

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF VILLA RICA, PCA

How To Identify Christ's Brethren

By

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Matthew 12: 46-5

Cf. Luke 8:19-21

It is wonderful we have a day each year set apart to celebrate motherhood. There is something special about mothers. To be the vessel of God in bringing forth God's creature made in God's own image is to be considered a divine honor. God created Adam alone without the instrumentality of a woman. Since Adam the entire race of man has come into this world through the woman. The first woman, Eve was taken from the man. Her name means "Living or Life" and she was so named the scripture says, "because she was the mother of all living" (Gen 3: 20).

It was by a woman that man was tempted to sin and lose his life but instead of imposing a curse on womankind God gave to a woman the high honor and privilege of being the vessel that brought forth the Life Giver. Many women in Israel hoped that they might be the mother of the Messiah. God reserved that great honor for Mary, a teen aged virgin.

If human mothers are honored by God in bringing into the world the seed of Adam who was created in the image of God, then Mary was honored above measure in bringing into the world the promised Messiah who was formed in her womb by the immediate activity and power of the Holy Ghost, for this Son was none other than the sinless Son of God who came as God's Redeeming servant, who came to save his people from their sins, who founds a new race of men and sets up an eternal kingdom.

Undoubtedly, the Lord Jesus loved Mary his mother as any son loves his mother and even with a deeper and unwavering love because of who he is. Yet in the scripture portion we have chosen today we find that his family is not to be considered in that limited earthly sense which we generally are wont to do. I recall that when he performed his first miracle at the marriage in Cana that he seemed to be saying to his mother that she was not to expect that she had special claims on his divine prerogatives, that she was not to expect miracles at her bidding simply on the basis of their blood relationship. He said to her on that occasion, **"Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come."** (Jn. 2:4). He did not address her as "mother" but as "woman".

Then on an occasion when people were crowding around him trying to hear his words and his mother and his brethren desired to see him and speak with him he did not give them special preference. I am sure that those who gave him the message that they were waiting to see him expected him to order a path to be cleared and an immediate audience to be given to them.

Suppose your mother came to you under similar circumstances? What would be your reaction? Would you not give special attention to your mother and your family if they were asking to see you?

⁴⁸But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" ⁴⁹And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! ⁵⁰"For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

There is no favoritism with the Lord Jesus Christ. His earthly family did not have any more right to his presence and blessing than did any other person who came seeking his words. Why do you suppose he took that position? Was it because he discounted the flesh and blood relationship? No. It was not that this had no meaning or significance, but he did

consider his mission greater than his family. He put the Word of his Father in the supreme place that it belongs.

We do err if we think that Jesus put his mother and brethren above any other soul who comes seeking to hear and obey the Word of God. What does that say to us today? Does it not say to us that with God the important thing is how you hear and respond to the Word of God?

Jesus relegated motherhood into its proper place of importance in God's order. Mothers are a channel of blessing, a vessel of birth and life, a special person to every man born of woman, yet not to come before the Word of God, not to be put ahead of the will of His Father.

The Lord Jesus is not clannish. He offers himself to all persons on an equal basis. Even his mother and his brothers did not have any more right to claim his presence and attention than other persons who were obedient to His Father. The Kingdom of God is not the special inheritance of the descendants of Mary and Joseph. They have no more right to seek the blessing of Christ than any other person. Whosoever will may come.

This is not the way the world thinks. We always believe that flesh and blood takes priority over anything else. Not so. What takes priority over even mother and father, sister and brother, husband and wife, children and grandchildren is Jesus Christ and his Word.

But don't we tend to think that God is pleased when we skip the Word of God in order to be with family and relatives? Perhaps there are even some here today not because of the Word of God but because it is to honor your mother. While it is not wrong to want to honor our mothers it can be wrong if we elevate them in our hearts above the Word of God. Let us get our priorities straight. Let us come to church for the right reason, to hear and be willing to obey the Word of God. That gives mothers the right kind of honor for the Word of God commands us to **HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise)**, ³**SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH. Eph 6:2-3**

Putting the Word of God first does not lessen any person's love and honor for his mother, just the opposite, it teaches us to do that very thing. Is it not true that it is not in the churches of God that teach the Bible that you find mothers being treated shabbily and not being honored? No, you won't find that in the church but it is the modern day women's liberation movement that makes motherhood appear to be undesirable, that presses for abortion on demand so that women can be liberated from motherhood. It is in that philosophy that the term mother has become less honorable?

