

Pentecost 2, 10/6/12, Holy Trinity

Mark 3:20-35

Family! We all come from one.

And what an array there is of families!

Some are loving, some are quirky, some are dysfunctional, some are abusive and some are a combination of these things.

No matter what kind of family we have, each member of the family has a role to play, from the smallest child to the oldest adult.

There is an expectation of what each person will do within that family.

If a person changes roles and makes positive changes in life generally, personal relationships within the family members may be put in jeopardy.

In this morning's Gospel reading we have Jesus coming back to his hometown where his family lived.

People were crowding him and Jesus' family was worried about him and wanted to restrain him.

Mark tells us "they were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind'".

Mark does not tell us to whom he is referring when he writes "they".

Is it Jesus' family or is it some persons in the crowd or is it a bit of both?

But we do know that Jesus is functioning outside of his usual role in the family and they are fearful of where this new role may lead.

He was clear that he was called by God to preach and teach and heal, and that was his focus.

He knew his role and this was different to the role expected by the family or by the hometown in which he had been raised and in which the family still lived.

Jesus does not reject his family, but makes it quite clear that there are higher priorities than family.

Jesus had parents, brothers and sisters.

Family ties were typically very strong in his Jewish culture.

Yet Jesus had already challenged the established patterns for family life.

He had already set out on a new adventure and had not followed the established pattern for a thirty year old man of marrying and having a family to preserve the future of the clan.

He told some people to stay with their families and to live radically for God there, but for others he called them to leave all behind and to follow him.

In other words, whether a person is at home or on the road, from now on God was to rule and God could overrule family life and expectations.

It also places us within a new family that extends beyond the birth family, into the family of a new birth through water and the Holy Spirit in holy baptism.

This is a family that goes beyond these walls, our denominational lines, our socio-economic status and into the family of anyone who does the will of God.

We are part of life in this family that meets within these walls week by week but yet extends far beyond these walls and it demands that we follow God.

We do this by continuing in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, in the prayers, resisting evil, repenting and returning to the Lord, proclaiming by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.

Further, we are to seek and serve the Lord in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves, striving for peace and justice among all people and respecting the dignity of every human being.

This is not an easy road to travel and yet we reply to it "I will, with God's help".

We cannot do this alone, but with a single-minded will and following Jesus' example we can do it.

We can live in our human family and in this wider family of the Body of Christ knowing that God is with us "ALWAYS".