Dear Open Door Family,

Well, after the first 3 winters here in Belton this one has been a big disappointment. We moved south for the warmer winters! Oh well, it has taught me long for spring like never before. And this may not be it but I have enjoyed the temperatures this week more than any of the last month. Longing for spring - yearning for the trees and flowers to bloom - having a desire to see humming birds and hear the sounds of the wind blowing through the leaves. Those are good and healthy longings. We can enjoy those things and remember our Lord created them all for us to enjoy. But if we really want to enjoy Him and Know Him there needs to be a deeper longing. A desire to KNOW Him better. Let's see what these verses say to us about that.

Matthew 12: 47- 50 *(NIV) Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers.* ***For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."***

Luke 8:21 *(NIV) ...My mother and brothers are those who* ***HEAR God's WORD and put it into practice.***

Matthew, Mark and Luke all tell us about this event. Mark (3:21) tells us that Jesus' family came to get Him because He was surrounded by people who were making so many demands on Him that He was unable to stop and eat. All three gospels tell us of the arrival of His family. Matthew and Mark tell us that Jesus says that those who are as close as family to Him are those who do God's will. He was not diminishing His human family or showing them a lack of respect. But He was using this moment to make a very important point. Anyone who wants to be as close as family to Jesus MUST do His Father's will; they must do God's Will.

When people are asked 'how can you get close to the Lord,' 'how can you grow in your personal relationship with Him,' the response might be to read the Bible and pray. This would be partially correct. It is true as far as it goes. But Jesus says doing God's will is what makes us close to him. One of the reasons it is wonderful to have the four gospels is that they sometimes give us insight into what the others are saying. Luke tells the same story and then tells us that Jesus said to be close to Him; we must HEAR God's Word and DO what it says. That is pretty clear.

I long for a closer more intimate walk with Jesus. I pray that all of us at Open Door Bible Church will be seeking that kind of closeness with our Lord. But it comes ONLY by doing God's Will. Where do we find God's Will? In the Bible. So we HEAR God's word by reading it or listening to it with a desire to hear God speak to us. Then we are to ACT on what we hear. We are to OBEY God. As we Hear and Obey we are drawn closer to our Lord Jesus and He calls us His family.

PRAYER: Lord, God help me to really HEAR You when I open up Your Word. May I never just go through the motions. But may I deliberately and purposefully set out each day to HEAR and to OBEY You.

Pastor Mark Kieft
>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>