

John 19:23-27; Mt. 12:46-50; Behold, Your Family I. Identifying His Family II. Providing for His Family  
 Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what responsibility do we have in regard to our parents?

Normally when we think of responsibilities within the home, we think of how parents are supposed to provide for and protect their children. Even society identifies child abandonment as wicked. Last week there was a mom that abandoned her 4-year-old daughter on the streets in NYC- even fallen society knows that this is wrong! But what about the responsibility of a child towards their parents? Jesus was perfect in all His ways- He fully kept all of the commandment from childhood right up until His death. Even now Jesus keeps the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment- children, honor your father and your mother as Ex. 20 reads. But how do you honor your parents when you are about to die? In our text for today we find that Jesus is the Son- He is the Son of God the Father; and He is the Son of Mary. But Jesus will not only be remembered in His death by Mary- no- the death of Jesus will be remembered by millions! So today we see that Jesus takes care of His family in His death. Our text is v. 26-27.

### **I. Identifying His Family**

In our first point, we consider who is considered the family of Jesus Christ. If Jesus takes care of His family in His death- who are the ones that He takes care of? Now we know that Jesus did have an earthly family. He was born of the Virgin Mary- and Joseph was his adopted father. But the Virgin Mary did not remain a virgin! No, Jesus had other brothers and sisters who were the children of Mary of Joseph. Listen to Mark 6:3- is not this the carpenter's son, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joses, Judas and Simon. And are not his sisters here with us? So Jesus had 4 younger brothers and at least 2 younger sisters. And while Jesus is hanging on the cross, John brings to mind again that this Jesus is the Son of Mary. Jesus was Mary's child as v. 25 makes clear. Again, the humanity of Jesus is brought before us. Jesus had an earthly mother who stood there- watching- observing. She is present as her Son suffers- she is watching as her first born dies a cruel death! I cannot imagine the pain that she has been going through. As Simeon foretold- a sword will pierce your heart! Mary is being cut to the heart

as she watches her Son die. But does Jesus always put a premium on his own, biological family. Does He only think of His earthly family? While never denying that Mary was his mother, He did in fact challenge his family's preconceived notions about His relation to them. As we read earlier in Mt. 12, being the biological family does not mean that that they had greater access, privilege and blessing from the work of Jesus. So in Mt. 12, the brothers and mother of Jesus are demanding that Jesus come home with them- they need to talk to him. They are attempting a family intervention- but instead of going along with them- instead of stopping his teaching and healing to meet with them- Jesus speaks some rather striking words! Who are my brothers- who is my mother? He is rebuking his earthly family for their failure to understand- for their attempted hindrance of His work. Rather, those who do the will of His Father in heaven- that is who Jesus identifies as His mother and brothers. Jesus is saying that there is a deeper connection- a stronger tie that binds Him to His disciples. A union that is deeper- a commitment that is stronger than any biological or earthly ties. Being a physical brother of Jesus does not mean that you have greater access to Him- being the physical mother of Jesus does not mean that you have authority over His work! There is an old saying- "that blood is thicker than water." This saying means that blood- or family ties- are the stronger and the most important earthly link. Say what you will about your family- they are still your family and nothing can undo that tie. However, Jesus is turning this thinking on its head. It's as if Jesus is saying- there is something thicker than blood- there is something stronger than an earthly, familial tie- and that is the bond of spiritual union! Being a member of the Kingdom of God makes us closer- having a deeper union- than any earthly bond! And since Jesus identifies His disciples- since He calls us His family- we have the rights and privileges of His family! To say this another way, those who are joined to Christ by faith are now adopted sons and daughter of God! We are children of our heavenly Father- just as Jesus is the Son of the heavenly Father! This is a glorious truth- in that we are now identified as His family- and He will die on the cross for us! Not even his earthly family- not even his earthly mother and her provision- will persuade Him to give us this work

of dying for the complete forgiveness of all our sins! It was because He loves us- His siblings- that He remains on the cross! The application is clear- we can rejoice in that we have been welcomed into the family of God! Mary and Jesus' brothers did not have a special status in the kingdom above! His biological family does not have greater access than we do! This even applies to the Jewish people as a whole. As Gal. 3:28 says, in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile! We all have a share in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Being a Jew does not give you a special "in" with Jesus today. No family or nation has greater access to the Father- rather all are granted access only by faith in Jesus Christ!

