08.05.16 extraordinary care, Deb Winters

Mark 3: 31-35 New Revised Standard Version (NIV)

True Kindred of Jesus

31 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and call him. 32 people sitting around him; and they said, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters [a] are outside, asking for you." 33 And he said: "Who is my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said: "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother!".

SERMON

Today is Mother's Day and for most people is a fun day of love and say thank you. My husband and I do not get to watch much TV, but when we can Sunday night to sit and enjoy some laughs with funniest home videos and Mother's Day is usually a classic of all setbacks gift is making and surprises for mom to scare her death and the inevitable mishaps breakfast in bed. Remember enjoying one last year saw two small children and her dad trying to surprise mom with breakfast in bed and looking at each child leaves the fruit plate all over the floor fell not once but twice in the form of the breast. I'm not sure I would have wanted to eat the fruit.

I have also joined the ranks of those in the Mother's Day is a bittersweet day for my mother is no longer with me here on earth and although much am who I am today because my mom and I have wonderful memories his love, still strange though he died more than 10 years ago.

Today is the day that the portion of the writing comes more alive for me. It is one of many places in my life where Jesus stretches the limits for me and for you. Jesus' biological family has gotten the word that Jesus is beginning to preach what some would consider heretically fill and maybe he is out of his mind with what he is saying, so Mary travels with some of the brothers of Jesus to come see in person what Jesus is saying and doing and maybe even have a little "talk" with him.

Jesus is in the middle of teaching when he tells his mother and brothers are there to see it and it becomes a teachable moment for which he addresses his congregation and asked, "Who is my mother and brother and sister?" He answers his own question when he says, ". He who does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" In my more years I have come to appreciate his teaching, but as a child I found it a burden that limits what you could get away with.

Today I can proudly say I'm a PK Preacher's Kid meaning. I do not know the history of how many of their pastors have had children, who grew up in the church, and I know there are one or two of you in the congregation today, but if you have experienced we would like growing know that we are not exactly the angels are supposed to be. That was my problem with this verse of scripture to grow because if you make a minor infraction, say running down the aisle, my mom or dad never really had to worry about correcting me, because before reaching half way down the hall to another adult would stop and felt it was his duty to correct my behavior down the hall and then all the rest of the way even though people were walking would make comments about my "no-lady like behavior." He hated this verse when I was a kid because I felt as if everyone had dibs on me for every little thing I did wrong. (Of course I am the third child in my family and I am guessing after experiencing my older brother and sister who knew they had to put a stop to me!)

Until the day he died my mother would pull his memory banks one of my adventures as a child when I was in third grade, my best friend was a guy by the name of Gordon and although we live in Philadelphia for the third grade there it was a territory I was allowed to travel freely. You might think of Philadelphia as a big city, but grew as small neighborhoods that got swallowed up as the city grew and when you live in Philadelphia these areas still have a neighborhood feel to them, for better and for worse sometimes.

Well my friend Gordon had marked a pack of cigarettes with candy. You have to be a certain age to appreciate this as they were the days of the Marlboro Man, which I think has already died of lung cancer, and advertisements were all over the place in magazines and on radio and television you looked at how cool smoking a cigarette as soon as we were beyond the view of the parish house where I grew up, Gordon took cigarettes and spent all afternoon walking around the neighborhood looking cool in our own eyes.

If there had been cell phones at the time, I had known pretty quickly that there was a problem, but lived an existence free cell phone so that when the time came for me to be home, simply take cigarettes candy and headed house innocent as can be. I should have known something was wrong when my mother was standing at the door ready to greet us. She sent Gordon on his way home where his mother was waiting to welcome you and my mother calmly asked if I wanted a snack before dinner, she said she had "assumed" that were walking all over the place. When we sat down she proceeded to ask me about my adventures and not long in conversation this damn verse came alive for me again. For you see, who had just got candy cigarettes in the mouth before the phone in the rectory began ringing off the base and in those days the phones were for cots.

I'll admit there was a woman out the door as we walked tells us that we should not pretend to smoke those cigarettes candy and I should have realized then the word had spread and my mother received a call after another on her daughter, who smoked outdoors in the street and, at his age, what were my parents, what was your pastor teach! I really hated this verse as a child. And now, now that I have come to love and pray that all children have enough people in their lives to care what they do and to help raise them "right" what may seem to their culture and time.

It really does take a village to raise a child. Is something children when they come here at First Baptist become a part of even though they do not realize the gifts they receive. The Sunday school teachers, and choir director, and adults taking note of them and talk to them and teach them lessons and play games and watch their work and comment on their gifts and talents and how good they look and dress and yes, even correct them, sometimes lucky with parental permission.

For me it's one of the things I know I do not do well enough to speak of the love of God in the lives of children here, and my adult students in school and in their lives and yet is what God he has called me to do, to be mother and sister to all who are family by choice. But then again, God extends those boundaries for which is no doubt that we are to play the role of mother and brother and sister who follow God because Jesus wants to go beyond our family when we share God's love.

Jesus was teaching one day, when asked exactly who is the neighbor of someone by Jewish law will help keep your neighbor, to show love to your neighbor, to help your neighbor. Jesus responded with some freedom to temporize:

There were young in Pottstown who had escaped from the house and was taking home the alley when a bully realized he had a pushover and beat him, took his cell phone, wallet, shoes and jacket and left him half dead in an alley.

Pastor Deb was late to arrive at the church that day and thought you might have seen someone lying in an alley on his way, but it was late and have no time to go to investigate; plus I wanted to put the finishing touches on his sermon.

A lawyer in the city was a walk in the morning before going to church when he thought he might have seen someone who puts in an alley but thought that probably just needed to sleep it off and did not want to get involved, think of all the paperwork that would have to go through the police so they crossed the street and continued his walk.

And then a prayer of the early Muslims who had just finished morning happened to look out the window and saw someone lying in the alley. I immediately went down to investigate and called 911 for an ambulance and went with young people to the hospital and waited there until he came to his family and made sure they could afford care and offered to help in any way possible.

Then Jesus asked his audience, which was the good neighbor? Pastor Deb? No. The Lawyer Christian? No. The Muslim? WHETHER! Go and do likewise. Celebrate Mother's Day, showing extraordinary care for all that God puts in your way. Not only her biological family, or family and church friends, but whom God puts in your path. Be the mother, brother, sister, that God has called to be for all who need your attention. Amen.