

**The Book of Mark**  
**Jesus: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord? (Part 3)**  
**Mark 3:20-35**  
**June 21, 2009**

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Tonight, we return to our study of the Gospel of Mark and specifically to Mark - the end of Mark 3. It's really a remarkable account that we're studying together and introduces us to a concept that was popularized by C.S. Lewis. Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, has an article on what it calls "C.S. Lewis' Trilemma." Essentially, in *Mere Christianity*, Lewis refers to Jesus' claims such as the authority to forgive sins, behaving as if He really was the person offended and He could forgive them, His claims to have always existed, His claims that He would come back and judge the world at the end of time. Lewis, Wikipedia goes on to say, argues that, "These claims logically exclude the possibility that Jesus was a great moral teacher, because Lewis believes that no one making such claims could possibly be rationally or morally reliable unless He was God." C.S. Lewis didn't create the trilemma. As we have been learning over the last couple of weeks of our study together (before I left **and** will continue tonight), in Mark's account in one day in Jesus' life, the people of Jesus' day were faced with exactly the same trilemma. It's in Mark 3.

We're studying Mark 3, verses 20 through the end of the chapter, verse 35. And you'll remember that there are three scenes in that section. The first scene, verses 20-21, Jesus' family leaves Nazareth to come to Capernaum to find Him. The second scene is in the house in Capernaum where Jesus is teaching. And there in verses 22-30, the Pharisees who'd come up (or down, rather) from Jerusalem came with the intention of confronting Jesus, with spying Him out, and they make a serious accusation against Him. And then the third scene is in verses 31-35 when Jesus' family arrives at that same house where He's teaching on that same day, that same morning.

In those three scenes we are confronted with the only three possible responses to Jesus' work and His claims, and they're always the same choices. His claims were false. Jesus claimed to be God. If you read the New Testament honestly, you cannot come away with any other conclusion: He claimed to be God. So, either His claims are false, and He knows they're false, in which case

He is a liar, or His claims are false and He doesn't know, in which case He is a madman, convinced that He's God when in fact He is not. Or His claims are true: He is all that He claims to be, and He is Lord. I think Mark intends that every person who reads this account must make a choice of what to do with Jesus' remarkable works and claims, and you see those choices unfold in this section.

The three options. The first is that He was a deluded lunatic; that He had lost His senses. There was something wrong with His mind. He wasn't thinking clearly to do what He did and to say what He said. This accusation was spoken against Jesus by none other than His own family - His brothers. And His mother, Mary, obviously confused, went along out of genuine concern for Him. Verse 21 says, "When His own people heard of this [His incessant activity of all that was going on around Him], they went out to take custody of Him [literally, to arrest Him]; for they were saying, 'He has lost His senses.'"

The other option that presents in this text is that He was a demonic liar. This option comes from Jesus' enemies, the religious leaders. A group of influential scribes and Pharisees had come from Jerusalem to spy on Jesus and His disciples. And as they were there in the house in Capernaum with Jesus, Jesus had healed a demoniac that morning. And the people as they saw what Jesus had done (they saw the power of it) they began to ask and wonder with each other, could this be the Messiah? The leaders in Jerusalem couldn't let that stand so they had a problem. But at the same time, they couldn't deny that a miracle had actually taken place. So, they were left with only two options: either accept Jesus' claims, which they would not do, or accuse Him of being in collusion with the only other being in the universe capable of such a mighty act, and that was Satan himself. So, they make two very explicit accusations. They say He is possessed by Beelzebul. They were accusing Jesus of being personally inhabited by, controlled by, Satan himself. Jesus, they said, is possessed by the devil. The second accusation they made is related but different: "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." What they were really saying was: Jesus is a liar. He's telling you one thing but something else is actually true. He has a different agenda than what He's telling you and is in league with Satan to accomplish it.

So, the options we've seen for responding to Jesus' claims so far are: He's a delusional lunatic or

He's a demonically inspired liar. Now if He was not a lunatic and if He was not a liar, and yet He made the claims that He made, there really is only one other option - He is the divine Lord. And that's what we want to look at tonight - verses 31-35.

