

Mark 3: 31-35

31 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' 33 And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

Commentary: At first it may seem that Jesus was rather distant if not disrespectful toward his family. Gospel references to them usually have to do with their concern for Jesus and his impatience with their lack of understanding as to his mission. But Jesus' statement in this passage should not be read as a criticism toward his family or toward anyone who takes family relationships seriously. Rather he wants to declare his intimate relationship to any and all who come to God in sincerity and truth. Jesus didn't just belong to his family but to the world. His intimate connection was not about particular blood lines, racial and cultural roots, or religious associations. Rather, Jesus was connected intimately with anyone who desired to fulfill God's vision for their lives.

In this season of Covid-19, we're forced to draw clear lines as to who we can be close to physically and who we can only connect with at a distance. And yet, we are physical and social creatures as human beings and for many of us 'family' has much richer meaning than the people we live with or are related to biologically. It's easy to see others as simply those we have to cooperate with in order to get through this season since we're all in this together. But we also see remarkable acts of kindness and care, under risky and difficult circumstances, especially from those on the front lines of the battle. Their actions remind us that we are all citizens of this planet and we all need to take greater responsibility for each other. If we are to call ourselves followers of Jesus, we must follow him beyond our familial, economic and cultural comfort zones into a wider world of compassion and care for our world, human and non-human.

Prayer: Creator God, you call us as your children, to embrace our citizenship of responsibility for each other and our world as a whole. May we reflect this our call, by renewed intention, inspiration, commitment and action to reach out in care to the people around us beyond the walls of our familiarity... In Jesus' name; Amen.