

Matthew 12:46-50

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-12/matthew-1246-50/>

Jesus takes an opportunity to teach the truth that whoever lives his life in harmony with God by doing the will of His Father, is His family.

The parallel gospel accounts of this event are found in Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21.

Matthew tells us that *someone* interrupts *Jesus* with a message *while He was still speaking to the crowds*. As *Jesus* was teaching, *His mother and brothers were standing outside* the building, possibly a synagogue. *Jesus's* mother was Mary (Matthew 1:24-25 Luke 2:5-7). Because *Jesus* was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:27-36), these *brothers* were really *His* half-brothers, and they were younger than *He*. One of *Jesus's* half-brothers was James (Matthew 13:55), who scholars believe authored the epistle of James, and who later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15). Another of *Jesus's* half-brothers was Jude (Matthew 13:55), who scholars believe authored the epistle of Jude. Scripture does not refer to *Jesus's* earthly father, Joseph, beyond *Jesus's* childhood (Luke 2:41-51). It is commonly believed that Joseph had died at some point before *Jesus* began His earthly ministry as the Messiah.

Because *Jesus's* *mother and brothers* came to seek *Him*, it is likely that *Jesus* is in the vicinity of Nazareth where He was raised. But it is unlikely that *He* is actually in Nazareth at this point, because Matthew later tells us that *Jesus* departed from there and went to his hometown (Matthew 13:53-56).

As they stood *outside*, *His mother and brothers were seeking to speak to Jesus*. Matthew does not tell us what they wanted to *speak to Him* about. *Someone* informed *Jesus* about His family *outside*, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.”

Rather than immediately go *outside* to *His* family, *Jesus* took this as an opportunity to illustrate a lesson. *And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers!”* With the gesture and remark, *Jesus* indicated that *His disciples* were His family.

Jesus then elaborated what He meant by this. And He broadens the definition from one of His literal disciples to *whoever does the will of His Father*. *For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother*. A family consists of a Father, who is its head, a *mother, brothers and sisters*.

In the biblical model, a family lives together. They experience and seek to overcome the trials of life together. They share what they have together. They support one another in their hopes and dreams. And they take care of each other. Even though He had a family by blood *Jesus* was teaching that *He* also had a spiritual family. And His spiritual family consists of *whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven*. His point was that His spiritual family consists of *whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven*. In other words, *whoever* follows the *Father*, wherever he might live, is an active member of *Jesus's* heavenly household.

This sheds light on a passage from Mark, where Jesus speaks of rewards that will be given to those who walk in obedience to His commands:

“Peter began to say to Him, ‘Behold, we have left everything and followed You.’ Jesus said, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel’s sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last, first.’” (Mark 10:28-30)

In this passage Jesus promises great rewards for suffering for His sake, a “hundred times” as much as was lost. But interestingly, Jesus says we will gain a hundred mothers for every mother we lost. How can this be? It seems that believers are supposed to be one another’s reward.

When we walk by faith, in radical obedience to Christ, we gain a bond of fellowship that is a great reward, that will greatly benefit us in this life, and will carry over into the life that is to come.

Biblical Text

While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”