

Who Is a Part of the Family of God?

Mark 3:31-35

Intro: 1) In the spirit of tolerance, non-judgmentalism and sentimental inclusivism, some theologians teach and many people believe that everyone is a child of God, we all are children of God. We call this teaching “universalism” or “universal reconciliation,” if you look at it eschatologically and how things will eventually end up.

2) Keith DeRose, a professor of philosophy at Yale University lays out quite clearly for us what universalism affirms: “Universalism refers to the position that eventually all human beings will be saved and will enjoy everlasting life with Christ...In short, then, it’s the position that every human being will, eventually at least, make it to the party” (“Universalism and the Bible: The Really Good News”).

3) While some like DeRose seek to marshal thoughtful and sophisticated arguments to support their thesis, it gets crushed on the rock solid truth of many, many Scriptures, one being the startling and shocking words of Jesus in Mark 3:31-35.

4) In this text Jesus’ intent is not to shoot down the false doctrine of Universalism, and yet he does so and at the expense of his own family. Verses 31-35 are thematically connected to vs. 20-21. The religious leaders have accused Jesus of being an agent of Satan (vs. 22-30). His family, sad to say, accuse him of being deranged and in need of forced confinement (v. 21). It is in this context Jesus makes clear who is family and who is not, who is in and who is out. His words could not be more striking. His words could not be more clear.

I. Being a part of the family of God is not by physical descent or relationship 3:31-33

- Mary and the brothers of Jesus arrive, probably at the home of Peter’s mother-in-law in Capernaum. It may be that his family has just arrived from Nazareth with the intent to seize Him and take Him home, convinced He is out of His mind (v. 21).
- Matthew 13:55 informs us that Jesus has at least 4 brother, their names were “James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas.” Matthew 13:56 notes He also had sisters, but they are not named.
- Interestingly they are “standing outside” (and others are on the inside!) and had to “send to him” and “call him” (v. 31). Word finally gets to Him in v. 32 (read).
- The response of Jesus in v. 33 is shocking in the strongly ethno-centric, patriarchal, family-centered culture of that day! He implies here, and makes clear in v. 35, that physical descent and relationship is not how one becomes a member of the family of God. In fact, what is He saying?
 1. No physical family is ultimately necessary.

2. No particular race or culture is ultimately essential.
 3. When you are a member of the family of God, you are a part of the only family that really matters.
 4. The family of God is a spiritual reality not a physical one, joining together zealots, tax-collectors, thieves, murders, liars, cheats, legalists, self-righteous religionists, and all kinds of others sinners just like you and me.
- The nature of Mary and the brother's request was natural, normal, and expected. The response of Jesus was not!

II. Being a part of the family of God is not the result of finding Jesus interesting or helpful 3:34

- If physical relationships are not the key to a spiritual relationship with God, what else might be ruled out? What else might be a false perspective on this crucial issue?
- Verse 34 provides additional insight. The room is crowded and filled to overflow with those who were attracted to Jesus. They loved His miracles. They loved His exorcisms. They loved the show and what He could do for them. Remember, the crowds are never viewed in a favorable light in Mark. Crowds do not follow and stay for the long haul with Jesus. Individuals do and of their own volition and decision.
- Hence Jesus looked around at those who were seated around Him. Peterson in *The Message* says, "Looking around, taking in everyone seated around him."
- Keep in mind who is in the room:
 - The 12 (including Judas)
 - Scribes from Jerusalem
 - Pharisee? (3:6)
 - Herodians? (3:6)
 - Those healed of disease (3:16)
 - Those healed of demon-possession (3:11)
 - Those who were simply curious
- Then, as now, people follow Jesus for different reason and with different agendas. Some are good and others are bad. Some want Him and other want what He can give them and do for them. Some follow for who He is and others follow for what they make Him out to be, one they can fit into their world, wants, plans, priorities, and preconceived notion. Oh how insightful John 2:23-25 is at this point:

Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not

entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

III. Being a part of the family of God is revealed by doing the will of God **3:35**

- Jesus provides a clear, simple, and blanket statement concerning who is a part of the family of God. It is anyone who “does the will of God,” who obeys the will of God.
- Luke 8:21 says it is “those who hear the word of God and do it.”
- Kent Hughes is correct when he says, “Obedience does not originate relationship with God (faith does that), but obedience is a sign of it” (*Mark*, Vol. I, 98). He also notes this new family relationship is far superior (it is eternal), far stronger, far more satisfying, far more demanding, and far more dear than any human family relationship.
- I love the insight of Tim Keller, as he relates our text to that of the “Prodigal Son” in Luke 15: “Jesus...he is the true elder brother. He willingly brings us into the Father’s family at his expense. He died for us, he was plundered for us. We sit at the Father’s table dressed in Jesus’ clothes, with his ring on our finger. All through him. We must celebrate and live out the fact that we are members of a kingdom family, and it is all at the expense of our big brother, Jesus Christ. Do you live every day as if you are a member of God’s family, accepted and loved? Remember, a child in a family obeys not in order to be loved and accepted, but because he already is loved and accepted” (*Gospel of Mark*, 37-38).
- We should not be surprised at the importance Jesus attaches to the “will of God.” It is a critically important theme throughout the Bible. Just note a sampling of examples:
 1. “And when he had removed him [Saul], he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’” – Acts 13:22
 2. “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” – Romans 12:2
 3. “Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus...” – 1 Corinthians 1:1
 4. “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...” – 2 Corinthians 1:1
 5. “...not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,...” – Ephesians 6:6
 6. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;...” – 1 Thessalonians 4:3
 7. “...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:18

