

24-Jesus' True Family: Doers of God's Will

Series on Mark

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Bible Text: Mark 3:31-35
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We turn now to the Gospel of Mark 3, the last five verses, 31 through 35. Mark 3:31-35. Hear the word of God as it comes to us this morning.

31 There came then his [that is, Jesus'] brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

May God bless the reading of his word.

Dear congregation, it is an incredibly serious thing to be a human being, to be traveling to eternity with one soul to gain or to lose. It's a serious thing to have to give an account before God one day, of every thought, every word, every action. What a solemn thought, everything shall come back before God on that great day. Tonight at midnight, 2017 will be past. Every action and thought and word will be frozen in the memory bank of God. God will forget nothing. He knows all things and one day very soon, we stand before him for a never-ending eternity and our destiny will correlate to how we have lived this life, this tiny tiny life, even if we live to be 100 years old, it's a drop in the bucket compared to eternity. A serious thing to be a human being, destined for a never-ending eternity.

Have we taken even five minutes at any point in this year to just sit in a chair and think about these things, think about eternity? One old Puritan said if all the sand in the world were gathered together into a sky-piercing mountain and a bird were to come along every 1,000 years and take one grain of sand and move it to a new pile, after the millions and billions and trillions and zillions and whatever else there is, years would pass that and that entire pile of sand would be moved, eternity will have just begun. How utterly foolish to live for this life and this world in the face of a never-ending eternity.

These weeks, some of us have spent quite a bit of time with our families. Others of us, perhaps, have had family far away and grieved that we couldn't spend time with them. But the most important thing, congregation, as we cross the threshold into 2018 is that we belong to the better, the deeper, the more profound, the eternal family, the family of Jesus, and for that we need to be born again, we need to have a personal, intimate relationship with the Head of that family, the Father of that family, the Lord Jesus Christ, and we need to love that family and walk in the ways of that family as they walk in the ways of God.

So the message I want to bring you on this New Year's eve day, is a message do you belong to the family of Jesus? We want to find out what that means. How do you know if you belong to this precious eternal family? You see, our families, as precious as they are, will not be forever. In fact, the goal of us fathers ought to be that as heads of the household, and mothers as carers and nurturers in the household, that our families would be folded into that greater eternal family of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what we need and so this is a critical subject for us this morning.

Our text you can find in Mark 3:31-35. I'll read again only the last two verses, "he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Then we also read this in conjunction with Lord's Day 49.

Q. 124. Which is the third petition?

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"; that is, grant that we and all men may renounce our own will, and without murmuring obey thy will, which is only good; that so every one may attend to, and perform the duties of his station and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.

So our theme then is "Jesus' True Family: Doers of God's Will." We'll look at the circumstances behind his radical statement; the primary message of it; the heavenly pattern modeling it; and the practical conclusions from it. Jesus' true family are doers of God's will: the circumstances; the message; the pattern; and the conclusions.

A few weeks ago, we saw Jesus calling the 12 disciples in Mark 3 and afterward he delivered, as we can find from Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Then he entered into a house and there were two incidents that happened there that we studied last time. First, some relatives of his said that they were thinking he was having some kind of nervous breakdown because he couldn't even find time to eat or to rest due to the multitude pressing around him, and his enemies said, you recall, that he was possessed by a devil. Well, Jesus is still in this house, still surrounded by this multitude in the last five verses we are called to expound for you this morning, and Mark paints a rather graphic picture of the scene. He says in verse 32 that the multitude sat round about him. So Jesus is in this house, people are probably sitting around him in oriental fashion, and he is standing in the midst of them with people on all sides 360 degrees around him.

Verse 34 makes it even more graphic, he looked round about on them which sat about him.