This third option grows out of Jesus' comments when His family arrives in Capernaum on that same morning. Let me read it for you. Mark 3:31: "Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.' Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?' Looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.'"

Now, this third option and this third group of people that are gathered there that day have a totally different response than the two before them (and we'll look at this response in a moment). But first I want you to be aware of the very unusual circumstances of this text I've just read to you. Remember that this is part of one very long day in our Lord's ministry. I won't take time to walk through this list again (we've done it before) but all of this transpired on one day. But the main thing that you need to understand is that early that morning, Jesus' own family (in the verse I just read to you a moment ago, verse 21) Jesus' own family decide to arrest Him and to take Him by force back to the family home in order to control His outrageous and embarrassing behavior. So, from Nazareth to Capernaum is about twenty miles. Nazareth, Capernaum rather, is at the point of the arrow there on my little map, and that red line represents one of the ancient roads, a main road, running through Palestine. And you can see that it runs right by Nazareth and through Capernaum. So, they would have jumped on that international highway: walking, riding. It would have been a lot different than any international highway you've ever seen, but **it** was able to be traversed and they make it very quickly. It's about twenty miles, about five hours brisk walk. So later that same morning that Jesus had healed the demoniac, that the Pharisees had accused Him of being in collusion with the devil, He's in a house in Capernaum teaching. Later that same morning, they arrive.

Now that brings us then to verse 31. "Then His mother and His brothers arrived..." Now one

part of what happened that morning that's not here in Mark is in Matthew's Gospel. After that encounter with the Pharisees, that we've studied here in Mark where they accuse Him of being in league with Satan, after that they ask Jesus for a sign. And He offers them that famous statement about "no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah." After that, Matthew says this, "While He was still speaking to the crowds..." So, this is that morning. He's in the house. He's speaking to them. "His mother and [His] brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him." So, all of this transpires in a very tight time frame. That's what I want you to see. Verse 31 says, "Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and [were] standing outside..." Jesus is now standing or is sitting (we're not sure) inside probably Peter's home, near the synagogue there in Capernaum. The crowd is there and it's so tight that no one else can get inside. They're all seated in kind of concentric circles around Jesus. There're His disciples, the twelve. There are other disciples. There's the Pharisaical entourage from Jerusalem, and on the fringes, are the curious from all over the region and beyond. **His mother** and His brothers simply cannot get close to Him, so they pass along the word. Notice verse 31 says, "...they sent word to Him and called Him." Now you can just picture the message being passed, kind of from person to person, through the crowd. Jesus is teaching. Somebody gets another person's attention: (whispering) 'Hey! Jesus' mother and brothers are waiting for Him outside.' And the word passes on until finally someone nearby tells Jesus. Verse 32 says, "A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.'" Matthew says someone told him. Luke says it was reported to Him. Mark says the crowd said to Him.

What happens next though is truly amazing. Jesus' very surprising response. He begins with a question. Notice verse 33. It's a question designed to get them thinking. "Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?'" And then, in a follow-up to that, He makes a very unusual statement. Verse 34: "Looking about at those who were sitting around Him..." So, He's...remember now...close to Him would have been His disciples. He's teaching them, the Pharisees are there, there are other curious onlookers around crowded in this house, and Jesus looks around at those sitting about Him. Matthew adds, "And stretching out His hand toward His disciples..." And then He says, "Behold My mother and My brothers!" This is really one of Jesus' hard sayings. Imagine if you're the mother and the brothers. Imagine getting this report. In fact, this is such a hard saying that a famous skeptic of Christianity used this saying to accuse

Jesus of “trampling underfoot everything that is human - love and blood and country.” And this would have been absolutely shocking to first century Jews. They were very family oriented. Family was your very first priority. In fact, even the way the family’s request sort of makes its way through the crowd to Jesus implies that this should take precedence over what He’s doing. ‘You need to stop what you’re doing and go see Your mother and brothers. They’re outside.’ But Jesus is using this interruption to make a profound point, a point the New Testament makes so often - there are greater ties than flesh and blood. Let that sit on your brain for a moment. There are greater ties than flesh and blood. Jesus considers His true followers to be His true family.