## **II. Providing for His Family**

Now that we have established the fact that Jesus' earthly family could not hinder His salvific work, does this fact mean that Jesus had no responsibility towards His own biological family? Does He completely forsake and deny His blood relatives? Not at all. Although His relatives were mildly rebuked in Mt. 12, that does not mean that Jesus did not care for them and love them as son and brother should! We find this already back in Luke 2:51- where the young, boy Jesus submitted- was subject to His earthly parents. And here, at the end of His life, Jesus will still honor His parents as the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment states. Now we need to know a little historical context here. At this point in Jesus life, His earthly father, Joseph, has likely died. So Mary His mother is a widow in her late 40s or so. It is also important to remember that widows did not have a social context or government program to rely on. There was no SS or Roth IRA to draw from, rather a widow often lived at the mercy of the generosity of others. She could not perform the physical labor that was often a source of income- and she could easily be taken advantage of. Since that was the case, the oldest son was responsible to take care of their aging parents- particularly if their mother was a widow. So in this setting, it was Jesus who was supposed to care for Mary. But Jesus is dying- who will care for Mary after Jesus' death? Why not ask one of Jesus' younger brothers? There are 4 of them! Well, remember that as John 7:5 says, the earthly brothers of Jesus did not believe in Him. So his brothers thought Jesus was proud, insane or a liar- and Mary having

placed her faith in Jesus her son- would have been an outcast in her own family. Now it is true that most of Jesus' brothers come to believe in Jesus after He rises from the dead- but at this point they are no where to be found and likely hated Jesus and rejected their own mother Mary for her allegiance to Jesus. So Jesus was not going to look to his own brothers for help- rather He turns to John. Now we know quite a bit about John. John, along with his brother James, was one of the first disciples. John was a constant companion of Jesus- called the disciple whom Jesus loved. He was also the author of this book of the Bible that we are reading. John was likely well to do- owning his own fishing company. He had a home in Jerusalem and in Galilee. And the disciple John would be known later on for his great compassion. Added to this fact, John is the only disciple of Jesus who has stuck around. Peter was there earlier, but he has since denied Jesus and gone out to weep. But John was standing by the cross with this group of women. Proving this fact, there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. In asking John to help- to take in His mother- Jesus was asking His follower to care for the needy. This would be like the church being tasked to take care of widows. Let's read from I Tim. 5:1-3. Mary fit this requirement- and thus it falls on John to care for her. We also see that even though Jesus is still on the cross- still suffering and near to death- Jesus does not forsake nor forget His mother. Yes, He must remain and endure until He dies for His people- to save His Spiritual family- but that does not negate the fact that His biological mother was still to be cared for. So one of the last things that Jesus does in His earthly life- one of His last actions on the cross was this- to honor His mother. Now this applies to us as well. Honor your family and mother is something that we are called to do during our entire life. This commandment does not expire once you leave the home- and it still holds when your parents are old, weary, forgetful- and maybe even stubborn! We are still called to honor them- to hold them in high regard for their God-given position over you- and to care for them when the time comes as Jesus did for Mary. Now this is a lesson that many members of this church are learning- honoring my father and mother is not always easy but it is what I am called to do! As I Tim. 5:4 puts it, by showing godliness to your own household

you are making some return to your own parents- and this is pleasing to God! When you take care of your aged parents, you are repaying them- honoring them for all they did for you when you were young! Little baby Jesus had to be fed and changed and carried and provided for when He was young. Now He returns to honor His mother by finding her a home. As Mary opened her arms to receive Jesus as her son, so Jesus provides a place for Mary to be provided for. So Jesus says- Women, behold your son. John, behold your mother.

To conclude, understanding the dynamics of Jesus' family helps us understand why He did and said as He did! It is comforting to know that His earthly family would not be allowed to hinder His work- but rather as we find today- He still takes care of His family proving our need to care for our own families as well. Jesus takes care of His family in His death. He cared for His Spiritual family by remaining on the cross- and He takes care of His earthly family by finding Mary a home. We must never love our father, mother, brother or sister more than we love Jesus. But it is because we love Jesus that we are to honor, love and support our earthly families as He did!