So Jesus is in the midst and the multitude is gathered around him in a circle and in the parallel passage in Luke 8, we read that his mother and his brothers could not come at him, that is, they could not reach him because of the press of the crowd. So that fits in with where we were last time, that the house is full and there was a crowd outside the house and probably what happened is that word had come to Nazareth about Jesus, about his over-work and some had said to Mary and some had said to Jesus' own brothers that he was possessed by a demon, others said he's going to have a nervous breakdown, and they're very concerned, and so his mother and his brothers come and reach the outskirts of this crowd. Now of course, in Roman Catholic theology, we're told that Jesus doesn't have any brothers or sisters because Mary was a perpetual virgin. Of course that is nonsense. Mary, indeed, was impregnated by the Holy Spirit, who gave birth to the Messiah, but there's no reason to think that when the Bible says "mother and brothers" it doesn't mean mother and brothers. There is another word in Greek sometimes used for cousins and for distant relatives, but it's never used, this word is never used for anything else than spiritual brothers or physical brothers or describing a relationship of commonly shared humanity. It's never a synonym for some other relative.

So we know that Jesus' literal mother and his literal brothers, his brothers are named later by name in Mark 6:3, are approaching the crowd and they're passing the word because they can't get through, they're passing the word forward and it finally reaches Jesus while he's preaching that his mother and his brothers are here and they want to see him. Now how much of these rumors they believed, we don't know. Perhaps they half-believed that he was near a breakdown because of his over-work. That's quite possible. They certainly didn't believe he was demon possessed. They had witnessed his life for 30 years. But also it could be that they had come not only for his welfare but also for the welfare of their own family name. These are pretty bad rumors about Jesus and they're concerned perhaps also about their family and their reputation, and so they come, they want to speak to Jesus. They want to see how he is and so they pass the word forward and other people pass it forward, and finally it gets to the front and there's a murmuring in the crowd and Jesus is distracted while preaching and someone finally just breaks into his sermon and says, "Your mother and your brothers are here to see you. They want to speak with you. They're seeking you."

At that point, of course, everyone expects Jesus to break off his sermon and go and see his mother and brothers, especially if you understand Hebrew culture in those days where the family is the most sacred bond and intimate. You would never never refuse a request from your mother who is seeking you. But of course, Jesus is the Son of God, he's preaching the Gospel and preaching is the most important task. God had only one Son and he made him a preacher, said one old Puritan. There is nothing so critical as that.

So how does Jesus respond? What is his primary message to these circumstances? That's my second thought. Jesus answers them, verse 33, "Who is my mother or my brethren?" That's like an electrified statement, a shocking statement. In Hebrew culture, you would

never never ask such a question. It's confusing for the people. "What do you mean? He knows who his mother and his brothers are. What in the world is he doing?" You see, Jesus is standing in the midst of this pressing crowd, his sermon is being interrupted, he's bringing them the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and so when his sermon is distracted by these people who are saying, "Your mother and your brothers want to see you," he did what any wise preacher would do, rather than rebuke it, he grasped it as an opportunity to teach truth. So as the people are thinking surely he's going to cut off his sermon and respond warmly to the request of his mother and brothers, Jesus responds with almost a feigned ignorance and he says, "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers? Are they seeking for me? Do you know who they are?" And you can see by this time people are hanging on what he's about to say. They sense he's going to say something profound.

So then Jesus takes action. Look at verse 34, "he looked round about on them which sat about him." So literally he turns around, he looks completely 360 degrees, and we read also he lifts up his hand, he stretches forth his hand, says Matthew in the parallel account, and as he's looking, by the way, the same word "looking" is used here as was used earlier in Mark for his being grieved and angered about the hardness of evil hearts, and while he's looking, while he lifts up his hands, he says to them, "Do you know who my mother is and my brothers are? They're those among you who are doing the will of God. They are my mother, my brothers and my sisters."

This is the message and a powerful message it is. Jesus is doing the unthinkable. He is starting a new family, a new holy people, and he's doing so without regard for precious family bonds so strong in the Hebrew culture, and he gives to the people both a command and an explanation. The command is, "Behold." It's an imperative, "Behold my mother. Behold my brothers. Behold my sisters. They're sitting in front of me." And the explanation is, "They are the ones who do the will of God." So he's saying to them, "Don't strain your neck and try to look to the outer fringes of the crowd and see my literal mother and my literal brothers. Don't be distracted by my message concerning the kingdom of God. But you be my mother and you be my brothers and you be my sisters. I welcome you into the family of God."

