

The Amazing Jesus His Relationship with His Family

Intro: This year we're taking time once a month in a lesson to reflect upon the amazing character of Jesus. There are so many things about him that we need to admire and imitate. Already we've talked about the need to imitate his prayer life, to imitate his compassion for people in their suffering, his forbearance with his disciple's failings, and His patience with God's timing. Today I want to explore with you Jesus amazing relationship with His family.

His relationship to His earthly parents

The Scriptures give us a brief glimpse at Jesus as a young man. We see that, though He was the Son of God, he went through the normal human process of growth and maturity.

“And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52, NASB)

His Passover visit at age twelve gives us insight into his relationship to their parents.

Jesus was becoming aware of His special relationship with the Father. Now that he had become a "son of the Law" at age twelve, he took very seriously the need to explore God's word with those who taught in the temple. Luke records that they were very impressed with his knowledge and answers in the discussions. For three days Jesus was going to the temple and talking with them, a very impressive display of Jesus' emerging devotion to the word of God.

His parents thinking he was among the crowd discovered that he had stayed behind in Jerusalem; and they must have gone through considerable anxiety about his whereabouts as they search from place to place. Finally they found him in the temple, apparently the last place that they thought a young boy might have wanted to hang out. They considered his actions a mistreatment of them:

And when they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You.” (Luke 2:48, NASB)

But Jesus instead indicated that perhaps they should have been more sensitive to his relationship to God. His response shows respect, but also a bit of correction:

And He said to them, “Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49, NASB)

As a young Jewish boy, he was obligated by the Law of God to honor His parents and obey them. Even as a teenager, when young people are often asserting their independence, we see him showing proper respect and obedience to them.

And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:51, NASB)

Later when he began His ministry, Jesus shows respect for His mother and a desire to please her; but also an awareness of the more important issue of His obedience to His heavenly father.

Jesus along with his family were attending a wedding feast in a city near Nazareth (at Cana). The host suffered the embarrassment of running out of wine for the feast. Jesus' mother came with an apparent suggestion that Jesus do something about that. Did she know that Jesus had been endowed with miracle-working power; and that this was the time to demonstrate it?

But note Jesus' response:

*And Jesus *said to her, "Woman, what do I have to do with you? My hour has not yet come." (John 2:4, NASB)*

Jesus' answer might sound somewhat harsh to us; but the idiom he uses implies no disrespect; but only that he must, as God's chosen one, act on the basis of the Father's will, not any human's. His mother had to learn that though he had been a perfectly obedient child, she could not continue to command his actions. So there is respect; but also an acknowledgement of the higher authority of God.

Finally we see Jesus show honor for his mother at the cross.

*When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He *said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He *said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:26–27, NASB)*

In spite of the great suffering Jesus was enduring, he made provisions for the care of His mother.

His relationship with His brothers and sisters

We might be inclined to think it would be easy for Jesus to love his family; but Jesus endured a lot from his family. One might have thought that if there were any who believed in and followed Jesus it would be his family. It appears that they were not customarily among the disciples.

The Scripture explicitly says that they mocked him because of unbelief.

Now the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths, was at hand. His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here, and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may behold Your works which You are doing. "For no one does anything in secret, when he himself seeks to be known publicly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." For not even His brothers were believing in Him. (John 7:2–5, NASB)

Jesus politely corrected their misconception, reminding them that, as the Messiah, he had to follow God's time-table; but as for them, death was always a possibility; and they should take that seriously.

Jesus was forced by their behavior to acknowledge that they were though they were his physical family, they were not His true family.

While He was still speaking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You." But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:46–50, NASB)

Yet in spite of the ongoing rejection, Jesus apparently never gave up on His brothers. He loved them as himself; and manifested that love to them in His actions. Ultimately they all would stand among the believers in Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 1. Perhaps Paul gives us the best explanation as he recounts the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus:

...then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; (1 Corinthians 15:7, NASB)

Was this the event that turned the unbelief of Jesus' brothers into a loyal faith?

Observation

Jesus is a great example of a son and sibling who properly loved his family, even when that might not have been easy to do. He gave them the honor and love that God's law commanded.

Yet at the same time we see that Jesus would live out with His family the precept that He taught others:

He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. (Matthew 10:37, NASB)

With Jesus the heavenly father and His kingdom always came first; and though that meant suffering for him, he accepted that as part of the cross he must bear. He would not compromise the truth for the sake even of this most intimate relationship.

Application to us

So we too must find our proper place with our family.

Sometimes in our frustration with their misbehavior we may allow ourselves to drift into wrong attitudes and actions toward them. We may write them off or treat them unkindly.

But Jesus teaches us to commit ourselves to treating them with respect and kindness.

Yet at the same time we must realize that God wants us to put him first in all things. That means that we may at times displease and disappoint them because we will not join with them in doing what is wrong or give our approval to conduct contrary to God's will.

Conclusion: Jesus' amazing care for His family is a good example for us. And we need to remember His words. Only those who are willing to obey the Father are truly His family.