

(Matt. 12:46-47) – Although we do not elevate Mary, the human mother of Jesus, to the status of worship, as does the false Roman Catholic Church, we do recognize that she was truly “*blessed among women*” (Luke 1:28,42). To worship Mary is idolatry. We are to worship God alone, and the Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. He is the one and only Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). Being the human mother of the humanity of Jesus, she was not, as the Catholics say, the “mother of God.” God has no mother. God is eternal and immutable. Again, Mary was the mother of the human nature, body and soul, of Christ. His humanity was created for Him in Mary’s womb. So, as we read that Mary was highly favored and blessed of God, we know, according to her own words, that she was a sinner saved by grace. In her song of praise, she said, “*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God MY SAVIOUR*” (Luke 1:46-47). Only sinners need a savior.

After the birth of the Lord Jesus, Mary bore several children by her husband, Joseph. Here, while the Lord spoke to people inside a house, “*BEHOLD, HIS MOTHER AND HIS BRETHREN STOOD WITHOUT, DESIRING TO SPEAK WITH HIM.*” These “brethren” here were his earthly, physical step-brothers named James, Joses or Joseph, Simon, and Judas (Matt. 13:55). He also had step-sisters although they are not named or numbered (Matt. 13:56). In John 7:1-10, His brothers go on to the festival while Jesus stays behind. John 17:5 tells us that at that time his step-brothers did not believe in Him. In Acts 1:14, His brothers and mother are described as praying with the disciples, so we can rightly assume that these were brought by God to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works. Galatians 1:19 mentions that James was Jesus’s brother.

(Matt. 12:48) – When the disciple came to the Lord to tell Him that His mother and step-brothers wanted to speak with Him, the Lord’s answer, He replied – “*WHO IS MY MOTHER? AND WHO ARE MY BRETHREN?*” He was not being cold or disrespectful to His mother and step-brothers. Christ loved His mother and made sure she was cared for after His death (John 19:26-27). But here He used this opportunity to teach a vital truth concerning the reality of the spiritual and eternal family of God – all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Matt. 12:49) – “*AND HE STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND TOWARD HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID, BEHOLD MY MOTHER AND MY BRETHREN!*” – He made it clear that His true spiritual and eternal family are HIS DISCIPLES. Who are His true disciples? – “*FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, THE SAME IS MY BROTHER, AND SISTER, AND MOTHER.*” And what is it to do the will of His Father? It is to believe on His Son Whom He has sent into the world to save

His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21; John 6:27-29,39-40; 1 John 3:23). This is the true spiritual and eternal family of Christ, made up of all those who were chosen unto salvation (2 Thess. 2:13), predestinated unto adoption (Eph. 1:4-5), justified and redeemed by His blood (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7), and effectually called to life and faith by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-7; 6:37-45).

One of the most important issues of living a true Christian life is the matter and reality of true fellowship. God's Word tells that all who are saved by God's grace are, first and foremost, in fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:1-4) and with the Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:4). When it comes to fellow human beings here on earth, with whom are we as believers to have fellowship and with whom are we not to have fellowship? As sinners saved by grace and brought to faith in Christ, we are commanded by our Lord not to be in fellowship with the world, and we are commanded to be in fellowship with other true believers. Our spiritual and eternal family is made up of people who are like-minded in the faith of God's elect. This spiritual and eternal family and relationship with other believers is to be regarded as infinitely more important than our earthly families and relationships (Matt. 10:34-42; Luke 14:25-27). We are to come out from any religious fellowship with the world (Heb. 13:9-12). We cannot speak peace to, worship with, or recognize God's blessings upon their religious notions and efforts (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11). We are to recognize and receive all who testify of the truth of the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in and by Christ and based on His righteousness alone (3 John 5-8).

This fellowship is identified in the Word of God. It is the fellowship of God's grace in Christ into which we are brought by the Spirit of life and truth (Php. 2:1). It is the fellowship of light and truth in the Gospel revealed to us (Eph. 3:9; Php. 1:5; 1 John 1:6-7). It is the fellowship of righteousness wherein those who are justified by God's grace based on Christ's righteousness imputed are bonded together in the faith of God's elect and in obedience to God as motivated by grace, love, and gratitude (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Every believer's relationship with Christ is the basis for fellowship with one another (John 17:20-23). The importance and necessity of this fellowship is that it reinforces our relationship with Christ and our standing before God in Him in our minds and helps us to focus on Christ and His Word. As iron sharpens iron, in true fellowship Christians sharpen one another's faith and stir one another to exercise that faith in love and good works, all to God's glory (Heb. 10:19-25).