

# Mark - Jesus' Next of Kin

by J. Glyn Owen

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*Christianity is a matter of relationship with Jesus Christ and the unseen God, and being physically related to Jesus is no guarantee of spiritual kinship.*

**Duration:** 46:41

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:8, Matthew 6:33, Mark 3:31-35, John 14:27, Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 3:29, Philippians 4:7

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that being physically related to Jesus does not guarantee spiritual kinship with him. He uses the example of Mary and Jesus' brothers arriving to see him but not immediately approaching him. The preacher highlights the importance of personal faith in Christ and being born again of the Spirit of God. He also emphasizes that Jesus' relationship with his true followers is as deep and intimate as any human relationship, using the examples of mother and child and brother and brother. The sermon encourages listeners to examine their own relationship with God and place their faith solely in Jesus.

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## Transcript

Will you kindly turn in your New Testaments to the Gospel recorded by Mark, chapter 3. And we are going to take up the passage that begins with verse 31 and goes through to the end of the chapter, that is to verse 35. Now I shall not read that passage again at this time, we shall be referring to it as we proceed, so it will be helpful if you keep your eyes on the text. Christianity is much more than credence.

It is that, it is a matter of believing what God has revealed and what God has said. It involves that. Christianity is not only more than credence, it is also more than a mere subjective experience of peace or of joy.

It includes that too. You cannot be right with God, and you cannot be right with your fellows without enjoying an inner peace that passes understanding. You cannot be right with God without sharing something of the overflow of heaven into your heart, even whilst you travel the streets of earth.

Something of heaven comes into your soul, here and now, if you are right with God. That's true. But Christianity is more than both of these.

Fundamentally, Christianity is a matter of relationship. It is a personal relationship, first of all with Jesus Christ who came into this world and who lived in this world of space and time and sense, and then of a relationship with the unseen God who was made visible in Jesus Christ. This is what it's really all about.

This is the basic thing about the Christian faith. It brings man to know the Lord Jesus. And in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Mediator and Lord, it brings us to know the unseen, invisible, eternal, self-subsisting God whom I have never seen save incarnate in His only Son, the Lord Jesus.

Now basically, this passage is about that. It has something very significant to say about the saving relationship with Jesus Christ. And we've called our text, our sermon this morning, Jesus Next of Kin.

We've given it that title. Now, I want to confine myself very simply to the two main things, as it appears to me, that we have here in these verses. We have a question and we have an answer.

And the beautiful thing about my text this morning is that the one who asks the question also gives the answer. Jesus asks the question, the crucial question, Jesus gives the answer. So what we are going to look at is what Jesus asked and what Jesus answered.

Now, look first of all at the question that Jesus asked. Verse 33, because this is the heart of it, everything else is the background. He replied, Who are my mother and my brothers? What a remarkable question.

We talk about people who don't know their identity. Is Jesus to be numbered among those who doesn't know Himself, whence He came and whither He's going and who are His? Well, who are my mother and my brothers? Who are they? A question He asked. Now, of course, we've got to see this question against a background.

We shall proceed to examine the situation, therefore, and I think that it will become increasingly evident that that was a startling question. Especially when we consider it against the background found here in the context. Now, the first thing I think we ought to consider is the growing confusion among the family members.

Children of Mary and of Joseph, including Mary herself. Joseph, you may remember, seems to have receded out of the picture. And most people believe that by this time in the life of our Lord Jesus, Joseph had died.

Whether that is right or wrong, we cannot dogmatize, but Joseph is not here. We simply have Mary, his mother, and his brothers at this point. We have reference to his sisters elsewhere, but it's mother, it's Mary, and his brothers.

Now, what I'm speaking about at this moment is the growing confusion among them. A growing confusion that has now brought them away from home to intervene in his life, either to save him from himself, thinking that he was a little mad, or to save him from society because they've heard that the authorities are hardening in their opposition against him, or both. But whichever way you interpret it, whichever is the correct interpretation, evidently they're so concerned they've come away from home, and they're now going to intervene when Jesus is mid-flight in his teaching.

Because they want to get him away from this crowd, and they want to take him somewhere where they deem he will be safe. Now, why were they confused? Well, now, let me put it to fathers and mothers here today, of whatever age. I want you to imagine a little.

