

7363U

## THE DISCIPLES OF THE LORD

Speaker: Bro. Roger Lewis

Study#6 Mary - mother of the Lord

Reading: Luke 2:25-52

Well, as brother Roger said (I've waited many years to be able to say, 'as brother Roger said, and to have someone in the chair that I could say that to; it certainly doesn't happen very often), but, of course, Mary was one of the disciples, wasn't she? and the story today is how she became a disciple of Christ. It's always nice to have a study on a lady, isn't it? because we don't often have studies on the women of the bible, and this is a very special one, because remember that this particular woman was chosen by God to bring forth Messiah to Israel. She must have been a remarkable young woman. Out of all the young virgins of Israel, God selected this girl to be the mother of His Son. There must have been something very special about Mary.

In fact, what we're going to find is that despite the fact that she was a wonderful person, a unique person, that she had a problem, like all the other disciples. So the story of our study today is to see the way in which she had to work through that problem, and that only in overcoming that problem could she become wholeheartedly, finally, fully, completely, a disciple of the Lord. Actually, I'm quite sure that Mary would turn over in her grave, if she knew what happened to her through the Roman Catholic apostasy and the principles of Mariology and the counting of beads and the reciting of prayers to Mary. We all know, by the way, or at least I hope you do, what the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is, by the way? now be careful! What is the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception? yes, the doctrine is that Mary was immaculately conceived and the reason, of course, is because Mary brought forth Jesus, and Jesus is God, and therefore, for a woman to bring forth God, she must have been absolutely pure herself to produce God, and therefore, she herself had to be immaculately conceived, and so one error propounds itself upon another. So we have a whole lot of hideous nonsense these days, preached on and believed on in the name of Mary, which I'm quite sure, that poor old Mary would be most distressed to know about. In fact, so much so that if you go to Spain today, you can actually see Mary's house from Nazareth in a certain Roman Catholic city in Spain. This is the real house from Nazareth itself, which apparently flew to Spain, and is now a Roman Catholic shrine, and no doubt a great deal of money is made inviting people through as well. So that's not the Mary that we're going to look at today, the Mary we want to have a look at is, the Mary of the bible, a wonderful girl but a woman who grew up with a particular problem that she had to struggle with. I'm sure you'll find as we go through that problem that you'll have a sympathy for Mary, as to why she had the problem, a very natural one, a very understandable one for her to have.

Well, our story actually starts in Luke 2, just a little earlier in, perhaps in Luke 2 verse 22. It says, 'When the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present him to the LORD; As it is written in the law of the LORD, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the LORD; and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the LORD, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons', which tells us what, of course, about Mary and Joseph? that this was the offering of the poor, they were not a wealthy couple; spiritually rich maybe, but not augmented in the increase of mammon. 'And Simeon who was in the temple, an old man, blessed them with these words in verse 34.

'Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed'. Now you'll see that the first part of verse 35 is in brackets, so what we should read is, 'this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed'. Now one of the passages that I believe, that Simeon had in mind was Isaiah 8 and if you'll come back to it for a moment, I'm not saying this was the only passage he was alluding to, by the way, but here's one of them, because when he says this child is set for 'the fall and rising again of many in Israel,' he's taking up two key words out of Isaiah 8 and reading from verse 14, 'He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall' (do you see those key words there?) **many and fall**; this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel. Well, what were they going to stumble at? well, Isaiah 8 is part of the Immanuel prophecies, and the doctrine that was going to cause stumbling, was the doctrine of God manifest in the Son, Immanuel, God with us (6005). Certain people would rise to that doctrine and see that as the cornerstone of their faith, and other people would **fall** under that doctrine not being able to understand it, and would stumble against the stone of Jesus. So you see, there was a **fall or rising** depending on how one reacted to the **sign** of Immanuel in the nation. God shall give thee a sign, remember, ask for 'a sign in the heavens above or on the earth beneath'; God says I'll give you a sign and the sign is, of course, the sign of Immanuel. So when Simeon says 'this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel,' I believe, that part of what he had in mind, was the sign of Immanuel, the doctrine of God manifest in His Son; **whose child** is this boy? God with us! you either rise to that doctrine or fall. The whole of Israel would be divided, wouldn't they? into those two classes, those who rose to an understanding of that principle or that fell away from accepting Jesus Christ as the manifestation of His Father.