So you see what he's doing, having captured their ears with a question, having captured their eyes with his penetrating look and upraised hand, and having capture their minds by his command, he now has them fully in his hands and he says this, "Whoever is sitting here, if you do the will of God, no matter what your social status, no matter what your class, no matter what your background, you are my brother, you are my sister, you are my mother. Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, my mother, my sister."

So this is powerful. You see, Jesus elsewhere of course, you know that, he said, "He who does not hate his wife and mother and father and brothers and sisters cannot be my disciple." Now that's hyperbole in one sense, but what Jesus is saying, of course, is that there is a fierce priority that he requires in all who profess to follow him. As important as earthly family ties are, they do not have priority over our commitment to God's will and God's family. Seek ye first the kingdom, the King of this kingdom and his kingdom, that

is, Jesus Christ, for these spiritual ties with union with Jesus are the most important family ties we can acquire in this life and they are family ties that will last forever because if we are united with Christ, we one day, you see, will be with him in eternity. He will be our everlasting Father, as Isaiah calls him, and our brothers and sisters will abide forever and they will be all those who are in spiritual union with him and we will do the will of God perfectly in that realm of glory.

Do you understand how shockingly radical this message is? It's broadly inclusive and it's broadly exclusive, blessedly inclusive. "Those are the only ones who belong to my family, who do the will of God." That's what Jesus is saying. "If the general trajectory of your life is not doing the will of God, if the general trajectory of your life is that you want to do your will even though you sit in church, even though you have an outward nominal form of Christianity in your walk, in your lifestyle, if your will is precedent over God's will, you cannot be my disciple. You are not in my family." That's powerful. It's examining. Sobering. On the other side, the statement, this radical statement is soberingly exclusive. You see, if you're not bound to Jesus with cords of faith and love that produce a life of careful obedience that really want to do his will, you are not part of his family.

So I need to ask you the question, myself as well: in 2017, what were our hearts like? Was this our great question, I want to do the will of God? Were our intellects seeking to do the will of God? Were our purposes seeking to do the will of God? Was our life seeking to do the will of God? Was our own immediate family seeking to do the will of God? Was it our daily business to do the will of God? Did we really belong this past year to the family of God because we sought to do the will of God? That's a critical question. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same shall be my brother, my mother, and my sister."

Now that is not to say, I hope you understand this, that we get into heaven or that we get converted by our doing. No, Jesus is saying, of course, we're saved only by coming to him but he just preached the Sermon on the Mount, only by being emptied of self, only by becoming poor in spirit and mourning over sin and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, do we find entrance into the family of God, but once we are born again, once the Spirit works these things in us, you see, the hallmark of the Spirit in the life of sanctification is that you want to do the will of God.

So that's why we need to really ask ourselves three questions. First in our lives and in this past year as well, have we, first of all, come to Christ to know that will? Have we responded to his invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest"? After all, that is God's will in his foundational command. It's the first great command. God doesn't say, "Have you agonized for years and years to get into the kingdom?" God doesn't say, "Have you just done all your effort to get into the kingdom?" But God just says this, "Have you come to me? Have you believed in me? Have you repented at my feet?"

Can you say with the poet, "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidst me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come." Or did you

manage somehow to live through the whole year of 2017 saying, "I hope that some day I might yet be converted. I'm just unconverted." You know, we like that word "unconverted" when we're unconverted because it's kind of a passive word. It almost implies that maybe somehow because God hasn't converted us yet, that it's his responsibility. But the New Testament never talks that way, does it? Never. The New Testament always says, "Come. Believe. Repent." There are 3,000 texts in the Bible that invite you to come to Jesus and believe and repent and be saved, and there are 0 texts in the Bible that give you an excuse for being unconverted. Don't think you're going to enter into Jesus' family when you stay away from Jesus himself, and don't cast yourself at his feet and trust in him alone for salvation. You'll wait forever if you wait for a particular spectacular experience. He says, "Come to me just as you are with all your sin, laboring, heavy-laden. I will give you rest."