You've had a son. There was something very significant about his birth, something out of the ordinary. Your son, of course, was not conceived of the Holy Ghost in the sense in which Jesus was.

I'm not suggesting that there could be anything akin to that. But you've had a wonderful child, a wonderful son. He's grown up.

He's given you no trouble. He's been the epitome of wisdom and understanding, and the grace of God was upon him. There was no token whatsoever of his being mentally different from other people, other boys, other girls.

And then suddenly, he leaves home one day, and he begins now to preach. Well, that's all right. But when he begins to preach, he begins to preach about a kingdom other than the kingdoms of this world.

Now, that's bad. A kingdom other than and different from the kingdom of the Jews. The Jewish kingdom.

A kingdom other than and different from Rome. To go further, and to spell out the kind of megalomania that people have referred to in Jesus, he makes himself the very centerpiece. He speaks of himself as the way, the truth, the life, the beginning, the end, the everything in the kingdom.

And then there has come the point recently where he summoned twelve men to be his emissaries, to be with him in order that he should send them forth as apostoli, as apostles, as emissaries, as ambassadors of the realm over which, if you please, he is going to be king. How would you feel if you were his mother? What would you think if you were his father? Wouldn't you be a little bit concerned? Now, to go a step further, corresponding or on the opposite side of the scale, you have the growing enmity of the society, or should I say, of the leaders of the society in which Jesus did that. You have the hardening of enmity among the leaders of the Jews.

Now we saw that as Mr. Scharf preached to us from the passage preceding this last Lord's Day morning. You can see things coming to a boiling point. Jesus is exorcising demons, he's casting them out, he's healing the sick, he's doing the most remarkable things.

And his most bitter foe could not deny that. Being unable to deny that, how then can I have a case against him? Well, they've hatched on a most mischievous plot, a hellish plot. Unable to deny the reality of his miracles, they proceed to say, yes, yes, he's casting out demons all right.

But he's doing it out of collusion with the prince of demons. Now this is the height of enmity and animosity and envy and much else. We can't deny the facts.

Therefore we must explain it in some way other than by agreeing that he is working in fellowship with the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob. Therefore, this is our understanding. We can't deny that he's doing it, but he's doing it because he has a special pact with a prince of demons, with Beelzebul or Beelzebub or whatever his name may be.

Now the astute cannot help seeing that he's on a collision course. He's talking about his own kingdom. The leaders of the kingdom of the Jews, whatever about Rome at this point, they are set against him and they say what he's doing, he's doing because the power of Satan is upon him.

Now to add confusion or perhaps if not further confusion, to challenge his mother and his brothers more and more even as to challenge the leaders of the Jews. When Jesus chose the twelve, did you notice, he

didn't choose one scribe, he didn't choose one Pharisee, he didn't choose anybody from the Sanhedrin to share in the government of the kingdom that he is about to establish. None of them, he kept them out.

He chose the most ordinary people. And I'll tell you one other thing, he didn't choose one of his brothers, not one. Now I don't pretend to be able to understand all the reasoning and all the thinking and all the feeling that went into it.

But here come his dear mother and his brothers and they said he's beside himself and we've got to do something to save him from himself and to save him from society. We just don't know what things are coming to. I wonder whether Mary remembered that word of Simeon to her in the temple thirty years before that day.

Behold this child said Simeon taking the baby Jesus in his arm, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel. And for a sign that is spoken against and them speaking to Mary directly and a sword will pierce through your own soul also. That the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

Growing confusion in the family leading to an attempted intervention by the family. Now evidently we have to link this passage verses 31 to 35 with what was previously said in verses 20 and 21. You might like to look at this in your Bible, in your New Testament.

Now I want to suggest to you that the New International Version is really the most accurate translation there. It goes like this. Then Jesus entered a house and again a crowd gathered so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat.

When his family heard about this they went out to take charge of him for they said he is out of his mind. Now the RSV, one version of the Revised Standard Version, or one edition I should say, brings in there, it's not right, brings in the word people. It says people were saying he is beside himself.

Now you don't have the word for people in the Greek. The New International Version is right in saying the same people who were saying, the same folk who said he is beside himself are the folk who came. And the folk who came to save him from himself and from society are his mother and his brothers.

So that we are to conclude if we link verses 20 and 21 with verses 31 to 35. We are to conclude that the people who are really concerned are essentially his mother and his family. Come back into the family for a moment then.