Now come back to Luke 2, so it's the teaching of God manifest in the flesh, that would be the doctrine that would divide people in Israel. Now do you see what verse 35 says, now we come to the bracketed bit, 'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, now that's what we're going to take up today, the sword that pierced the soul of

Mary. That's what we're going to look at today, the sword thrusts that pierced the soul of Mary. What we believe those sword thrusts were related to, is the very thing that others would rise or fall to, the doctrine of Immanuel, God with us.

Now where else is the idea of the sword used? 'A sword shall pierce thy soul', where else is the sword taken up and in what context in the New Testament? a two-edged sword sawing asunder which is? give me the full quotation! 'The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword', right, so that's Hebrews 4, so here we have the sword used in Hebrews 4 as a symbol of the Word. Anywhere else? Ephesians 6! alright, what does that one say? 'take the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God', so here we have the sword used in Ephesians 6 also as a symbol of the Word of God. So the sword is taken up as representative in the New Testament of the influence of the Spirit Word. Now however, that's what Paul says in Ephesians and Hebrews, but the Lord makes reference to the sword, where does the Lord refer to the sword? let's have a look at the Lord's own use of the term. Whereabouts is that? the gospel of Matthew 10, quite correct! now let's have a look at the Lord's own use of it; 'yea, a sword shall pierce thine own soul also', well, here's how the Lord used that, in Matthew 10 verse 34, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword'. Well, what's the sword? well, He explains the sword in verse 35 and 36, 'For **I am come** (you see, I came not to send peace, I am come to send a sword) 'For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. so **a man's enemies shall be found in his own family**', (says the Diaglott of verse 36). Now what He's talking about, of course, is the influence of the Spirit Word **dividing between families!** Down the middle of a family would the Spirit Word come, slice! and some would rise to the doctrine of God manifestation and others would fall away from that, and the Spirit Word would exercise that influence, right into the middle of families itself. **That was the sword that would pierce the soul of Mary as well!** the influence of Christ's teaching as the Spirit Word, which would inevitably divide families; that very same sword was going to touch her! was going to deeply affect her.

Now in verse 35, when Jesus said, 'I'm come to set a man at variance against his father', do you think Christ would really do that? surely Christ wouldn't come to set a man at variance against his father? So what does He mean? is Christ saying that He'd deliberately come in and break up families? yes, it wasn't that He was coming deliberately to break up families, but that the teaching of the Spirit sword would inevitably have that effect. It wasn't that Jesus wanted to do that, was it? but that's what the influence of the sword would be like, it would divide between families. It wasn't that Jesus sought to do that, all He wanted to do was to preach the doctrine of Immanuel, but some would rise to that, and others would fall away and in that very process of rising and falling, families would be divided by that Spirit Word with the outworking of His work, was the effect of His teaching.

Verse 37, oh, now this is interesting! 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me'.

Now here's the problem, you see, 'he that loveth son more than Me is not worthy of Me', now how could Mary apply that? ah, now here's the problem you see; here's the beginning of the problem in Mary's life. He that loveth or she that loveth **son** more than Me, now how could Mary work that out? See the problem here, now here's the beginning of the problem in Mary's life; 'he that loveth **son** more than Me'; now she already loved Him as a son, but the problem was, **she loved Him as her son**, she had to learn to follow Him as **God's Son**' and there's a big difference between those two. Mary herself had to learn the doctrine of Immanuel, **God with us!** and therein laid the struggle for this woman. Because, the whole problem that she had was her bond to that boy! You know, probably only a mother understands, a boy grows up big and tall and strong and before you know it, he's baptized and he's got a job and he's in the meeting, but mom remembers the days she changed his nappy. Mom remembers when the first tooth was cut, mom remembers the first funny little walk through the lounge and the cuddles that she used to get, mom remembers counting all his fingers and toes when he was born, to make sure he was all there and alright; you see, mothers are made that way, aren't they? mothers know! and mothers especially have a very strong attachment to sons, they love their daughters too, but sons, oh, they are something else! This was her son, her firstborn son, and she loved Him dearly!

Now can you see how this was going to be a problem for Mary? oh, what a really difficult problem this was going to be, and the whole problem for Mary was, the teaching of the Spirit Word, that was to divide her own family ultimately and pierce her own soul again, and again, until she learned who's Son this boy really is, and she was going to have a real struggle with this. Now if you're taking notes and you all should be anyway, is you want to take note of these key words, because as soon as you've got these words, they just jump out of the narrative and scream at you, and you say, well, why didn't I see those before; and these 5 words are the key to the whole story, because the whole of Mary's life's problem revolves around **human relationships**, and here they are, the 5 key words, '**Father, mother, brethren, disciples, sons**'. Alright! they are all the words of relationships aren't they? I'll read them again, 'Father, mother, brethren, disciples, sons. Now I don't know if you noticed but hidden in those five terms are two different types of relationships; mother, son, brethren, what sort of a relationship is that? **flesh and blood!** Father, Son, disciples! what sort of a relationship is that? that's a **spiritual** relationship, and this was going to be the basis of the conflict in Mary's mind that she was going to struggle with, and again, and again, her soul was to be pierced with the influence of the Spirit Word, until she learnt that lesson out of the life of her own son.

