**The Ven Dr Amanda Bloor, Archdeacon of Cleveland, reflects on Mark 3.20‐35 for the Second Sunday after Trinity, 9th June.**

We talk a lot in church about being a family, about being children of God, and being made into brothers and sisters through Christ. Sometimes that can be a comforting thought - it reminds us that we belong, that we're not alone, whilst at other times it can be a nudge to take a deep breath and acknowledge that our church family can be just as irritating or difficult as our blood families can sometimes be, however much we love them.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus finds himself engaging with both his blood family, his mother, his brothers, his sisters, and that wider church family, that is, the people who are coming together to learn from him and to find out more about his ministry. He's under pressure. There's such a big crowd following him that he's afraid he'll be crushed if they surge forward to touch him in their hope to be healed. And Jesus knows that he has made enemies amongst the scribes and the Pharisees. They disapprove of the things he's been teaching. They disapprove of the people he spends time with. They even accuse him of being possessed by evil. There's a lot going on, and it is urgent. Jesus is driven to do as much as he can within the short space of time that he has.

He heals, he teaches, he appoints the apostles to be sent out to proclaim his message, and after what must have been an incredibly hectic time, he goes home. But he finds that even there, there are crowds following him. There's no respite. We might think that someone of such wisdom, someone so inspiring, someone who is doing good, would be supported by those close to him.

Yet in this passage, Jesus finds that there are too many people who seem to be working against him and against the things he's trying to achieve. The scribes spread rumours that his power comes not from God, but from the ruler of the demons. And his family, his mother and his siblings, are worried that he's out of his mind. They want to rush in and take him away. They might be motivated by good intentions - perhaps they want to keep him from harm, but their actions threaten his mission.

I wonder what we would do in a situation like this. Jesus remarkably uses that moment when most of us in a similar situation would crumble under pressure to make a teaching point. He looks at the people gathered to listen to him, those who want to learn more from him, and he says very simply, you are my family. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. That's quite mind-boggling, but it's life changing too. We are Jesus's family. How amazing is that?

Let's pray. Jesus, welcomer of all, thank you for making me part of your family. Help me to always try to do God's will and to trust you to be my brother as well as my Lord. Amen.