What's really gone on? Well, their growing confusion and fears have meant that the family have been talking together perhaps for a long, long time now as to where things are going with Jesus. I can't imagine, well I can imagine but I cannot say with any dogmatism any more than anybody else can, what really went on, how they really thought about it, how each one had his contribution to make. But one thing we are certain, they came to a conclusion.

Not all talking comes to a conclusion. And it was an agreed conclusion as in the committee organising next Saturday's Ladies' Day. It was a unanimous conclusion.

Mary and the boys decided that they must go and intervene and do something. And then they arrive. Now can you imagine the situation? Jesus is either in a house and the people are all crowded around him.

Or he is in the open air in which case they are still crowded around him. So that when Mary and the boys arrive they see the crowd and they see him over there. But they don't think it's expedient to call to him or even to go to him.

Assuming that they could at that point. So they send a message along, either they send an individual to go in and tell Jesus that his mother and his brothers are there. Or they pass the message from one person to another until at last it comes to Jesus that his mother and his brothers are outside the crowd waiting for him.

He gets the message. And having got the message that Mary and his brothers are there outside waiting for him, this is his reaction. Who's my mother? Who are my brothers? It is as if he queried his relation to them and it must have seemed odd to say the least to those who heard it even as it is to those of us who read it today.

But of course as always give Jesus time and he explains himself and so we have the answer. Now look at the answer Jesus gave to his own question. Verses 34 and 35.

And he looked at those seated in a circle around him and he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother. Now we shall look at two things there only.

First of all the truth that is enunciated and the test of being Jesus next of kin. The truth he enunciates about the people who are his next of kin and then the test to apply in order for us to know ourselves. Now look at the truth enunciated here.

He looked around at those seated in a circle about him and he said, Here are my mother and my brothers. It's electrifying. You can almost sense people holding their breath.

Who are my mother and who are my brothers? That's bad enough but when he says this, My mother and my brothers are not people outside there. My mother and my brother are in the crowd. Not those but these.

Now rightly to understand what took place at this point of course we must remember what we are told in John chapter 2 and verse 25. Where we read these words. We are in Jerusalem in that context and we read these words.

He, that is Jesus, knew all men. And he needed no man's testimony about his brother man because he himself knew what was in man. Now if you and I don't come to our text here today believing that then we shall not make sense of it and we shall not take it as authoritative.

We need to see that the Lord Jesus who is speaking now is speaking authoritatively because he knows the heart of Mary and he knows the heart of his brothers. If that is not true then we might as well quit. He knew what was in man's heart.

And if he knew what was in the heart of Nicodemus. And if he knew what was in the hearts of those people in Jerusalem who apparently believed in him says John but he didn't believe in them. If he knew the hearts of those outside the family surely he would know what was in the heart of his own mother and of his own brothers.

Now if you don't believe that then alright you can't take anything else. We must come to this text believing that our Lord knew and if he didn't know then he shouldn't have said this. But because he knew he said it.

He's not defaming anybody and he's not even speaking the truth without knowing the basis for the truth. Now he makes it explicit then that as he understands it at that stage neither his mother nor his brothers were wholeheartedly believers in him as the Messiah son of the living God. So he turns to the people who are believing in the crowd and he says rather than out there here in the crowd here meaning among the crowd are my mother and my brothers.

Now I want you to notice three or four principles that emerge out of that amazing statement which our world has still to take seriously and some parts of the church. The first thing is this being physically related to Jesus is no guarantee of spiritual kinship with him. Let me repeat it being physically related to Jesus is no guarantee of being spiritually related to him.

A physical relationship and spiritual kinship are two different things all together. Now of course Jesus senses that though Mary and his brothers would hardly agree with the scribes and the Pharisees that he's casting out demons because he's in collusion with the prince of demons. Beelzebub they would hardly go so far as that.

The fact of the matter is this that at this point Jesus senses Jesus knows that neither his mother nor his brothers at that stage let me underline are one with him in spirit and in thought. They loved him they cared for him or they wouldn't have left home. They're not intervening because they hate him they're intervening because they love him.

And whether it's primarily to save him from himself or to save him from society or both they'll do so because because you see they love him but they don't understand him. And because they don't understand him they have no confidence in him not real confidence. And because they have no confidence in him that he's doing the right thing that he can be depended upon to speak the word of God and do the will of God because they have not that confidence in him they're concerned about him and they say let's let's let's do something to shield him.