It’s very interesting to see this unfold throughout the New Testament. In the parable of Matthew 25, Jesus is the King, judging, and He will say, “To the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine...you did it to Me” (speaking of His followers). In Matthew 28, Jesus says to them after the resurrection, “Do not be afraid; go and take word to My [brothers]...”. Literally in the Greek text, there’s no word for “brethren”. It’s “brothers”. “...to My brethren [brothers] to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.” In Luke 11 someone says to Jesus, “Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed.” Surely **the** family ties - ‘that is a blessed thing to have been Your mother.’ “But He said, ‘On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.’” Romans 8, He’s spoken of as “the firstborn among many brethren [brothers].” And I love Hebrews 2:11-12. Watch what the writer of Hebrews says. “For both He who sanctifies [that’s Christ, the one who sets us apart] and those who are sanctified [that’s us] are all from one Father; for which reason He [that is Christ] is not ashamed to call them brethren [brothers], saying, ‘I will proclaim Your name to My brethren [brothers], in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise.’” Think about that. Jesus says, ‘My followers are My family.’

Jesus ends His response with the reason He would make such a statement. After His question and His statement, He gives this reason. Look at verse 35. “For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother.” It’s a little different in Matthew’s account. Matthew 12:50: “For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.” And Luke’s is different yet. Luke 8:21: “But He answered and said to them, ‘My

mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.” It’s what it means to do the will of God: it’s to hear the Word of God and do it. Notice that Jesus defines all Christians as those who do the will of God. If you do the will of God, if you hear the Word of God and do it, then you are a Christian. Obedience to the Word of God doesn’t purchase our salvation but it proves it. What is the will of God that obeying, when I obey it, will mark me as a true Christian? Well, go back to the very beginning of Mark, the command of the Gospel, Mark 1:14-15. Jesus began - that message that’s recorded - first is what? “Repent and believe.” There’s the will of God. It was a command from God: repent and believe the Gospel. But it goes beyond that to the rest of what Jesus taught and said. Jesus put it like this in Luke 6: “Why do call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” There are those who profess, Titus says, to know God but by their deeds they deny Him.

You see, the disciples gathered around Jesus, the ones that He pointed to there on the floor sitting around Him, they didn’t agree with His physical brothers. They didn’t think He was a deluded lunatic. The disciples, gathered there at His feet, didn’t agree with the assessment of the Scribes and Pharisees either. They didn’t think that He was a demonic liar on some agenda for Satan. Instead, His disciples had been led by the work of the Spirit of God to the third option. They had embraced Him for what He claimed to be. They believed that He was the divine Lord and, therefore, they subjected their wills to His. He was the Lord. So here’s this third group. Fascinating, how on one day in God’s providence, all of those views are represented in one place at one time. It’s as if we’re intended to be confronted with the choices, as they were that morning. Any neutral people standing around the fringes of the crowd had to make a choice.

Now, we’re not told what happened next. But it’s clear that Jesus’ family did not prevail. They did not take Him back to Nazareth. They went home empty-handed and, undoubtedly, His brothers went home angry and offended at His public response to them. Later, in God’s grace, they would come to embrace Him as Lord and Savior. But at this point they go home angry, offended, and as John records later, sarcastic about His claims.

Now this passage, verses 31-35, has some very serious implications. And not just those verses, but all of this section together. Some serious implications that I want us to think about the rest of

our time together this evening. First of all, in response to Jesus' claims, there are only three viable options, the same three choices taken on that one day in Palestine. Either He is a lunatic, a liar, or He is Lord and God. Now it's very important to realize that there is no middle ground. You see, there are always people **who** think they can have it both ways: they can acknowledge the remarkable moral character of Jesus Christ and yet still not acknowledge that He is Lord and God. The world is filled with people like this. He was a great prophet. He's a wonderful teacher. Yes, He was a fabulous example of how we ought to live. It's just not logically possible to take that position.

