

Small Group Questions from Mark 3:13-35

Background: Jesus has come to reconstitute the people of God. His mission is to call people to be part of God's family (children of God who are adopted) with God as their Father.

1. In this passage Mark is drawing us to reflect on the question- *Who is in the Family of God?* How is this both a challenge and an invitation?

2. As Jesus commissions the 12 apostles notice that Mark summarizes the role of a disciple- they are:
 - A. with him -spend time with him (according to Mark 3:34 = at his feet)
 - B. sent out in ministry and mission
 - to preach (most likely Jesus' message and mission-that the KoG is near, repent and believe the good news),
 - to drive out demons
 - to give testimony about Jesus as the Son of God.
 - to be fishers of men
 - C. live in community as the Family of God (Mark 3:34-35- mothers, brothers, sisters- doing the will of God)

Do you think it is possible to serve God (B. ministry and mission) without A. (spending time with him) and/or C. (being Family together)?

3. When answering his own rhetorical question in Mark 3:33 *who are my mother and brothers* why do you think Jesus' answer
 - a. includes *sister*
 - b. and does not include *father*?

(ie. what are the implications)

4. Jesus mother and brothers want Jesus on their own terms. They stand outside while his disciples are inside at Jesus feet. Jesus parable about a household is particularly relevant to them- *a house/household is divided against itself cannot stand.* In what ways do we often want Jesus on *our* terms?

5. Jesus' challenge is to widen our commitment/allegiance beyond biological lines to include those who we are spiritually connected to – those whom God has adopted into the new people of God.

Background: In the ancient world/culture of the 1st century, the cultural expectations were that the desires, the needs, the goals of the individual took second place to the viability, the honour, the good of the group.

This is in contrast to our modern western culture where the aspirations and the needs of the individual person take priority over the groups and institutions in our lives. Our view comes from Individualism where the main goal is independence and freedom of choice for the sake of our own benefit first, over the collective state.

Remember the story from Titanic about Rose – wanting to put her own desires before the good of her family. A 1st century audience would have been horrified that Rose would do this.

- a. How is this challenging in our modern culture?
- b. How do we manage commitment to our biological family while trying to follow Jesus' call to treat our church as family (brothers and sisters)?

6. Consider this quote from the ancient world:

Justin Martyr (c. 100–165 AD) was an early Christian apologist who wrote to defend Christianity against Roman misconceptions. His *First Apology* was addressed to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius, aiming to explain Christian beliefs and practices.

In this passage, Justin describes the **transformation** that Christianity brought to its followers. He highlights how Christians, once driven by greed, division, and violence, now practice **communal sharing, unity, and charity**.

"We who once took most pleasure in the means of increasing our wealth and property, now bring what we have into a common front and share it with everyone in need. We, who hated and killed one another and would not associate with men of different tribes because of their different customs, now live together. Those who have more come to the aid of those who lack, and we are constantly together. Those who prosper and so wish, contribute each one as much as he chooses to."

Like the early church, how can we live as the Family of God in practical terms?

[Have an extended discussion and try to get as practical as you can]