Secondly, we need to ask as we examine our lives for the last year not only have I come to him but is my life marked by a serious endeavor to obey God? That's the fruit. That's the fruit of belonging to the family of God. When you are a happy child in the family, you want to obey your father and your mother. When you are a truly happy Christian serving God, you want to obey. You want to do the will of God and so when you hear the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus preaches, you want to be poor in spirit, you want to mourn over your sin, you want to be meek, you want to hunger and thirst after righteousness, you want to be merciful, you want to be pure in heart, you want to be a peacemaker, you want to rejoice in persecution, you want to cut off the right hand if it offends God and pluck out the right eye, you want to love your enemies and go the second mile and turn the other cheek, you want your yea to be yea and your nay to be nay, you want to do the will of God. Now that doesn't mean you achieve it perfectly. Not in this life, of course not, but is your life on a different plane? Is it on a different trajectory now? Is this what the engine that runs your life? When you get up in the morning, is it your desire to hate sin today? To kill sin? To walk in paths of righteousness? Do you want to do the will of God? Is there a new piety within you? A new purity? A new godliness? A new desire? An elevatedness? A majesty that you want your life to reflect the King of kings and the Prince of princes and the Lord of lords? You want to be like Jesus? You want to be conformed to his image? You want to do the will of God? You see, every child of God can say, "That's my desire. That's my passion. That's my longing. Oh, would to God I would do it more consistently, but I cannot deny this, I want to do the will of God." And you endeavor to do it.

But then, thirdly, is your life being controlled by the will of God? Controlled by the will of God. You see, the standard, the rule, the regulations, the law of God, the Gospel of God, does it dominate your life? Does it control? Does it guide you in making decisions or are you just serving yourself and doing what you want to do? Do you say like so many people do today, "Well, I know I'm a Christian but you can't always be righteous, you can't always, you know, be good." What? You see, if you're a Christian you want to be good, you want to be righteous, you want to be controlled by the will and the word of God. Maybe I can ask it this way. If you have a certain conviction today about something and you find in the Bible that your conviction is wrong but it's something you really like, what will you do? You see, if you do the will of God, you will deny yourself what you

enjoyed, what you thought you enjoyed because now you will see it as sin because it's not according to the will of God. If your eye offends you, Jesus said, pluck it out.

So you see, the point is this: those who belong to my family pledge allegiance to me, Jesus is saying, to my Father. They want to do the will of God. They want to live in obedience to God and they make an endeavor to do so and increasingly their will, their thinking, their speaking becomes more and more controlled by the will of God as recorded in the word of God. So I want to live a Bible-based life. I want to live a relationship with Jesus Christ that is controlled by him. I want to do obeisance to him. This is what it means to belong to the family of God. You're no longer your own boss. He controls you. My only comfort in life and death is that I don't belong to myself but I belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

Now the Heidelberg Catechism says this so beautifully in Lord's Day 49 when it talks about the heavenly pattern modeling Jesus' radical statement. It says grant that we in all men, you see, the instructor here doesn't think that he has it either in himself but it's a prayer, you see. Grant that we and all men may renounce our own will and without murmuring obey thy will which is only good so that every one may attend to and perform the duties of his station and calling, as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven. Now what the Catechism is doing is it's giving us three wonderful points about the heavenly pattern of doing God's will. Here they are. When we do God's will and belong to Jesus' family, there is an honorable self-denial, an honorable self-denial that permeates our life.

Children, you often ask your parents for many things. Maybe one day you'll go to your mom and you'll say, "Mom, can I have a cookie?" And your mom says, "No, it's almost supper time." And you say, "Mom, please, just one?" Or your dad tells you it's time for bed and you say, "Can't I stay up just a little while longer?" Or your mom says, "Go clean up your room," and you say, "But can't I just keep playing for a little while?" You see, in every case you're asking your dad or your mom to change their mind. You want them to allow you to do what you want to do and don't want to do what they want you to do.

