

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
T. Adjusting To The True Fellowship Of God's Family
(Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21)

I. Introduction

- A. Though Christ's ministry of preaching the gospel of the Messianic Kingdom and healing the infirmed was initially widely received, Israel's leaders publicly rejected Him in Matthew 12:22-37 with Mark 3:20-30.
- B. Accordingly, Christ eventually rejected these unbelieving leaders in Matthew 12:38-45, what led to His rejection of the people of Israel since they followed their leaders' rejection of Himself.
- C. What followed in Matthew 12:46-50, Mark 3:31-35 and Luke 8:19-21 was Christ's revelation of the true fellowship of God's family, what every believer needs to know and to apply for his edification:

II. Adjusting To The True Fellowship Of God's Family, Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21.

- A. Matthew 12:46-47 with Mark 3:31-32 and Luke 8:19-20 reported that Jesus' earthly mother Mary and earthly brothers arrived at a house where Jesus was teaching, and due to the press of the crowds around Him, they could not enter the home to meet Jesus, so they sent word for Him to come out to meet them.
- B. We know from Mark 3:20-21 ESV, NIV that these earthly family members of Jesus had come to take custody of Him, for His skipping meals in busily ministering to people had led them to conclude that Jesus was insane.
- C. This is a remarkable event, for it reveals that Jesus' own earthly family, including His mother Mary, sinned in unbelief in Jesus at this time in His ministry. This event counters the Roman Catholic Church's doctrine of the Immaculate Conception where Mary is believed to be conceived without sin and thus was impeccable or incapable of sinning in her earthly life! (Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 158-159)
- D. Jesus' response to this event revealed the basis of fellowship in God's spiritual family (as follows):
 - 1. Christ answered the man who informed Him that His mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to speak with Him by asking, "Who is my mother? And who are my brethren?" (Matthew 12:48 KJV)
 - 2. Then, looking around about Him on those who sat in the house listening to His teaching (Mark 3:34a) and stretching His hand out toward these people (Matthew 12:49a), Jesus added, "Behold my mother and my brothers!" (Matthew 12:49b KJV; Mark 3:34 KJV)
 - 3. Jesus explained that whoever did the will of His Father Who was in heaven, what these disciples were doing, such a person was His brother and mother, and even sister, an added relationship that Jesus included to signal that He referred to any human being who did the will of His heavenly Father, Matthew 12:50.
 - 4. Luke 8:21 clarified that those who did the will of Christ's heavenly Father was the same as one who heard the Word of God and obeyed it. This clarification meant much to the non-eyewitness Luke (cf. Luke 1:1-4) as it does to others like Luke who never heard Jesus teach in His earthly life, but who are exposed to the written Scriptures that were spiritually authored by Him (cf. Revelation 19:11-13).
 - 5. In other words, Jesus revealed that "the spiritual relationship between Christ and believers is closer than the closest of blood ties. Obedience to God takes precedence over responsibilities to family" (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, footnote to Matthew 12:50).
- E. Christ's teaching on this subject carries a great application to relationships in both natural and spiritual realms:
 - 1. Though Christ's earthly mother Mary who was blessed of God to bear Messiah Jesus so that according to Mary's own Magnificat, all generations of God's people would call her blessed (cf. Luke 1:46-49), when she doubted Jesus' sanity in an act of unbelief so that she sought to take custody of Him (Mark 3:21, 31-32), she was not in fellowship with Jesus and God the Father as were the people who were crowded in the room where Jesus was teaching them!
 - 2. Thankfully, Jesus' mother Mary and His earthly brothers had a change of heart after His resurrection so that they were among the 120 believers who met in Jerusalem and upon whom the Holy Spirit fell on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4). They needed to repent of their unbelief for restored fellowship with God, for their spiritual relationship with Jesus superseded their natural relationship with Him.

Lesson: *When Jesus' earthly family sought to take custody of Him in unbelief, Jesus revealed that the disciples around Him who heeded God's Word were in true fellowship with Him and not His earthly family. Thankfully, Jesus' earthly family later had a change of heart and came back into spiritual fellowship with Him and the Father.*

Application: *May we value heeding Scripture as the essential priority of enjoying fellowship not only with God, but with all other people, including earthly family and extended family members.*