C.S. Lewis was right. This is what he writes in *Mere Christianity*. One of my favorite quotes. I don't agree with everything C.S. Lewis wrote. **He** was not a theologian. He had some flawed views on several fronts, but I believe he was a brother in Christ. And on this front, I think he was absolutely right. Listen to what he writes, "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him [Jesus]: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic - on the level with a man who says he's a poached egg - or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." It's not an option. These are the options.

And by the way, you can't be neutral. You can't say I'm not going to land. Jesus won't let you do that either. In fact, turn to Matthew 12 and let me show you what He says on that very day, on that very morning, in this context. Matthew 12. Right after verse 25 - that encounter with the Pharisees where they accuse Him of being in league with Satan, being possessed by Satan and He rebukes them - notice one statement He makes that Matthew records that Mark does not record. Very interesting. Verse 30: "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters." Jesus was saying, to those people gathered there in that crowded house that morning faced with these three different groups of people - but maybe they were still on the

fence, still undecided, still neutral, still trying to decide what they were going to do with Jesus - Jesus says, let me tell you something you can't do: you can't be neutral. The one who is not with Me is what? "Against Me."

Can I just stop here for a moment and say that, tonight, you may be in a service at Countryside Bible Church, you may be from a Christian home, but you know in your heart that you are not a follower of Jesus Christ. And you might have kidded yourself that that means you really just haven't taken a position - you're just for you, you're not really against Christ, you just want to do what you want to do, enjoy what you want, and you're still neutral about Christ. Jesus says, 'Can't happen! You're not neutral. If you are not with Me you are against Me.' Decide where you're going to be, but you can't be neutral.

John Broadus, the great American theologian of the time of the Civil War, wrote this: "In this great and deadly struggle, there can be no neutrality. No man can be friends with both sides, nor be indifferent to both. It is probable that many of those present were thinking they would not take sides between Jesus and the blaspheming Pharisees." Men often think that they are by no means opposing Christ's service, though they are not engaged in it. This is impossible. If we are not yielding Christ our whole heart, we are really yielding Him nothing. Professed neutrality may even be more offensive to Him. Better to be on one side or the other than to say **you** just haven't decided. There's only these three options. Jesus did claim to be God, and these are the alternatives.

There's a second implication of this section we've studied together. And I've touched on this already so I'm not going to spend much time on it tonight. But I just want to remind you of it as we sort of wrap up this section. As Jesus' followers, we're going to be treated the same way He was treated. As Jesus' followers, we too will be thought of often as either deceived, simple, naive, weak-minded, or even as far as insane, out of our minds, lost our senses, or liars, hypocrites, some kind of selfish agenda, actually in league with the devil himself. Pick up the newspaper and you will find people saying these things about Christians today: about you, about me, and about our brothers and sisters in Christ. Nothing has changed. Jesus said the student is not greater than his master. If this is how they treated Me, this is how they'll treat you. So folks,



get used to that. Don't worry about that. Don't be offended by the fact that some people are going to think you're simple and naive. Other people are going to think you're really evil incarnate, that there's something else going on. You can't be real. You must be a hypocrite. There must be some facade. You can't be as nice as you appear to be. You ever heard that? Get used to it. That's how they treated the Son of God.

There's a third implication that comes out of this text; very important one for us to understand. This is really at the heart of this passage that we've studied tonight. For every Christian, our primary relationships are our spiritual relationships. For every Christian, our primary relationships are our spiritual relationships. This runs absolutely contrary to the tendency of Christians today to practically worship their human families. As I was studying this week, I came across an amazing quote from the pen of Kent Hughes that I have to share with you. He wrote on this very topic. Listen to what he writes. He says: "There is especially among Christians another reason why the family is in trouble: it's worship. In a valiant effort to stem the tide, many Christians and non-Christians, alike, have made the family everything. Every moment of every day, every involvement, every commitment, every engagement, is measured and judged by the question, how will this benefit my family? While this is generally commendable, it can degenerate into familial narcissism. The four walls of the home become a temple, and only within and for those walls are any sacrifices made. Thus, we commit domestic idolatry. The tragedy is this: every earthly loyalty if it is made central, becomes idolatry, and all idolatries eventually destroy their worshippers. What can we do to preserve and elevate our families? The answer begins with the family putting love and obedience to Christ above everything else." That's what Jesus was saying when His family, His human family, was standing outside and He was surrounded by His disciples and He said, 'This is My true family. This is what matters most.' If you are a Christian, your primary relationships are spiritual relationships. It's not as if your family relationships aren't important. That's not what Jesus was saying. Jesus didn't mean that we should sever all family relationships and treat them as unimportant. Jesus commanded parents to be cared for. Later in Mark 7, Jesus took care of Mary at the foot of the cross even as He was dying in John 19. He made a point to look up His own human brothers after His resurrection and see them come to faith (1 Corinthians 15). We are commanded to love our human family members. But here's the point: our relationship to

