



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Reflection June 6, 2021

This Sunday's Scripture: I Samuel 8:4-15, Psalm 138, 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1, Mark 3:20-35

Who Is My Family? (Mark 3:20-35)

Usually Mark's gospel comes right to the point: few adjectives and many actions. However, this passage is a little more complicated as Mark "frames" one story with another – part of the framing story comes before and the rest after. In this gospel passage the first part of the framing story relates how Jesus's family and others, after hearing his teachings, being to think Jesus has lost his mind, and they go to find him. The rest of the story comes after the exchange between Jesus and the scribes.

The scribes accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan, the source of Jesus's powers: they claim Jesus "...has an unclean spirit." This is the famous exchange where Jesus declares that a house divided cannot stand: Jesus reminds the scribes and the gathered crowd that he had come to teach about the Kingdom of God and forgive sins, clearly at odds with Satan's work in the world. Then Jesus warns them about blaspheming against the Holy Spirit.



After this encounter comes the conclusion of the framing story. Jesus is told: "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." To which Jesus replies, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who sat around him, he says, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Many are perplexed by this comment. Does Jesus think family is not important? Is He saying it is permissible for children to disobey their parents and go their own way? Is it also permissible for family members to disown each other? Sadly, many people believe this. But look at Jesus's last words in this gospel: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." I wonder if there is another interpretation. Of course! Jesus is the Son of God, and his family is all of humankind. We are all children of God and members of Jesus's family. AMEN.

We Want a King! The I Samuel reading is worth pondering. Samuel warns people that if they have a king ruling over them, there will not be a good outcome. Rulers in those days were tyrants who enslaved their subjects. Yet that is what the people choose "to be like everyone else." A warning for today's Church about going with the flow during a time of rapid societal change: when is it time to be "like the other nations" and when is it time to maintain our identity in Christ?

A Prayer from the Church of Scotland: As Christ called on His followers to be salt and light, to have an impact on the communities in which we live, we pray that, as we seek to witness for God in the world, we will always do so in a loving and gentle way, remembering that we need to be faithful to our calling to be salt and light. AMEN