

# “How to Become a Relative of Jesus”

Allan Pole on Sunday morning, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022



Theme: We can have a relationship with God only on His terms.

Text: Luke 8:19-21

Here's a thought: William F. Buckley, Jr. declared, "I mean to live my life an obedient man, but obedient to God, subservient to the wisdom of my ancestors: never to the authority of political truths arrived at yesterday in the voting booth."

A tourist was staying in a hotel, and as he and the room clerk became friendly, they began swapping jokes. The room clerk said to the tourist, "I have a riddle. My mother and father had a baby, but it wasn't my brother or sister. Who was it?"

The visitor thought for a moment and said, "I don't know. Who was it?"

"It was me!" answered the clerk.

The man, after he returned to his home, decided to try the riddle on his friend. "My parents had a baby. It wasn't my brother or my sister. Who was it?"

His friend countered, "I don't know. Who was it?"

The man replied, "The room clerk at the hotel where I stayed."

In Luke 8:19-21 Jesus explains how a person can become part of His family:

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." NIV

Different people have interacted with Jesus in different ways:

**His Birth Family** (Luke 8:19-20)



While Jesus was teaching, His mother and brothers came to speak to Him. There is no reason to doubt that these brothers were Mary's later children by Joseph, who was probably now dead. Mark 3:21 indicates they came to take Jesus home because He was "out of his mind." He was provoking the opposition of leaders in a way that seemed reckless to them.

The appearance of His family created an awkward situation for Jesus. He had always been obedient to His mother, but to obey her now would mean abandoning His ministry. Though their intentions were good, His younger brothers were not believers yet. His mother certainly knew the truth about Him, but somehow in a moment of weakness, the brothers persuaded her to join them in this effort. Gently but firmly, Jesus made it clear that they could not control His ministry.

We can concoct ways that give us an "in" with God. We think we will make it by doing (or not doing) and saying (or not saying) certain things. If we are good citizens and pay our taxes, mind our own business and be polite to people, be generous and kind, and don't drink, smoke or swear, the Father will include us in Christ's family and heaven.

The Apostle Paul corrects this age-old temptation in Colossians 2:16-23:

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. 19 He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. 20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. NIV

Does this mean that I am promoting lawlessness and anarchy? Of course not!

It means that we are saved *for* good works, not *by* good works. We dare not place any hope in our family connections or clean living to gain a relationship with Jesus.

Humanly speaking, Jesus' birth family had every right to see Him and to be with Him. In Luke chapter 8 and Colossians chapter 2, Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul tell us to be free from human regulations for the basis of our relationship with God.

Do you think you are a Christian because your parents are? I have news for you: God has no grandchildren. Do you think you are a part of Jesus' family because you are better than most people you know? That is nothing but a pile of dung in God's economy. We can have a relationship with God only on His terms.

Different people have interacted with Jesus in different ways:

His Birth Family

**His Fickle Fans** (Luke 8:19)



These are cool, but these are not the kind of fans I mean.

Different people have interacted with Jesus in different ways:

His Birth Family

**His Fickle Fans** (Luke 8:19)



By the time of this account in Luke chapter 8, many people were curiosity seekers, intrigued by this young rabbi named Jesus of Nazareth. They were interested in what He had to say and do but not genuinely committed to Him. I suspect Jesus' birth family had to press through some of these fickle fans to get to Him. However, as people realized what this relationship with Jesus meant, they began to jump off the bandwagon.

Jesus feeds the 5,000 early in John chapter 6, and John 6:60-66 illustrates again how fickle people can be:

60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" 61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." 66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him. NIV

I suspect that some of these people cheered on Christ's crucifixion later. They did not yet realize the sacrifices that come with following Him.

A critic remarked, "That's a very graceful statue, but isn't that an odd position for a general to assume?"

The sculptor replied, "Perhaps it is, but the committee decided they couldn't afford a horse for him when I was half finished."