God and His people must take precedence over our relationship to our earthly families.

This has always been true. In fact, Jesus understood this from the Scripture. Quite an interesting account back in Exodus. Turn back to Exodus for a moment. Exodus 32 - about the tribe of Levi. You remember this account? Exodus 32:25. This is at the golden calf. Verse 25: "Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control - for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies - then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, 'Whoever is for the Lord, come to me!' And all the sons of Levi gathered to him. [Now] He [Moses] said to them [the Levites], 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Every man of you put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.'" So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day."

Now, I don't think we can begin to understand the drama of that scene. Moses has been on the mountain. Aaron, in his absence, has made this golden calf. The people have declared a feast day to Yahweh. But in reality, they're really worshiping in an idolatrous way. They have decided how they will worship God and they've done it in the form of this golden calf. Whether they were worshiping the calf or whether, like Baal was often worshiped - the calf was just like this powerful being on which God was supposed to ride - they were making up the rules about how to worship. And it degenerated, we learn in this text and in the New Testament, it had degenerated into a drunken orgy. And Moses comes down in the middle of that and he rallies the sons of Levi around him. And he says I want you to take your sword and all of those who refuse to turn from what's going on here - I want you to kill them. If it's your brother, kill him. If it's your neighbor, kill him. That's a hard thing. It actually happened folks. This is what the Levites did.

Now I want you to see the divine commentary on this. Turn to Deuteronomy 33. Deuteronomy 33. Here is the blessing of Moses as he reaches the end of his life. This is a long time later, almost forty years, and notice what he says in verse 8 in his blessing of Levi. "Of Levi he said, 'Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man, [those were **the** tools for discerning God's will, you remember, the breastplate] whom You proved at Massah, with whom

You contended at the waters of Meribah; who said of his father and his mother, 'I did not consider them'; and he did not acknowledge his brothers, nor did he regard his own sons, for they observed Your word, and kept Your covenant.'” In other words, Moses praises the Levites for being more concerned about God and His ways than about their sons and their brothers and their father and their mother. So, this was the Biblical pattern and Jesus understood this.

You see, our greatest relational priority is Christ Himself. Jesus could not have made this clearer. Turn over to Matthew 10. You'll remember this passage. It's another of Jesus' hard sayings. Matthew 10:35. Verse 34: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and [for] a man's enemies will be the members of his household." He said listen, you need to know that I did come to bring peace, but I didn't come to bring unilateral peace. In fact, the fact that you follow Me may create tension and conflict like you won't believe, even within your family. And in case you think the price is too high, verse 37, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take [up] his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me." Jesus says, first and foremost, your priority is to Me, not to any human relationship. That hasn't changed folks. That's still true. We have obligations to love the people around us, to love our family, to care for them. And often those obligations don't conflict with the responsibilities we have to Christ, and we're grateful for that. But there are times in all of our lives when obedience to Christ has to be more important to us than even our families and how they respond. If our relationship with Christ endangers our relationship with our human family, as one author says, "It is a price worth paying."