So you see they cared for him and they cared because they did not understand. They had natural affection and concern but not spiritual perception and conviction at that stage. Now unfortunately you know we can have something of this same kind.

This was was it not this was the primary problem with the Jews of our Lord's day. You see they depended upon a physical relationship rather than a spiritual with Abraham of course. Whatever Jesus and his disciples seemed to say or preach to the Jews of their day and age they generally fell back upon the fact look you shouldn't talk like that to us because we are Abram's children.

Over and over again you have it you have it for example in John chapter 8 and Jesus has to tell them some of the most rigorous things. You listen to this they disagree something very completely with something that Jesus has said and they retort as usual Abraham is our father. You see Abram is our father and Jesus says to them look look if Abram were your father if you were Abram's children then you would do the things Abraham did.

As it is you are determined to kill me a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abram did not do such things and then he goes on in verse 44 you belong to your father the devil and you want to

carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning not holding to the truth for there is no truth in him when he lies he speaks his native language for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Now do you see what Jesus is saying he's pointing out the fact that they're depending upon everything upon the fact that they were the physical descendants of Abram. Of course says Jesus you are but you're not his spiritual descendants you don't belong to him you have no kinship with him otherwise you would do as he did. You would believe as he believed you would behave as he behaved.

Abram didn't behave like this Abram wouldn't murder the man who brings to them the word of God. Abram wouldn't do that you're of a different spirit altogether. Now John the Baptist had the same problem with the Jews of his day.

I don't know whether you ever smile when you read the scriptures but I see the funny side of things occasionally. Now perhaps this is a very serious thing and I shouldn't smile here. But I hear John the Baptist talking to the rabid Pharisees of his day and he says produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

And don't begin to say to yourselves what? Well you know we have Abraham as our father. He's heard it before he's heard that sermon a thousand times. We've got Abram as our father all's well with us we belong to Abram.

Don't start it says John the Baptist I don't want to hear it again. For I tell you and this is the crunch. Out of these stones God can raise up children for Abram.

There's very little difference between you and stones he says in effect. God can make stones into physical descendants of Abraham. I'm not talking about your physical descent he says.

You see they're getting mixed up all the time because they were physically the children of Abram. They said we don't need the grace that other people do. You don't need to talk to us we're all right.

You go outside among the nations and among the ungodly but we're all right. Paul had the same trouble and Paul had to put it very explicitly more than once and he did put it. Let me give you one passage.

In Romans 2 28 and 29 he said a man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly. Nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No he says a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly.

And circumcision is circumcision of the heart by the spirit not by the written code. Now you see here we have it. It's the same principle again.

It's this dependence upon the physical relationship and it doesn't hold. See we have the same kind of thing among professing Christian people. I was a delegate for the Presbyterian Church of Wales once to a world conference of Christians.

And it was a great thrill to welcome we were all representing 72 different nations at that point. And in my group there were about 36 from different nationalities. And it was wonderful to talk to different people about their knowledge of and experience of the grace of God.

I remember there was a young man who stayed with me in my room and we were mates. He slept in one bed I slept in the other. I won't tell you where he came from.

Now I said to him tell me I said how did you become a Christian? He says my grandfather was a Christian. I said that's wonderful. And he said my father was a Christian.

I said that's great you had a wonderful heritage. But how did you become a Christian? He says I'm a third generation Christian. Well I said yes but how did you become a Christian? Well he says I was born from my mother and my father is my father.

I said did you never read that word in John 3 that which is born of the flesh is flesh. Marvel not that I say unto thee ye must be born again. You must be.

You see it's this dependence upon the fact that our parents or our grandparents were. My dear friends in the basic sense it makes no difference at all. It provides us with a privilege of knowledge and influence that ought to lead us to a point where we ourselves receive the gospel and receive the Savior.

But it is no substitute for a personal saving experience. I wonder whether I'm speaking to someone in that category today. And if your last moment upon earth was to come now and in the next moment you're standing before the judgment seat and God asked you why should I let you into my heaven.

Your answer would be to say well you see my father and my mother were great people. And my grandparents were so wonderful. My friend it doesn't count you know.

