



Introduction

Text: Matthew 12:46-50

Theme: Love in Community

How do we live out brotherhood and sisterhood for all the world to see? Let's discover what it means to actively love and take responsibility for one another in the presence of a world that is desperate to experience real love.

Discussion

Read Matthew 12:46-50

Jesus makes a very counter cultural move here by denying his family's' request. Jesus is saying that in order to define true family we must recognize the true father. Now Jesus is not saying that the natural family isn't important but he is saying that it isn't the highest level of bond between people. In the same fashion that a marriage is a small metaphor to the relationship of Jesus and the church. Our natural families are small metaphors, little glimpses into the grand family that is being established through the preaching of the Gospel. He is showcasing how we all become brothers and sisters through doing his father's will

1. Why is it so shocking to observe Jesus' denial of his family's request to speak to him?
 - a. How easy/difficult is it for you to see the believers in your church as actual brothers and sisters?
 - b. Share one example of a time where your church family felt like a real family to you. Has this city group been a good example of family for you?

Jesus loves His family and found the blood ties to be important, but here He teaches that a blood related family is not nearly as important as a spiritually related family. Eternity in heaven is not gained through blood ties. If you think you will make it to heaven because of your parents or your children or your siblings or anyone else who is a fine Christian, then think again. The Jewish leaders of that time thought they merited heaven simply because they were descendants of Abraham – and they were wrong. Here we find that even Jesus' blood relatives are not part of His spiritual family until they come to Him personally and place their faith and trust in Him as the Messiah.

2. How are you developing a personal relationship with Jesus?
 - a. Do you ever struggle with getting help from other people or outside sources in order get closer to Christ?

Read Hebrews 10:32-34

So we see that the Roman Empire had been persecuting the early church for their beliefs. They were being abused and robbed because they continued to preach and share about Jesus. The Roman's would refer to the christian belief as a "deadly superstition" and consider it an illegal religion.

3. In a climate where christians are being persecuted, why would these believers risk their lives to visit others in jail?
 - a. Would you consider putting yourself at risk for your siblings in Christ?
 - b. Is Jesus really all you need? Is he your better and lasting possession?

Additional Reading

Additional Scriptures on biblical brotherhood/sisterhood:

1 Peter 3:8
Colossians 3:14
Malachi 2:10
1 John 4:20