

## MARK 3:31-35

## GOD'S FAMILY – A NEW PARADIGM

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him.

<sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." <sup>33</sup> "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. <sup>34</sup> Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" <sup>35</sup> Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

As the Divine Teacher, Jesus seizes on every situation as a moment for instruction. As he walks along he sees a fig tree, a white-washed tomb or hears a comment about the majestic edifice of the Temple and turns it into a teaching moment. But isn't that the way of God? In Romans, St. Paul says that the heathens are without excuse because God has revealed himself through the creation around them (Romans 1:20). Jesus even used the commandments during the Sermon on the Mount as jumping off points for the deeper revelation of God's (Matthew 5:21-48).

When placed in that context, Jesus' reaction to the news that his family is looking for him can be seen, not as a "put-down" of his family and biological families in general, but rather as an opportunity to teach that the believer belongs to God's family even if his blood relatives do not. At first glance this does not look like a big deal to us, but remember the Jewish concept of the people of God. God's family was the Jews and the Jews were the descendants of Abraham. At the time of Jesus there was no understanding about being children of Abraham through faith. You were either in or out of God's people based on your blood line.

The paradigm shift in our understanding of the family of God begins with this episode. Being in an intact biological family of believers is still God's perfect will, but being in a family of nonbelievers or even not being in a family at all is not a deal breaker. No matter your genealogical circumstances, you are a member of God's family if you believe in Jesus and obey God's will.

**Thank you, Father, for adopting me as your child through your Son, Jesus Christ. Thank you for the Holy Spirit who brings me to you and empowers me to live as your child. Thank you for your Church, which you have provided so that I might have the tangible experience of being in your family. Amen.**