

2025-08-31

Who Is My Mother?

Mark 3:31-35

One of the children's books we read to our girls was, "Are You My Mother?" by P. D. Eastman. A baby bird breaks through its shell and the mother bird is not around. The mother had flown away to get food for its coming newborn. The newborn bird wanted its mother. It cried, "Where is my mother?" Instead of waiting for its mother to return, this baby bird begins the search for its mother. It falls out of its nest and actually walks past its mother and does not notice her. The baby bird asked a cat and a chicken, a dog and a cow, "Are you my mother?" They all said, "No." It wondered if a car, a boat and a plane were its mother. Of course they were not. Then a big earth mover **scoops up the baby bird**, lifts it high and starts moving. The baby bird becomes frightened and wants to go home. It cries out, "I want my mother." The earth mover drops the baby bird right into its nest. Just then, the mother returns with a worm for the baby bird. The mother bird asks the baby, "Do you know who I am?" The baby bird goes through a list of things the mother is not and ends with, "You are a bird, and you are my mother." It is good to know who your mother is and who your family members are. We want our children to know that we love them and care for them whether we are with them or away from them, when they are young and when they are adults. Jesus' mother and brothers cared about what was going on in His life. They just did not understand who He was and what His mission was even after living with Him for all of their lives. Had they listened to Him?

Mark 3:31 *"Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him."* We pick up the story from verse 21. His family had heard about His ability to heal others, and cast out demons and the crowds of people wanting to be around Him. They had traveled from Nazareth with the intention of taking Him by force if necessary because they thought, *"He is out of His mind."* (21). A more common expression is "He's crazy." Did you know that Jesus had at least 4 brothers and 2 sisters? In Mark 6:3 the brothers are named. They are James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. The verse also mentions that He had sisters, which means He had more than one.

Some people who want Mary to be a virgin all her life say that these people are not actual brothers and sisters but cousins. There is a problem with this way of believing. The Greek word for brother and sister means, from the same womb. Those who come from the same womb are related as brothers and sisters. These men and women came out of the same womb as Jesus. They had the same mother, but a different father. It is interesting that none of Jesus' family believed in His deity or followed Him until

after His resurrection (Acts 1:14). I could only find two other references to Mary, the mother of Jesus, after their trip to the temple in Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old. The first one was at a wedding in Cana (John 2:1-2). Mary was at the wedding. Jesus was an invited guest. Mary, who seems to be one of the coordinators of the wedding told Jesus “*They have no wine*” (John 2:3). She lets Jesus decide what to do. After the wedding Jesus travels to Capernaum with his family and His disciples (2:12). The next occurrence of Mary after this encounter in Mark (Matthew 12:46-50 and Luke 8:19-21 both record this same event) is when Mary was at the foot of the cross when Jesus died (John 19:25). We are not told about the family of Jesus. We know that after the resurrection of Jesus, some family members became leaders in the Christian community. James, the brother of Jesus had a leadership role in the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:13). He also authored the letter titled James. And Jesus’ brother Judas wrote the letter in our Bible titled Jude.

Verse 32 “*And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You.’*” We might think that if Mary the mother of Jesus along with her other sons had come to talk with Jesus, the crowd would somehow allow them to get inside the house so they could see Him and talk with Him face to face. That is a reasonable assumption. This is an orderly crowd around Jesus. It is not a rock concert where they are throwing cans of beer at people. Jesus always brought order into a situation. The crowd would cooperate if Mary really wanted to go in. It is as if Mary and her sons have no intention of going inside the house. They want to see Jesus. **They just want Jesus to come out to them.** If Jesus goes out to them, His family is in a better position to take Jesus away from the crowd, talk to Him privately and disappear with Him without saying anything to anyone. The crowd informed Jesus that His mother and His brothers had arrived and were seeking Him. This is a sad picture of Jesus’ family. They were seeking Him, **not to hear, believe and follow** Jesus but to quiet Him and take Him away from His mission. I wonder what it was like living with a perfect brother. They must have known He was different. He always told the truth. He always did the right things. I know what it is like living with four brothers. None were perfect, including me. We lied and did wrong things. Jesus never did.