Now in our lives even when we're Christians, we do this far too often with God, even in prayer we can do this, we can ask God for one thing after another and then we say, "Thy will be done," but what we really are asking is, "My will be done," by the content of our petitions. That's why, you see, the Catechism begins with this: if you really want to do God's will, if you want to belong to God's family, your prayer will be, "Grant that we may renounce our own will." Self-denial. Honorable self-denial.

Secondly, submission to God's will. Submission to God's will and without murmuring obey thy will. You see, God's will is what guides all events from God's hidden sovereign decree, but God's will is also revealed in his law and we are called to live by that law. We don't know the hidden decree so God has recorded what his will is in the Bible, in the law, but also in the Gospel, that we are to believe in his Son and to repent before him. So God is asking us if we're going to belong to his family to walk and live by the Gospel and by the law so that we may submit our will to both, and that our will may be controlled by

the love of God revealed in his Gospel and Jesus, but also by the love of God revealed in his law, especially the 10 Commandments, through which he guides us in every area of our life and teaches us how to walk as a Christian.

So we must know the Bible if we're going to do the will of God. We must know the word with our mind, we must cherish the word with our heart, and we must obey the word from our will. Our consciences must be trained and molded and shaped biblically so that we learn to want to do the love, the law and the Gospel of God, and then when we say, "Thy will be done," we want to be part of the doing of that. We want to participate together with all believers in the doing of it. We don't pray, "Thy will be known," only. That's important to know God's will but we want to pray, "Thy will be done. Help me to know thy will and then help me to go out and do it, Lord."

Then, thirdly, our instructor speaks not only of honorable self-denial and submission to God's will, honorable submission, but he also speaks of heavenly servants. Heavenly servants. We are to do this as faithfully and willingly as the angels do in heaven, without murmuring, with cheerful obedience. The angels do things willingly, cheerfully, without hesitation. They obey God perfectly, joyfully, faithfully, and you see, that's what we want to do if we're in the family of God. Psalm 103 puts it this way, verse 20, "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word." The angels, as it were, hang upon the word of God. They want to do the will of God readily, immediately, cheerfully.

So instead of saying, "Well, mom, can I have another cookie?" someone who wants to do the will of his parents says, "Mom, can I help you?" You say, "What can I do for you? I want to please you?" Then you cheerfully do what mom asks. That's a whole different attitude, you see. That's how a Christian feels. "I don't obey God just so I'm hoping that somehow because I obey him I'm going to stay out of hell. No, I obey God because I love him and I want to do his will and I want to please him and I belong to his family and I cherish him. I cherish his approval so I want to be like the angels in heaven. I want a new obedience worked in me by his Holy Spirit." Then even though you're not perfect but your sins are washed away in the blood of Christ, because that's the trajectory of your life, you're revealing that you belong to the family of God. You are the brother, the sister of the Lord Jesus Christ, of your elder brother.

I want to just set before you as we close this morning three practical conclusions that by implication flow out of Jesus' radical statement that whosoever shall do the will of God is his mother and father, or mother and sister and brother. The first is this: Jesus' radical statement ought to help us promote and cherish spiritual communion of saints among Christ's brothers and sisters because they're our brothers and sisters as well. His shocking statement is actually therapeutic for the invisible church of God for every true believer knows what it is to find spiritual friends in this world among the people of God to be a very rich treasure in our lives. What a blessing it is when we belong to a family that transcends flesh and blood, even greater blessing when those friends can be within our own earthly family. What a blessing when husband and wife have such a friendship together or father, mother and a child. How lonely it can be in the Christian life when

people are brought into the Christian faith by the amazing work of the Holy Spirit but their entire family is left outside. I've met many such people in my travels. Many, the only one in their family and how they then treasure finding spiritual brothers and sisters in the church of God. What a blessing.

