upon us.

To have God to transform our hearts so that we're not being self-willed and our hearts are not stony but our hearts are flesh and they're pliable and we say, Lord, I delight to do your will.

[32 : 53] God, I want to do your will. Even when we sin, when we fail, we fall short, we say, God, I want to do your will. Brothers and sisters, that desire is something outside of ourselves.

None of us has that. We want to do our own will. And so we need to hear this morning the sobering words of Jesus.

A great disappointment to his family and an even greater disappointment to those who will hear it on that final day. That it is only those who do the will of God who are going to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Brothers and sisters, these are sobering words. The only way to do God's will is to come to know God through Christ and to be accepted in his family.

And so I close by asking us the question, are you a doer of God's will? Are you a doer of God's will? Do you desire to do God's will?

[34 : 08] Or are you living for yourself? And you may be here this morning and you may honestly answer and say, no, I don't desire to do God's will.

I am living for myself. God's will. And that's a great place to start because you're being honest. But I would encourage you to go further and ask the Lord, God, would you help me to do your will?

Would you transform my life? Will you do for me what you told Nicodemus he needed? That he needed an action outside of himself?

He needed something to happen to him that he couldn't do for himself. He needed to be born again. And God, would you transform my heart and enable me to live for you and to serve you and to love you all of my days?

Brothers and sisters, we have complicated the Christian life in so many different ways. At its root, what being a Christian is, is living in this fallen, broken world, and doing God's will.

[35 : 25] And doing it with an awareness that it's not of us, it's not anything in us, but it is the grace of God at work in our lives, enabling rebellious sinners to lay aside their will and to do the will of God and to seek to please him in this world.

I'm going to close and pray for us. And if you're here this morning and you would acknowledge that you're living for yourself, you're not living for God, but you want to live for God, I encourage you right where you are, just cry out to the Lord God, to have mercy on you, to forgive you, to transform your heart, and to enable you to do his will.

And if you do that, after a gathering, I would ask you, come and talk to me. Let me know that you did do that, that I might specifically pray for you as you seek to do the will of God.

Let's pray. Thank you.