Now let's wake up to this before it's too late. Are you right with God? Have you been born again? Are you, you, you, not your father, not your mother, not your grandpa, not your grandma, but you, you, you. Are you born again of the Spirit of God? Are you right with God? Have your faith in Christ to the exclusion of confidence in yourself or your nationality or your posterity or any, any other thing.

Jesus only. My friend it's the confusion, the damns. It's seriousness.

The third principle I notice is that Jesus Christ's relation to his true followers is as deep and intimate as his, as the most intimate human relationship. I've no time to develop this. But I can't miss it because it's so beautiful.

You see our Lord Jesus does something here. He takes up the very relationships referred to, namely the relationship of mother and child, brother and brother. And he proceeds to insist that he is all this to those who are spiritually related to him in terms of faith and love.

That is to all the subjects of his kingdom. Those who do the will of God, he says, are my mother and my brother and my sister. You know there is some sweetness in knowing that my mother is my mother.

I don't see her very often. But her voice on the telephone cheers me. Don't you know that experience? And there is something in that relationship which is, which, which defies expression.

So too between brother and brother and brother and sister if it's, if there is affection and if it's genuine. Now what Jesus goes on to say is this. Whatever sweetness there is in the relationship of a mother and child, brother and brother or brother and sister or sister and brother.

Look, he says, all that and more is involved in my relationship to my real relations. If you're mine next of kin, then there is something as sweet in it as the relationship between mother and child, brother and sister, sister and brother. I'm sorry I can't dwell on that, but my good friends, there's something here to explore.

What is your relationship with Jesus Christ? The third principle is this. If occasion demanded it, Jesus would choose those who are spiritually related to him before those who are merely physically his relations. Our Lord was at this point, I believe, saying exactly that, both in word and in deed.

He was saying that at that stage in time, he himself was more intimately related to those in the crowd who believed him, who trusted him, who believed he was the Messiah, the son of the living God. He was more intimately related to them and to the dear, the most highly favored among women, the dearest woman, the blessed Virgin Mary from whose womb he merged. At that point in time, these are my next of kin, he says.

They're in the crowd, not out there. I think things change later on, but at this point, and that's why I'm stressing it. Now come with me, lastly, and just spend a few moments considering the test to be applied in order to discover whether or not we are within this sphere, the sphere of our Lord's real next of kin.

You have the answer, you have the test put in verse 35. The NIV puts it like this. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

What is it then that really makes the difference between being physically related to Jesus and being spiritually? Let me put it to you like this. How did Mary and how did his brothers, James, for example, he writes the epistle that bears his name in the New Testament. How did James come from the one category into the other? How did the other brothers and sisters come to believe in Jesus? And how did Mary so develop that she too entered into this experience as we believe she did? Well, this is the answer.

You may know the person who has come there when they've come to the point that they are doers of God's will. Now Jesus is touching the crucial point here. Not people who say I've got a beautiful experience.

Oh, we have our beautiful experiences. Of course we do. If we walk with the Lord it couldn't be otherwise.

But I'm a little bit afraid of that word beautiful. I hear a lot of it in North America here. And it covers a multitude of transgressions sometimes.

Beautiful experience. Beautiful. The Bible rarely uses it.

It sometimes does. A beautiful experience need not be a sanctifying experience or a saving experience or a valid experience. Some of the most valid experiences of the Bible are not beautiful.

They're terrifying. They tear you to pieces. The clay is in the hand of the potter being broken and re-broken and broken and broken again.

Not beautiful. You only say beautiful if you don't know what it means to be broken. Conceding the point that even a physical relationship with Jesus Himself does not automatically involve spiritual kinship with Him.

What is the test? Here it is. Those that do the will of God. Present continuous tense.

Those who go on doing it. Doing the will of God. Now, Jesus is not saying that obedience to God is the fruit.

Sorry, let me put it the right way. What Jesus is saying is that obedience to God is the fruit and not the cause. Not the root of our saving relationship with Jesus.

He's not saying if you do the will of God you will be saved. You'll have forgiveness of sins. You'll have eternal life.

What He's saying is this. If you are rightly related, then you will do His will. If you are saved, you will obey.

If you are born again, you will obey. It is by grace, says Paul, you have been saved through faith and this not from yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one could boast.

For we are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. The second thing is this. The obedience that marks our saving relationship to Jesus Christ is obedience to God.