I remember preaching one time when a young lady came just weeping to me after the sermon. I was preaching about heaven and the relationship of God's people in heaven being brothers and sisters to each other forever and that that begins already in this earth in the invisible church, and she came up to me and she said, "You know, my parents are both dead. They weren't Christians. I've got no brothers and sisters. I have only one uncle and he's a drunk and he lives in Australia 10,000 miles away. And I was actually weeping in my room for loneliness this week and saying I have no family, and suddenly you preached a sermon this morning and I began to look around and say my family is here in the church. These are my brothers and my sisters. I do have a family. I have the best family. I have a family that will never die."

You see, when you want to do the will of God, there's so much that comes against you. Your own flesh, your own natural tendencies to sin, indwelling sin, the tempting world, the buffeting Satan, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, what a blessing it is to have others who are in that same warfare with you, who struggle with you to do the will of God, to encourage one another. Let us walk in the ways of God. The old Puritans called this the spiritual brotherhood. That's exemplified powerfully by the Puritan, John Bunyan's, "Pilgrim's Progress." You notice that Christian is hardly ever walking alone. Did you notice that? He's got Faithful with him. When Faithful dies, he's got Hopeful with him. They walk together to the Celestial City. Christian is always talking to someone. He's always seeking to encourage someone or be encouraged by someone to do the will of God. This is what we need.

"These are my mothers, my brothers and my sisters right around me," Jesus said. Not just one but all who do the will of God. So they are to be brothers and sisters to each other. As we enter 2018, would you please think about that and would you please treasure those friendships and maybe, maybe we need to cut out some things in our lives, some stuff things, some materialistic things, so that we can treasure and develop more close bonding friendships between brothers and sisters in Christ and encourage one another to do the will of God.

The second take-away from this text by implication is that we get some guidance here on how to react to pressure when our nearest relatives would divert us from the will of God. Jesus gives us an example here. Some of you face this more than others but this is a common experience among true Christians all around the world when they become Christians. Their family doesn't understand how they now have a new view of the Lord's Day, for example, and they want to throw a party on the Lord's Day and the new Christian says, "I can't come." It's very difficult. You don't want to disappoint your family. There's pressure. There's temptation to compromise, you see. But Jesus sets such a wonderful example. He doesn't demean Mary. He doesn't demean his brothers. But he demonstrates that the will of his Father took precedence over the will of his mother and

sometimes we just need to politely lovingly say, "I cannot do this because I believe it's the will of God based on the word of God to go another way." And maybe they'll be upset with you but, you see, Jesus says by implication by his own example, "You're not going to win them by compromising with them. You must rather prove to them that you are bound to someone whom they cannot see with ties that are deeper and more permanent and stronger even than the ties of blood relatives and earthly relationships." This is the point, "Jesus has become number 1. My spiritual kinship with him is more satisfying, more precious, more demanding than any other friendship. My friendship with Jesus is in a league by itself. He demands my whole heart, my whole will, my whole life, my whole mind." So Jesus gives us guidance in how to deal with others who would seek to steer us away from the will of God, even nearest relatives, even his God-fearing mother Mary who bore him and nurtured him. What a lesson.

Then finally, thirdly, this passage also provides comfort to the weakest and feeblest of the true disciples of Jesus. Maybe when I was preaching before we sang, you were thinking, "Now I'm really confused. I don't know where I belong because, yes, it's my desire to do the will of God but I fall short every day." Yes, yes, there's hope for you here because when Jesus looked around and said, "These are my brothers and my sisters," who was in that crowd? Well, we saw, he had chosen 12. Peter was in that crowd, the man who would deny him and say, "I don't know him." The man who would often go his own way and be impetuous. A man who would even use his old sailor's language to curse and swear that he didn't know Jesus when he denied him. And the other disciples who would desert him. You see, Jesus is not saying that only those belong to my family who are perfect. We don't believe in perfectionism. He's saying those belong to my family who have a trajectory of doing the will of God. Not those who never slip or stumble or fall. Jesus had holy frustration very often with those 11 true disciples but this is encouraging, I say, because he never disowned any of them.