The birth rate among fickle fans of Jesus seems to have remained high through the centuries. Today many highly regard Jesus Christ and see Him as a good man or even a prophet. Some call themselves Christians, but because of their lack of commitment to following Him, they misrepresent the name Christian, which means "Christ-like one."

William F. Buckley, Jr. (1925-2008), author and political commentator, pointed out the importance of obeying God when he wrote:

I mean to live my life an obedient man, but obedient to God, subservient to the wisdom of my ancestors: never to the authority of political truths arrived at yesterday in the voting booth.

Sometimes it seems acceptable to be Christian - when our situation is desperate or when we want to be known as a clean-living citizen. How about you? Are you under the impression that becoming a Christian is a popular decision? Do you want to be a part of the crowd that hears and speaks the words of Jesus Christ? Do you believe that to "go to church" is the honourable thing to do, to have a "Christian wedding" or a "Christian burial" is a socially acceptable way to go? If so, you are sadly mistaken! There is a price for being a follower of Jesus.

Different people have interacted with Jesus in different ways:

His Birth Family

His Fickle Fans

## **His Spiritual Family** (Luke 8:21)



Jesus turned His birth family's ill-advised effort into an opportunity to teach a great truth: His real brothers and sisters hear and obey God's will. Spiritual relations are more important than physical ones, and a spiritual family is more important and lasting than any biological family can be.

Jesus elaborates on this truth in Luke 11:27-28:

27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you." 28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." NIV

Jesus placed no eternal value or merit on being related to Him by birth or being part of the crowd gathering to hear His words. He refers to sorting the truth from the false that will happen one day. On that day of judgment, there will be no virtue in being born into a good Christian family or attending Christian meetings. The Judge of all heaven and earth will draw the dividing line between those who practice God's word and those who do not.

A young son of a missionary couple in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was playing in the yard. Suddenly the voice of the boy's father rang out from the porch, "Philip, obey me instantly! Drop to your stomach!" Immediately the youngster did as his father commanded. "Now crawl toward me as fast as you can!" The boy obeyed. "Stand up and run to me!" Philip responded unquestioningly and ran into his father's arms.

As the youngster turned to look at the tree where he had been playing, he saw a large deadly snake hanging from one of the branches! At the first command of his father, Philip could have hesitated and asked, "Why do you want me to do that?" Or he could have casually replied, "In a minute." But his instant obedience without questioning saved his life!

Christ's followers make up His spiritual family and display their loyalty by obeying God. Luke has placed this incident here to illustrate how people should respond to the Lord's teaching. He accepts those who receive it obediently like relatives. Jesus did not want to insult His birth family; their presence simply gave Him a chance to illustrate a point.

Hebrews 2:10-11 refers again to Christ's spiritual family:

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. NIV

Becoming a part of God's family begins by accepting Jesus Christ's death on the cross as your only hope for forgiveness for acts you have committed to offend God. It means you must recognize that any good deeds you might do to cover up or outweigh your sins will prove desperately inadequate. Becoming a part of God's family is sealed and displayed to everyone by our obedience to Him as our Lord and Master.

The Father is holding out to us the offer of an eternal, spiritual family relationship. He can become *your* Father, and Jesus Christ can become your older brother. If you accept this relationship, you enter into a family that spreads through New Beginnings Church, Calgary, Canada, worldwide and throughout history! We find our way onto the Heavenly Father's lap by bowing at His feet.

A homeowner in Bancroft, Wisconsin, said he heard a cat meowing on the front porch. When he opened the door, a big, long-haired, grey male cat walked in, checked things out, began purring, and then jumped up on his favourite chair. Family members could not believe their eyes. But when they compared the cat to pictures taken earlier, they could only conclude that their cat Clem had finally come home after eight years!

What remarkable homing instincts God has given to some animals! On a spiritual level, why do God's created children often seem to have less? Why do we, in our rebellion, show less sense than the animals? He calls us to appreciate the spiritual family He planned for us to enjoy.

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**His Fickle Fans**

**His Spiritual Family**

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