Verse 33 “*But He answered them, saying, ‘Who is My mother, or My brothers?’*” By asking a question like this, some people may think Jesus is crazy. Doesn’t He know who His mother and brothers are? I think there is a long pause before Jesus answered His own question. Jesus wanted people to think on a deeper, spiritual level. Jesus takes this opportunity to help people see that there are some relationships that are much more important than those with your physical family. It is important to have a spiritual relationship with God and with God’s people.

Verse 34 “*And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers!’*” When Jesus looked around at all the faces of the people, He was evaluating their facial expressions. They probably looked puzzled or confused by His question. The crowd may have been more confused with His answer. The crowd may have wondered if Jesus’ mother and brothers had slipped by them unnoticed, but they could not be seen anywhere. Some may have thought, since Jesus healed lots of people and cast out lots of demons, maybe He is going to magically bring His mother and brothers into the room. But nothing happened. What does Jesus mean by saying, ‘*Here are My mother and My brothers!*’? He cannot be referring to His real mother and brothers because they are literally standing outside. Is Jesus referring to the disciples or the whole crowd? Maybe He is a little delusional.

Verse 35 “*For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.*” Here is a shocking statement no one saw coming. Do you want to be part of God’s family? True Christian discipleship involves a spiritual relationship. God is making it possible for everyone to have a genuine relationship with Him. The connection is made when people do the will of God, they live the will of God. This obedience begins by first **hearing** the will of God and then **believing** the will of God so that you can faithfully **do** the will of God. If I was in the crowd and Jesus allowed us to ask Him questions, I would ask Him, “**What is the will of God so that I may do it and be part of God’s family?**”

How would Jesus respond? What is the first action that God expects people to do to show that they are doing His will and are willing to follow Him? Jesus began His ministry with “***Repent, and believe in the gospel***” (Mark 1:15). God wants us to turn away from wrong believing and wrong living to live according to His design. The next action we are to take is **baptism**. “*But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him*” (Luke 7:30). John’s baptism was for repentance (Matthew 3:11). Today we baptize people to show a changed life, that we have died to an old way of life and have been raised to walk in a new life (Romans 6:3-4). The will of God includes suffering and rejoicing, giving and going, obedience and trust and renewing your mind to think like Jesus. Do the will of God. See where He takes you. Hear Jesus. Believe Jesus and follow Jesus.

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Our mission statement: **Spread the gospel of Jesus Christ;
Teach believers to worship God; Foster growth in the Christian faith**

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Questions to ask yourself?

Do you know who your mother is? Did she love you?

- Verse 31 Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?
Why didn't Jesus' mother and brothers go into the house and talk with Him? Did Mary ever get to talk with Jesus?
- Verse 32 If you were part of this crowd around Jesus, wouldn't you want His mother and brothers to go into the house?
When did some of Jesus' family members start to believe in Him?
- Verse 33 If you were in this crowd and heard Jesus say, '*Who is My mother, or My brothers?*' what would you think about Him?
- Verse 34 What would you be thinking when Jesus answered His question by saying, '*Here are My mother and My brothers!*'
- Verse 35 Do you know the will of God? What is the will of God?
Are you doing the will of God?
Are you part of God's family? How do you know you are?
It would be interesting to know how Mary and her other sons reacted to Jesus' statement about His family.

Actions to take:

Do a personal Bible study on **the will of God** using these verses.

Romans 8:27 and 12:2 and 15:32

2 Corinthians 8:5 (1-5)

Ephesians 6:6 (5-8)

Colossians 4:12

1 Thessalonians 4:3 and 5:18

Hebrews 10:36 (35-39)

1 Peter 2:15 and 3:17 (15-17) and 4:2, 19

1 John 2:17