He never disowned any of them and that's an encouragement for us. We need to remember that our elder brother will never un-brother us despite our un-brotherly attitudes toward him at times. Despite all our weaknesses. And so as we leave the house of God and the last Sabbath of this year, we may be encouraged if we are truly earnestly desirous to do the will of God but feel we are coming short time and time again, he won't desert you. Not next year nor the following nor for all eternity. Thank God for the brotherhood of Jesus Christ, the unfailing brotherhood. Thank God that there is one and only one but it's sufficient, who does the will of God perfectly and who did it as a substitute for sinners so that when you believe in him and trust in him alone for salvation, he applies his perfect obedience to the will of his Father to your account so all your disobediences will be washed away on the great judgment day and he will bring you to the celestial city, a perfect brotherhood where everyone in glory will perfectly do the will of God and perfectly relate to one another, and you will never again have an un-brotherly thought, an un-brotherly word, or an un-brotherly action against Christ or against your brother, but where your brotherhood to him will be as perfect as his perfect brotherhood to you.

That's the way to look at life, your whole life. That's the way to look at 2017. Did he make one mistake with you? Did he in one instance this past year turn away from you? Did he at one time give you afflictions you didn't deserve or afflictions that wouldn't do you good? No, he was a perfect brother to you in 2017. He's a perfect brother to you all your life. He'll be a perfect brother to you for all eternity because he's always doing the will of his Father for you and the beautiful thing is that one day you'll be just like him. You will be perfect in your brotherhood to him. You'll be as sin-free as he is sin-free and in heaven you'll finally get your wish that you'll no more have to say, "Evil is present with me," but the desire to do the will of God perfectly will be realized despite all your sin here because you'll enter in through the obedience of Jesus and you'll belong to that perfect family of millions upon millions upon millions who do the will of God perfectly to all eternity. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Gracious God, we thank thee so much for this strong radical yet beautiful statement of Jesus and we pray that every person in this audience this morning will be taught by thy Holy Spirit to long to do the will of God, to belong to the family of Jesus, to be his brother and his sister. And Lord, do forgive all our sin that seems to contradict our family belongingness when we are true believers. Wash us clean through the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ and grant that we may do better by thy grace in 2018, that we would think more and speak more and act more in accord with the perfect will of the perfect Father in heaven. Teach us thy will to do and give as we have sung, give us a single eye, thy name to glorify. Forgive, O God, and remember us in Jesus Christ and help us to enjoy the family of God in and through him. We pray also pray for Trudy as she commemorates her birthday this week. Be near to her, Lord, and bless her. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

SUNDAY MORNING

12/31/17

Dr. Joel R. Beuke

Votum and Salutation

Psalter 334

Reading of the Law of God

Scripture Reading: Mark 3:31-35

Prayer

Psalter 233

Sermon Text: Mark 3:31-35

Lord's Day 49

Jesus's True Family: Doers of God's Will

1. *The circumstances behind
Jesus's radical statement*
 2. *The primary message contained
within Jesus's radical statement*
 3. *The heavenly pattern modelling
Jesus's radical statement*
 4. *The practical conclusions from
Jesus's radical statement*
 - Psalter 236 (standing)
 - Sermon Conclusion
 - Closing Prayer
 - Psalter 30
- Doxology of Praise (pg. 415)
Benediction

1. *What were the circumstances that moved Jesus to make such a radical statement about His true family?*

2. *What was Jesus driving at as His primary message in our text? How is His statement both inclusive and exclusive?*

3. *In what ways should our obedience to God's will reflect angelic obedience?*

4. *Why is denying our own will foundational for the Christian life?*

5. *What is involved in submitting to God's will?*

6. *How did Christ fulfil God's will perfectly? How does He begin to teach us to follow in His steps albeit imperfectly?*

7. *List three practical applications or messages that flow out of our text:*

a.

b.

c.