



## **Luke 8:19–21**

19 Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd. 20 Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.' 21 He replied, 'My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.'

### **Reflection**

(Today's reflection is given by Craig Tubman)

Here in today's passage is another clue as to the shape and nature of the kingdom of God.

From the opening chapter of Luke's Gospel he has identified Jesus as the king of God's eternal kingdom. He is the one God has promised he would send. He is the one that fulfils the prophecies of Isaiah. And Jesus is the one about whom Simeon said 'Now I have seen your salvation'. Jesus is the king, the ruler, the one with authority that humanity has yearned for. And yet as king, Jesus is not calling mere loyal subjects who are to cower at his every word, but rather he is doing something very different. Jesus is forming a new fam-

ily. Quite an odd and unexpected family because the king himself is adopting people to be his brothers and sisters. He is generous with his power and wants us to join him in his glorious kingdom – not as subjects but as part of the Royal family.

Worth noting, firstly, is that this is at total odds with most historical human kingdoms. The king himself (or queen) is usually looking to limit the number of people close to them, to ensure there are no would-be attempts at the throne. The ruler would seek subjects who will obey their every word so that they can profit off the combined wealth their subjects bring to the kingdom.

But what if there was a king had no rivals? What if there was a king who knew that his

throne would never be toppled and didn't need subjects to make him rich or powerful? What sort of king would that be like?

Such a king would look like Jesus.

In today's passage Luke records that Jesus popularity as a teacher is growing, crowds are flocking to him – perhaps to receive healing or to hear his teaching. His family turn up and Jesus is alerted to their presence. On one level this is a call for him to drop everything and give them pride of place. But Jesus does not do this. He doesn't deny that they are his family – he doesn't lower their status in any way. But what he does do is elevate everyone else. Or at least provide the potential for that.

Having just recorded for us the parable of the sower – the story of a life that flourishes through listening and responding to the words of Jesus and urging his listeners to listen carefully, Jesus now declares:

‘My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.’

There is something very different between loyal subjects and being family. It is true that as an Australian I am still a subject of Queen Elizabeth. I have no real issue with this, other than being a little odd I’m okay being a subject of the queen. But there is a distance here. She is a figure-head and leader but my own connection to her is minimal. Contrast this with the experience of Meghan Markle – the recent

bride of Prince Harry. Megan is now part of the family. She does not just know the queen, she is the queen's daughter-in-law and will now take part in the inheritance and benefit of being a member of the Royal family. She even has a new title, a new identity as the Duchess of Sussex. There is something very different between loyal subjects and being family.

The God of the universe – the one who began it all, sustains all and has future plans to make all things stunningly new – wants you to be part of his family; to be adopted, to now take part in the inheritance and benefit of being a member of his Royal family. You will even have a new title, a new identity as a child of the living God. For this is the shape and nature of the kingdom of God. It is Jesus the one

through whom we are adopted who says: 'My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.'

To hear God's word and put it into practice could mean a multitude of things. But it is interesting that the very next account Luke gives us is that of Jesus calming the storm and inviting the disciples to put their trust in him. The first and decisive step of adoption into God's family is a humble and honest faith in the work of the one true son, Jesus. Then from there we get to learn what it's like to live in a Royal family – in God's family. There will be transformation as we listen to Jesus' call on our lives and respond. All the while finding joy in our new status as children of his.

**Think & Pray**

Why not take time today to consider what it means for you to be adopted into this royal and eternal family? Do you live with a sense of the inheritance that is to come? Have you embraced your new identity as a child of God? What would it look like to grow more into the family likeness for you?

Reflect on these things and pray that God may lead you into wisdom and growth.