Well, here's the first sword thrust, in Luke 2 verse 41, just see how you can pick this story up once you have those key words. 'Verse 41, 'Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover', (they were a godly family, spiritually minded, they were observant of the feasts) And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a

day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. It came to pass, that after 3 days, they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And **when they saw Him, they were amazed**: and His mother said unto Him,(now look at these key words) His **mother** said unto Him, **Son**, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy **father** and I have sought Thee sorrowing'. Now can you feel all the sense of 'mother' here? alright! You see, what happens is, when a child gets into trouble, mom gets worried; mothers do, mothers worry about their children, and what happens is, when the child comes home safely or is found safely, do you know what the mother really feels? she really feels an enormous sense of relief, that all is well, and do you know how she shows her relief? she gives the child a jolly good scold! It's true, alright? that's how mothers react, they're actually relieved that it's all okay, but in fact, she says, 'don't you ever do that again, you had mom quite worried!' Now that's exactly what Mary does here, but she says, 'His mother said, son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing!' Can you see the 'mother' bond, binding her back to her son here? all the terms of human relationships.

Do you see what Jesus said in reply, verse 49, a twelve year old boy; 'And he said unto them, How is it that you sought me, wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Oh, that was a sword thrust! wasn't it? don't you think Mary felt that? because it was respectfully said as no doubt we would expect, Jesus would certainly not be disrespectful to his parents, but it was a repudiation nevertheless of 'thy father and I' have sought thee', no, no, no, says Jesus, My Father's business! that would have hurt Mary, really hurt, that in the strange beautiful obedient child, that she knew was different, and always had known was different, that even now at 12 years of age, there was still something strange about Him. He was their child and yet He wasn't somehow, there was a strange distance between her and this boy; a gulf that she couldn't understand. Verse 50 says, 'They understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart'. She felt the first prick of the sword, in the realization that this son, was not just hers; his mother had said, 'thy father and I', son. No, My Father's business!

Well, the years rolled past, we tend to read from the narrative if we read it carefully, we gain the impression that Joseph died, reasonably early on into the marriage and the bringing forth of the children. There was quite a big family, wasn't there? how many in the family, by the way? Well there was Jesus, James, Joses, Judah and Simon, and at least two sisters. So there were 7 children in the family, it wasn't a small family and it appears that Joseph died early on into the story because he disappears from the record very early on, and from then on we only hear about Mary. Of course, if that's true, then I can imagine that as the years rolled on and as Jesus came into manhood, that He would be leaned on more and more by His mother, to solve problems with the other children. 'Jesus, could you attend to so-in-so and such and such' and she would lean

on Jesus for guidance, wouldn't she? as we would expect, it was a natural enough thing, but the day came when Jesus' ministry began and the call of God had come! As Jesus strode away from the house over the hills, and his mother waved 'good-bye' with a tear in her eye, even she hadn't realized that He really had walked away completely this time. He was no longer her son, in some special sense, He had forever gone; He was now on His Father's business. But she had some more sword thrusts before she realized that that bond had forever been changed between them.

The next story that we come across, the ministry of Christ has begun and in John's gospel record in chapter 2, we read of another occasion where Jesus comes into contact with His mother, shortly after His ministry has commenced. We're told in John 2 of the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Now it says in verse 1, 'The third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee and the mother of Jesus was there': notice that Joseph isn't mentioned; you see, by implication Joseph is already gone from the narrative by this time, he'd gone, but the mother of Jesus is there, verse 2, now why would both the mother of Jesus and Jesus both be at a wedding? it's a family gathering, quite right! flesh and blood relationships, you see. It's a family gathering and here they are together, but it wasn't just Jesus and His mother, you'll notice verse 2 says, 'Both Jesus was called **and** His disciples to the marriage' because Jesus is now a travelling Rabbi and He has a following. Now He's got disciples, in fact, the suggestion has been made that because Jesus was part of the family and He was invited to the wedding, but because He was a Rabbi and had all these other people following now as disciples, that the family felt obliged to invite the whole of Jesus' entourage, and because they had invited them, the wine ran out, because of all these extra people that had come. Jesus is a man of importance now, He's a teacher and has followers, so they're there as well.

