

Mark 3:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren?

Analysis

Jesus responds with startling question: 'Who is my mother, or my brethren?' This isn't rejection or dishonor but redefinition of primary identity and loyalty. Jesus doesn't deny biological relationships but subordinates them to spiritual reality. The rhetorical question challenges assumptions about what constitutes true family. In kingdom perspective, spiritual relationships supersede biological ties. This anticipates His statement about true family being those who do God's will (v. 35). Jesus demonstrates that gospel creates new family bound by faith, not blood.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean culture was intensely family-oriented. Identity, security, and social standing derived from kinship. To question family primacy was revolutionary. Jesus' redefinition prepared disciples for reality that following Him might cost family relationships. Early Christians experienced this—Jewish converts were disowned, Gentile believers ostracized. The church became new family providing identity and support. Paul calls believers 'household of God' (Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15), demonstrating spiritual kinship superseding natural family.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' question challenge you to examine where you find primary identity and belonging?
2. What does this teach about the church as spiritual family superseding biological ties?
3. How do you navigate tension between honoring family and prioritizing kingdom?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀπεκριθῇ	αὐτοῖς	λέγων,	Τίς	ἐστιν	ἡ	μήτηρ	μου
And	he answered	them	saying	Who	is	G3588	mother	my
G2532	G611	G846	G3004	G5101	G2076		G3384	G3450
ἡ	οἱ	ἀδελφοί	μου					
or	G3588	brethren	my					
G2228		G80	G3450					

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:3 (Parallel theme): Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Mark 3:21 (Parallel theme): And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Deuteronomy 33:9 (Parallel theme): Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.

2 Corinthians 5:16 (Parallel theme): Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

John 2:4 (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

Luke 2:49 (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

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