Christ was not ignoring his mother or his brethren; rather he was teaching us something very important --that mother and father, sister and brother and our closest family must never come before our heavenly Father and His precious, life giving Word.

I find in this portion of scripture the criterion for Christ's attention and approval, and it is the same for all people in all places in all ages. There must be a willingness to submit to the Word of God as the authoritative Word. This is not simply a reading of the Bible or a coming to church to hear the Bible taught and preached. It goes down deep into the very response of the heart, the yieldedness of the soul.

When the Word of God is preached, do you listen with an ear to hear what God would tell you to do? Do you come desiring above all to give ear to the Word of God?

Some people want to have their ears tickled. They want to hear something new, something curious, startling and exciting. They want to be entertained and stimulated but there is no true inclination to apply the Word of God to their life. Do I speak to some person today who has listened to the Word of God many times but you have never truly surrendered your life to Christ. You have never closed with Christ and said, Lord, I will follow you. I will do what your Word says to do no matter what it may cost me to obey? Dear friend, I encourage you to listen believably. I urge you to yield full obedience to Christ.

There may be some here today who would obey your mother's word, or your father's word. Some perhaps who wish that there were a mother alive to tell you what to do, who you could go to with your problems and perplexities, but that you haven't yet come to the place where you will do what God says to do. Mother and Daddy's word is more important and precious to you than the Word of the living God. Is that your case today?

Oh, listen, beloved, if a mother or a father knows the Lord then their Words can be used to lead you to the Savior. But if they themselves have not put the Word of God foremost, then they may even stand in the way of you knowing the Lord and obeying his Word. Some mothers by example and precept lead their children God ward, but, alas, some do not.

The mother of England's famous William E. Gladstone led her son to faith in Christ when he was nine. He chose as his life motto "In practice, the great thing is that the life of God may be the supreme habit of my soul." He also wrote, "All I think, all I write, all I am is based, on the divinity of Jesus Christ, the central hope of our poor, wayward race."

Oliver Cromwell's mother taught him the simple truths of Scripture and he chose as his favorite verse **I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.** (Phil 4:13).

The mother of Dwight L. Moody struggled against poverty on a New England farm. A widow of many problems, she taught her son the importance of eternal values. At 17 years of age, Moody accepted Christ and a few years later dedicated his life for service.

The mother of William Penn so impressed him with the importance of faith in Christ that he took as his life text: **For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.** (1 John. 5: 4).

Sir Isaac Newton's mother prayed with and for her son every day of her life. It was the grief of her deathbed that she left a seven-year-old son to the mercy of a rough world. Newton said, "I was born in a home of godliness and dedicated to God in my infancy."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon that prince of preachers wrote, "I cannot tell how much I owe to the solemn words and prayers of my good mother. It was the custom on Sunday evenings, while we were children, for her to stay at home with us. We sat around the table and read verse by verse, while she explained the Scripture to us. After that was done, then came the time of pleading with God. Some of the words of our mother's prayers we shall never forget, even when our heads are gray. I remember her once praying thus: 'Now, Lord, if my children go on in sin, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Jesus Christ.'"

Christ Himself gives us the supreme example of submission and obedience to the Word of God. We are taught in the Word of God, **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:5-11 (NASB)**

Christ taught us that the will of the Father is that we believe in the Son and follow him. He said, ³⁸**"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that**

of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” John 6:38 40 (NASB)

The most important matter on the agenda of life is that you have a family relationship with the heavenly Father. This relationship can only be established in Jesus Christ; therefore it takes priority over everything else in life. Christ promises us that those who hear the Word of God and do it are his mother and his brethren. Are you identified as a mother or father, a sister or brother in the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ? Come to Christ today and settle this matter on this beautiful Mother's Day.

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