8. “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” – Hebrews 10:36
9. “For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.” 1 Peter 2:15
10. “For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.” – 1 Peter 3:17
11. “...so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.” – 1 Peter 4:2
12. “Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” – 1 Peter 4:19
13. “And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” – 1 John 2:17

Conclusion:

“Some Biblical and Theological Observations”

- 1) We became children of God by spiritual birth not physical birth (John 3:1-8)
- 2) No one is born a Christian. You become a Christian and a member of God’s family by adoption!
 - Galatians 4:4-7
 - Romans 8:12-16
- 3) Becoming part of the family of God begins when we receive and believe in Jesus (John 1:12), which is a sovereign work of His will not ours (John 1:13)
- 4) Doing the will of God gives evidence that we are part of God’s family (Mark 3:35)
- 5) Those incapable of knowing and understanding the will of God are objects of God’s saving grace and mercy in Christ. People spend eternity in hell as a result of their conscious and willful acts of rebellion and disobedience against the revelation of God they have received (see Deut 1:39; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 20:11-12).
 - For more on this see “Why We Believe Children Who Die Go To Heaven” by Danny Akin and Al Mohler at www.danielakin.com
- 6) Revelation brings responsibility. The more you know, the greater is your accountability. Punishment is not equal in hell and rewards are not all the same in heaven.
- 7) In spite of sophisticated and even well-intended arguments, there is no biblical warrant or evidence that people will have a post-mortem opportunity to believe in Jesus or that eventually all persons (perhaps even demons) will be saved. Just as eternal life is forever, so is eternal death.
- 8) If it is true that all will eventually be saved, evangelism is unnecessary and missions is a waste of time, lives, and billions of dollars.

- 9) Because the Bible promises that people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation will be in heaven at the throne to worship the Lamb (Rev 5, 7), we work and rejoice in knowing that the family of God will consist of the 16,548 people groups scattered around the world, 6,918 as of 2011 still remaining unreached. Note for your careful and prayerful consideration, 30 of the larger and still yet unengaged people groups, all of which register 0.00% Christian. It is the will of God that they hear and believe. It is the will of God that we go and get them for His glory, that they too might become a part of the Family of God!

People Group	Country	Population	Percentage of Evangelicals
Algerian, Arabic-speaking	Algeria	24,526,000	0.00%
Arab, Moroccan	Morocco	13,531,000	0.00%
Arab, Saudi-Hijazi	Saudi Arabia	8,207,000	0.00%
Arab, Saudi-Najdi	Saudi Arabia	10,943,000	0.00%
Arain, Muslim	Pakistan	10,663,000	0.00%
Azerbaijani, Azeri Turk	Iran	14,711,000	0.00%
Baloch, Eastern	Pakistan	7,660,000	0.00%
Bania	India	25,717,000	0.00%
Bhil	India	13,371,000	0.00%
Brahman	India	54,955,000	0.00%
Chamar	India	48,011,00	0.00%
Hui	China	12,646,000	0.00%
Jat, Muslim	Pakistan	32,013,000	0.00%
Kapu	India	14,613,000	0.00%
Koiri	India	7,050,00	0.00%

Kumhar	India	13,702,000	0.00%
Kurd, Kurmanji	India	8,141,000	0.00%
Kurmi	India	16,469,000	0.00%
Lohar	India	8,398,000	0.00%
Mahratta	India	26,325,000	0.00%
Mahratta Kunbi	India	6,556,000	0.00%
Malay, Peninsular	Malaysia	8,605,000	0.00%
Mali	India	8,490,000	0.00%
Mappila	India	8,844,000	0.00%
Nai	India	10,531,000	0.00%
Pashtun, Northern	Pakistan	22,522,000	0.00%
Rajput, Muslim	Pakistan	16,922,000	0.00%
Santal	India	7,694,000	0.00%
Shaikh	Bangladesh	132,950,000	0.00%
Shaikh	India	73,079,000	0.00%
Shaikh	Pakistan	12,230,000	0.00%
Somali	Somalia	7,877,000	0.00%
Turk	Turkey	52,739,000	0.00%
Uyghur	China	10,833,000	0.00%
Yadav	India	54,272,000	0.00%