

I. Introduction

A. Breadcrumbs

1. Romans 8:18-30

a. Temporary suffering

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Romans 8:18)

b. Holy Spirit's intercession and strength

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He Who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)

c. God's whole work of redemption is to have a family where all the members look increasingly like their older brother.

For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Romans 8:29)

2. Verbiage

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church at Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints, and help her in whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron of many and of myself as well. (Romans 16:1-2)
By Silvanus, a faithful brother as I regard him, I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. (1 Peter 5:12)

3. I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

4. *The language chosen in Scripture regarding the church is familial.

B. Q: Do we use familial terminology in the church by word only?

II. How Jesus defined the Church, those who followed Him. (Matthew 12:46-50)

A. Context

1. Matthew 10: growing mixed reactions and hostilities toward Jesus and his teaching

2. Matthew 11-12: Jesus doing ministry and constantly being challenged

a. Pharisees: give us a sign

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from You." (Matthew 12:38)

b. Jesus had already done a ton of signs and wonders.

c. Nothing Jesus does will be enough, the sign they will get will be a crucified and then risen Savior.

3. *The assumption here is that all these people belong to God because of their lineage.

Jesus is about to disrupt their thinking and redefine what it looks like to belong to God.

B. Your mother and brothers are here.

While He was still speaking to the people, behold, His mother and His brothers stood outside, asking to speak to Him. (Matthew 12:46)

1. While He was speaking
 - a. Speaking about the unbelief and lack of obedience in this generation that has received the revelation of Jesus in the flesh.
 - b. Jesus is almost mid-sentence in rebuking the scribes and Pharisees.
2. Mother and brothers were outside asking to speak to Jesus.
 - a. Limited information, where and why is not addressed
 - b. What seems most important is that Jesus used the moment to define how He sees the people of God, the Church.

C. *Note: 12:47

1. Omitted because not found in all the MSS
2. NASB 2000, "Someone said to him, "Behold, your mother and your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak with you."

C. Jesus' response

But He replied to the man who told Him, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:48-50)

1. Who is My mother and who are My brothers? (v 48)
 - a. Nature of divine questions
 - 1) Jesus always knows the answer
 - 2) Questions serve both to disrupt and to direct thinking and behavior
 - b. Jesus disrupts and redirects the cultural understanding in His day as He does in our day as well.
 - c. *This has always been God's vision/perspective, we just suffer from our own cultural creep.
2. Here are (Behold) My mother and brothers! (v 49)
 - a. Jesus uses the exact same language to focus attention on the divine view of family.
 - b. My immediate family is defined differently than I have grown up thinking.
3. For whoever does the will of My Father in Heaven is My brother and sister and mother (v 50)
 - a. Present: sister (elevate women, particularly unmarried, in the Kingdom?)
 - b. Absent: Father
 - c. Observations:
 - 1) Father limited to God the Father
 - 2) All human names are "brother."
 - 3) Family is not genealogical because belonging in the church/family of God is not by lineage or biological, it is found in a rebirth through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
 - d. Key to Church as family: being a disciple of Jesus—does the will of our Father
 - 1) One who pursues intimacy with Jesus
 - 2) One who walks faithfully (obedient) with Jesus

4. *There is a definitive response to Jesus and the Scriptures that identifies a person as a family member in God's family. Jesus' primary identifier of family members is first their love and obedience toward God and then their love and submission to each other (first and second greatest commandments). We gather around Jesus, take His teachings to heart, put them into practice, and do God's will. This is the behavior of a family member.

III. What does this mean?

A. Truth

1. People who have come to know and obey Jesus are deeper family with each other than biology alone.
2. However, the biological family is not diminished, the eternal family is elevated. Scripture does teach that one who does not care for their family is behaving like one who does not know Jesus.

B. Our experience

1. The Bible clearly teaches that the Church is not an organization, it's not a club, it's not an ideology, it is a family.
 - a. I believe this to be true.
 - b. I experience this to be more mental ascent rather than lived experience.
2. The elephant in the room

So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by Whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. (Romans 8:12-17)