Then after Christ, our greatest relational priority is to those who are His followers: our brothers. Of course, the closest are those followers of Christ who are at the same time part of our human family. It is a wonderful thing when your own human family is also in Christ. Then they are the closest to you. But for those of you who are Christians, with no other believers in your family, look around. In the words of Jesus, these are your mothers and your brothers and your sisters. Look at Mark 10. Jesus makes both points in this passage. Mark 10:28. You remember the conversation has been about **the** rich coming to faith and Jesus said that's hard. (Excuse me)

Jesus says, 'That's hard. In fact, it's impossible!' And they said, 'Who then can be saved?' And so then Peter begins to think about this. Verse 28: and "Peter began to say to Him, 'Behold, we have left everything and followed You.' [And] Jesus said [to him], "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive [watch this] a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life." Now the last part of that we all understand. We understand that whatever we give up here, we will receive manifold in eternity (in the age to come, in heaven) all of the blessings that we talked about this morning in our inheritance. But how do we receive all of that now, in the present age? Jesus was making it clear that you may leave a mother because of your loyalty to Christ, you may leave a parent, you may leave a son, you may leave a daughter because of your loyalty to Christ. They may want to have nothing to do with you. But in this life, when you attach yourself to Christ, you attach yourself to all of those who are His followers. And now, even in this life, you have far more mothers and brothers and sisters and land and farms, because you have it in the people of God. For every Christian, then, our primary relationships are our spiritual relationships.

The last point I want you to get, the last serious implication, is I want you to come to grips with the intimacy of the relationship we enjoy with Christ. Did you really catch what Jesus said? He said that those disciples that gathered around Him that morning were closer to Him than the family He grew up with for thirty years. That's what He said. *You* disciples (those gathered around Him), *you* are closer to Me than my blood relationships. *You* are My mother and my brothers and my sisters. And understand, those disciples weren't exactly specimens of spiritual maturity and perfection. He's going to refer to them many times as being foolish, slow to learn, of little faith. On a number of occasions, He has to stop them from arguing with each other about who's the greatest. They don't believe. And in spite of their stubbornness, in spite of their slowness to learn, in spite of their ignorance, in spite of all the problems they gave Jesus, the writer of Hebrews (in the verse I shared with you just a few minutes ago) says, "He is [was] not ashamed to call them brethren [brothers]." Folks, the same is true for us. In spite of our spiritual weaknesses, in spite of our immaturity, Jesus is not ashamed to call us His mother and His brothers and His sisters. This really dovetails nicely with what we were talking about this

morning. This morning we learned that we can legitimately think of God as “Abba” (Papa) and we can think of Jesus as our older brother. That’s how we can think of Jesus and how we can think of the Father. But here is something I think that is even more amazing. It tells us how God thinks of us. When God thinks of us, He thinks of us as His adopted children. And in this passage, we've learned that when Jesus thinks of us, He thinks of us as His brothers and His sisters and His mother. What an incredible description of the love of Jesus Christ for those who have attached ~~himself~~ themselves to Him.

I want you just to think for a moment about the implications of that. You can call God, “Papa” and Jesus is your older brother. But it’s not just you thinking like that. That’s how God thinks. God, the Father, thinks of you as His adopted child. There is no better way to reflect what’s in the mind of God than He has adopted you and He thinks of you as His child. And Jesus says I think of you as my true family. You are truly His mother, His sister, His brother, if you’re in Christ. What amazing condescension. What amazing grace.

Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we are absolutely overwhelmed with all that we have learned today. Lord, I’m afraid we can’t even fully grasp it. Lord, I pray that You would take Your Word and, by Your Spirit, illumine our minds. Lord, don’t let these truths just run across the caverns of our brain **and** never sink in, never affect how we think and how we act and how we behave. Father **may the** intimacy of the relationship that we enjoy with You and with Christ, and You and Christ with us, Father, may that control our thinking. Lord, we do exalt You and elevate You as the Great God. We’re concerned to elevate You with a high view of who You are and elevated in Your majesty and greatness and grandeur. And yet, Father, help us at the same time to hold in tension with that the amazing truths of Your condescension that we’ve learned today: that we can come to You as Papa; and that we can come to Christ as our older brother who truly thinks of us, if we are His followers, as brothers and sisters and mothers. Father may that reality so grip our hearts that it helps us grasp the depths of Your love for us. And may understanding Your love compel us, drive us, to the path of obedience, even this week. Lord, help us to say no to sin because of the love You have shown us in Christ. For it’s in Jesus’ name we pray, Amen!