

The Couples Bible Study - March 3

CAST

Speaking parts

Ann –

Bob –

Sally –

Joe –

Kara -

Tim –

Jesus –

Mary –Monda

James (brother of Jesus) –

Person next to Jesus –

Non-speaking parts

Joses

Crowd and disciples

(A group gathers for their regular Couples Bible Study. Ann and Bob enter and are soon joined by Sally and Joe.)

Ann: Hi, Sally and Joe. I didn't know if you would be able to make it tonight with the weather we are having.

Joe: Glad to be here – Glad we made it safely. Did you have to do much shoveling to get out, Bob?

Bob: Just a little – the wind drifted the snow on the side of the garage – saved me a lot of work!

Ann: I wonder if Kara and Tim will have trouble getting here?

Sally: Well, here is your answer!

Kara: Hi, everyone. (Kara and Tim greet everyone and then all are seated.)

Bob: Well, let's get started. Kara, would you lead us in prayer?

Kara: Father in heaven, we thank you that we were all able to get here safely tonight and for this opportunity to study your Word. Guide us in our speaking and in our hearing. Enable us to grow in faith, in love and in openness to your presence in our lives; through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Ann: Where did we leave off? Did anyone mark it down?

Tim: We had just finished Jesus appointing his twelve disciples in Mark 3. I'll read on: "Then Jesus came into a house. Again such a crowd gathered that Jesus and those with him could not eat. When his family heard about it, they went to take charge of him because they were saying, 'He's out of his mind!'" (Tim and Bible study members freeze)

(Jesus enters followed by disciples and crowd. One from the crowd goes to where Mary and Jesus' two brothers are gathered.)

Helpful One: Mary, things are getting out of hand with Jesus. Everyone is bothering him and begging for help.

Mary: I am sure Jesus wants to help them.

Helpful One: But he's just not taking care of himself. All sorts of people are going to him – they believe he will heal them. I am worried for him.

Mary: You are not the first one to come to me. Last week another friend told me she heard that the religious and political leaders are plotting to destroy him.

Helpful One: I've always liked Jesus – he was such a nice young man – maybe if you brought him home for a while things would settle down.

Mary: Maybe that's a good idea – James and Joses, you can come with me and we will bring Jesus home.

James: Okay Mom.

(Mary, James and Joses go to the edge of the crowd surrounding Jesus. Mary speaks to one of the crowd)

Mary: I am Jesus' mother – these are his brothers. Could you tell Jesus we are here and looking for him?

(One person in the crowd speaks to another until the message gets to Jesus)

Person next to Jesus: Look, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you.

Jesus (looking around at the people sitting around him): Look, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother.

(Biblical characters freeze in place)

Kara: I've never heard that story before. Are you sure you are reading out of the Bible? How could Jesus treat Mary like that?

Sally: If my son ever did that to me it would break my heart.

Tim: I read what it says here in Mark. But it doesn't seem like Jesus was honoring his mother much that day.

Ann: In a way it reminds me of that story of Jesus when he was twelve. Mary, Joseph and Jesus went to the temple and Jesus stayed behind.

Sally: Yes, Mary and Joseph started traveling back to Nazareth with their relatives thinking Jesus was in the group.

Bob: I remember that – it took them three days to finally figure things out and to go back to Jerusalem to the temple to find Jesus.

Sally: And when they did Jesus said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you realize that I had to be in my Father's house?"

Joe: How could Jesus treat his parents like that? I thought one of the most important things we can do is to honor our father and mother.

Ann: It is. Jesus certainly did that from the cross when he gave John to Mary saying, "Woman, behold your son. And gave Mary to John saying: "Behold your mother." That shows how much he loved her.

Bob: I am confused, then, why Jesus turned his back on Mary in the passage we read a moment ago. To me it is clear that God wants our family relationships to be the most important ones in our life.

Kara: But I don't think that is what Jesus taught. Remember how he said, "From now on in one family five will be divided, three against two and two against three. A father will be against a son and a son against a father, a mother against a daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

Sally: And I remember him saying, "Anyone who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Bob: Now I am really confused. The reason I came back to the church is for the sake of my children. I want them to have a good foundation and for our family to get along better. It sounds like something else is more important to Jesus than family relationships.

Ann: Have you ever thought about all the people at church who are there alone? For some of them Sunday morning must be a time that divides their family rather than unites it.

Kara: Yeah, I sit next to a woman whose husband is never with her. She must leave him at home – (sarcastically) I’ll bet he loves that!

Tim (thoughtfully): Well, if her husband resented her going to church that could be quite a cross for her to bear.

Ann: I have to admit I have always felt smugly superior as I walk into church with my whole family there – together.

Bob: I don’t think it is a bad thing that we are all there together. But maybe our family connections cause us to not have enough time for some others.

Ann: Or not enough love.

Sally: That day when Mary came she also had Jesus’ brothers for family but maybe some around Jesus had no one but him for family. “Here are my mother and sister and brother!”

Tim: But I think the most important part of Jesus’ words are the last part – “Whoever does the will of God is my mother and sister and brother.” I think Jesus was saying that seeking God’s will is more important than the most important things in our lives – even more important than family.

Joe: It certainly was for Jesus. Seeking God’s will was more important for him than his own safety – his own life.

Sally: Well, I think God’s will for me is that I should be the best wife and mother that I can be. I expect my church to support me in that. I think the church should raise up the family in every way possible so that good, loving families are a model for everyone.

Kara: But maybe in doing that our church makes the lonely ones lonelier. I don’t think Jesus wants the gathering of his people to rob those who have the least of what little they have.

Ann: I remember something I heard: “In the kingdom of God nobodies are somebodies and somebodies become nobodies for the sake of the kingdom.” That is what was happening there that day – Mary – the most honored of all women became a nobody and those nobodies who were gathered around Jesus were declared somebodies.

Tim: How different the church would be if all the time somebodies were becoming nobodies.

Bob: And nobodies somebodies.

Sally: Isn't that what happened on the cross – the greatest somebody born of a woman became a nobody – dead and buried – and we who are all really nobodies become the beloved children of God.

Joe: Looks like our time is up – we will have to cover more verses next time or the world will end before we get to the sixth chapter!

Sally: Let's hope so!