

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

⁴⁶ *While [Jesus] was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.* ⁴⁷ *Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.”* ⁴⁸ *But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?”* ⁴⁹ *And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers!* ⁵⁰ *For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”*

Text: Matthew 12:46-50 A 1/15/17 Isaiah 42:1-9 Hebrews 2:9-17 Psalm 104
Responsive Reading fr. Psalm 119:124ff.

Hymns: 134, 343 (1, 2, 5, 7), 352, 355

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST?

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

What do we mean when we say, “I believe in Jesus Christ”? What do you believe about Jesus Christ? Most people think of that as just another question. But depending on what someone believes about Jesus, he’s either facing eternal death, or he has eternal life.

Our text is from the twelfth chapter of Matthew. The chapter begins with Jesus and His disciples on a Sabbath day. Jesus allows His disciples to pick grains of wheat to eat, and then He heals a large number of people. The Pharisees are convinced that Jesus is breaking the Sabbath. For that and for other reasons they were plotting to kill Him. Because of all of Jesus’ miracles many of the people thought that He may well be the Messiah. Some scribes joined the Pharisees in asking Jesus to give them a miraculous sign to prove He’s the Messiah. (Really?! After all of Jesus’ other miracles, they needed one more?!) Jesus promised to give them a sign all right, the sign of His upcoming death and His resurrection three days later. That would certainly prove that Jesus is the Messiah. In Mark’s parallel account we learn that Jesus then went home, where once again people crowded around Him.

Jesus’ family knew about His miracles, about what Jesus was saying about Himself and what people were saying about Him, and about Jesus’ trouble with the scribes and Pharisees – their religious leaders. In Jewish society back then it was a **very** serious thing to be in trouble with their religious leaders. It could result in getting kicked out of the synagogue, excommunicated, and shunned by their fellow Jews. This would then bring the family a lot of trouble. Mark says that Jesus’ family “*went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, ‘He is out of His mind’*” (Mk. 3:21). Jesus’ brothers were going to take Him by force, if necessary, and in their minds ‘try to talk some sense into Him.’

We're told, "*While [Jesus] was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.*" Jesus' mother, Mary, and His brothers had come to talk to Him. Years earlier the angel Gabriel had appeared to Mary and told her she was going to be the mother the Son of God. Mary knew that Jesus had no human father. After Jesus was born, Mary saw the shepherds and later the wise men, heard what they said about Jesus, and saw them worship Him. Mary saw Jesus as a twelve year old boy in the temple, amazing the teachers with His knowledge and understanding of God's Word (Lk. 2:42-52). Mary had seen how Jesus had truly been the perfect child growing up. Mary witnessed Jesus' first miracle of changing water into wine at the wedding in Cana (Jn. 2:1ff.). Mary pondered these things in her heart (Lk. 2:19, 51). Mary's purpose in coming with Jesus' brothers couldn't have been to join them in trying to stop Him from the things He was saying and doing.

Mary may well have wanted to see Jesus and speak with Him out of love and concern. It was different with Jesus' brothers. John tells us that at this time His brothers didn't believe in Him as the Messiah (Jn. 7:5). His brothers thought He was acting crazy, and wanted to put a stop to it.

When Jesus was told that His mother and brothers had come to talk to Him He responded by asking a question: "*Who is My mother and who are My brothers?*" Jesus wasn't being unkind to His mother and His brothers. He loved them as only Jesus can. Jesus was making an important point.

Notice, we're told that Jesus "*stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.'*" What do we know about Jesus' disciples and what they believed about Him? Nathaniel once told Jesus, "*You are the Son of God!*" (Jn. 1:49). On two separate occasions, speaking for himself and all the other disciples, Peter told Jesus the same thing (Mt. 16:16; Jn. 6:68-69). When Jesus says that the members of His family are those who do His Father's will, He's talking about everyone who believes in Him.

The Pharisees thought they were so good that they deserved to go to heaven. Jesus says, "*Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick*" (Mt. 9:12). The Pharisees thought they were spiritually healthy and good, so they saw no need for Jesus to forgive them and save them. Jesus continues, "*I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*" (Mt. 9:13b). God has to open our blind eyes to see our sin sickness before Him and turn us to Him in repentance so we can receive His forgiveness and salvation. Romans 4:5 says, "*To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.*" When we realize that we can't work our way into God's favor and into heaven, and trust alone in Jesus, we're saved and going to heaven. "*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved*" – Acts 16:31. Jesus says, "*Truly, truly I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.*" (Jn. 6:47).

The Pharisees tried to understand Jesus using their reason. They wanted a Messiah who would make their nation of Israel powerful again. Jesus didn't fit their idea of the Messiah, so they rejected Him.

Jesus isn't some sort of all-powerful 'genie' to be whatever we think He should be and do whatever we want Him to do. Jesus is the Son of God who saves us from our sins, gives our lives true meaning and purpose, and leads us safely through this sinful life to the perfect life in heaven.

Everywhere Jesus went crowds gathered to see Him. One of their main reasons in coming to Jesus was for healing of their bodies, which Jesus gave them. But sooner or later, they all eventually died. What Jesus really came to give them, and everyone else, is healing for our souls, and eternal life! *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (Jn. 3:16).

Jesus' brothers were only looking at Him as their big brother who, they thought, was saying and doing some very strange things, getting people all stirred up, and making enemies of their religious leaders. Jesus' brothers tried to stop Him because they misunderstood Him. Years earlier the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple said to Joseph and Mary, *"Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* (Lk. 2:49). As the Son of God, Jesus was carrying out part of what He had to do to save them and us all from our sins. Jesus didn't stop then, and He didn't stop when His brothers tried to talk Him out of it. Jesus kept going all the way to the cross when He could finally say, *"It is finished!"* (Jn. 19:30).

What do you believe about Jesus Christ? We're not going to find the answer to that question by relying on our reason or our feelings. The answer is found in God's Word. We know the answer by faith – faith that God gives us. We know Jesus and understand Him as we stand at the foot of His cross. Jesus Christ, God's Son, died for our sins on the cross, and rose again for our forgiveness and eternal salvation. Jesus Christ is our living Savior, Lord, Helper, and Friend. Jesus is coming again on the Judgment Day to take us to heaven.

Just after Jesus' resurrection and ascension, we read in the first chapter of Acts, *"...Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James"* (Jesus' disciples). *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers"* (vv. 13-14). God had brought Jesus' brothers to believe in Him and be saved! Praise God for giving us His Son, for giving us faith in His Son, and for giving us eternal life in His Son! Amen.