Now, some of you will know what I am getting at when I stress this. I still find a lot of people who very rarely talk about God, only about Jesus. And I sometimes fear in my soul that people are thinking of Jesus as somebody short of God.

I find that the obedience that Jesus elicited in the New Testament was not simply obedience to Himself, but always obedience to Himself as the Son of God, the Servant of God, the Mediator of the New Covenant, the Lord over all. In other words, you see, obedience to Jesus is also obedience to God. If it isn't that, it's not Christian.

Jesus Christ never stands between us and God. Paul goes so far as to say this. There is a day coming, he says, when the very kingdom of which Jesus is King and Lord will be handed lock, stock, and barrel back to God at last, so that God may be all things in all.

Let's be careful of a Jesus cult. Now, obviously I can't enlarge upon that, but really I'm concerned about it. If you're talking a lot about Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, are you sure it is Jesus as the Son of God, co-equal with God, and you respect the God who sent Him and the God revealed in Him and the God to whom you're answerable for what He has said to you and done for you? The obedience of the New Testament is an obedience to God, ultimately, as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Do you obey God? Can I add one other thing? What is the will of God? Well, the New Testament makes it clear. One, Jesus tells us, and John tells us, this is the will of God that you believe on Him who sent me. It is the will of God that we believe in His Son.

It is the will of God that we become like His Son, that we order our lives according to the pattern of His living, according to the truth of His teaching, according to the spirit of His living. He is the model. He is the typos.

He is the example given to His people. We are to model our entire lives after Him. More than that, in order to be thus related to Jesus Christ and do the will of God, we may sometimes have to run counter to the wishes of our nearest and dearest.

Now, I don't want to exacerbate matters for anybody, but some of us know what that means. Others of us don't. It may not always be necessary because we are to honor Father and Mother as the commandment requires us, and it's the first commandment with promise, but sometimes it has to be done.

That is what Jesus meant, of course, when He said what has been a stumbling block to many. He's speaking comparatively when He says in Luke, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and

mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Speaking comparatively, you and I must be prepared to put anybody and everybody and everything, including ourselves, on the cross to die in order to set ourselves to do the will of God.

Dean Farrar, it was, who has a most pungent comment somewhere on this subject, I'll quote it to you. Those whose intentions toward us are best are the most dangerous to us when their intentions are merely human. How often, alas, are a man's foes they of his own household, his friends who love him best, because in their worldliness they become his worst enemies.

They drag him down from the heights of sacrifice to the vulgar, the conventional, the commonplace. This is precisely the temptation that Jesus Himself had been assailed with at this point, and He would forewarn us, you may have to choose between your natural relations and Jesus as your Savior. But my very last word is this.

In another passage, Jesus encourages us to be prepared even for this, if needs be, and He does so in a very wonderful statement. Let me read it to you. I tell you the truth, He says, No one who has left home, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or fields, for me and the gospel, will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, and with them persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life.

The cross stands before you, and it may be a very hard, harsh cross too, but I am never any disciple's debtor, says Jesus. Do we bear the marks this morning of being our Lord's next of kin? Will you look in the mirror? Do you see the marks? I'm in the mirror of God's Word. Are they in you? Are they in me? As we look at one another, my friends, do we recognize one another? Here are a company, here is a people, and whatever else they're set upon doing, they want to do the will of God.

Am I known as that kind of person? Am I that kind of person? Are you? If we have never faced that fact and its implications before, I ask you good people to do so today. It is as crucial as crucial can be. It may mean life or death.

Let us pray. O Lord, our God and Father, we have been looking again at your Word, and it is true that there are parts of it that give us great joy and lift us up and elevate us and make us want to sing. For we have joy unspeakable and full of glory, and in some measure even now receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

But we do also feel these cutting passages penetrating into the depths of our beings and challenging us to look more seriously at ourselves and to make sure that we are what we profess to be, give to all of us that honesty of soul that does nothing less, that wants to be right in all things, and in order to be that, a spirit that is prepared to be judged by the Most Holy One Himself and by your Holy Word. Should there be among us this morning, our Father, those who are only second or third or fourth or fifth generation Christians and are depending upon their being Christians simply upon their relationship to men who were Christians, give them that experience of the new birth. Bring them from the dead to life and lead us all on in an ever deepening awareness and knowledge and fellowship with yourself that is to your glory here upon earth through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/26/SID26523.mp3>

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