So now we have this family gathering at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. Now you see what it says, verse 3, 'When they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. (you've really got to read these records carefully, remember how we said, good bible study is all about good bible reading. There are lots of things that we can think about when you read the record carefully) Here's the first thing! Ladies notice things! alright, they do, don't they? Women have a more practical sense, a greater sensitivity to practical problems than men do; none of the men had noticed that the wine had run out, but Mary did. Women sort of notice these sorts of things, don't they? and Mary didn't want that to happen because it was a family gathering, and if it's a family wedding you want everything to go well, don't you? you wouldn't want something like that to happen! and she says to herself, 'oh, my, they've got a problem here, the wine's run out!' So she whispers to Jesus, 'they've got no wine'. Did you notice what she's called in verses 1 and 3 (you might say I'm reading a bit into this, but I think there's a sense in this) 'the mother of Jesus', now I know that's who she was, but don't you detect just a touch of pride there? Here's Jesus the travelling Rabbi and all the disciples, and guess who else is at the wedding? the mother of Jesus; that's my boy, the Rabbi, Jesus, you know, my son! Who wouldn't feel proud? wouldn't you appreciate Mary feeling a touch of pride there, that Jesus now was a famous teacher? So the mother of Jesus says, 'they've got no wine!' and you see, for the last few years,

she'd been used to bringing her problems to Jesus at home, and leaning on Him to provide a solution as He always had, and perhaps now she expected with the commencement of His ministry, that maybe He would perform a miracle, something special to really make the wedding into an exciting occasion.

Jesus said unto her, verse 4, oh, here's a sword thrust! 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come'. Now whatever we might think, the word '**woman**' here, by the way, in verse 4, the word 'woman' (1135) is not perhaps quite as harsh in the Greek, as it might appear in the English, in fact, He's going to use it later on, in a context where we would never, ever believe that the Lord was being disrespectful; I don't think He was being rude here, wasn't being nasty, the Lord would never have done that with His mother, but the one thing we can say is this, the word 'woman' is not the same as 'mother'; He didn't say 'mother', He said, 'woman' that's a more distant relationship, isn't it? He does not acknowledge her as 'mother'. You see, what He's saying is, 'look, I am no longer subject unto you; the family tie is forever finished, I have begun my Father's business, you can no longer presume upon your fleshly relationship to Me. 'Woman, what have I to do with thee?' Not only that, of course, but the powers that God had given Him were for the advancing of His Father's purpose, not His mother's. She had to learn that too, didn't she? Oh, yes, Christ had the power to turn the water into wine, but it could only be done if it was in some way advancing His Father's purpose, not because His mother ever asked Him, and she had to know that!

Do you see what He says in verse 4? 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come?' and when His hour had come what would He say? John 17 verse 1, 'These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son'. When the hour of Christ came, it was to His Father that attention would be directed, not to His mother. But that hour had not yet come in John 2 at the time of the wedding in Cana of Galilee. Now can you feel that sense of the sword that must have hurt Mary on this occasion? They're all at the wedding, it's a family gathering, and there she is with Jesus, what a marvellous thing for her to be able to see her son again, and to ask for His help in the way she's used to doing, and to have this sort of rebuff, 'Woman, what have I do with thee'? A stern look that must have hurt her, that was the thrust of the sword because she still saw her relationship to Him as a fleshly one, this was her son, and Jesus was endeavouring to teach her that He was not her son, not any longer, He was the Father's Son and on the Father's business.

At least, His mother nevertheless, accepted the rebuff and had enough confidence in her son, if you come back to John 2, at least His mother had the wisdom nevertheless to say in verse 5, 'His mother said unto the servants, Whatever He asks you to do, do it'. She accepted the rebuff, but instructed the servants to stand by, nevertheless, and Jesus did perform a miracle, didn't He? but He made it clear that the miracle that He was performing was not because of His mother's request, but to advance the purpose of His Father. It would always be that that was the case; He was His Son, not her son any longer. So what are the key words there? **Mother, disciples, woman**, all these terms of relationship again, and this time the emphasis is on a spiritual tie that His

disciples are there. This is a new sort of relationship that Mary doesn't quite understand, but she's going to have to grow in her understanding of that!

Matthew 12. Oh, you'll remember this story! verse 46, now here's one of these little stories where you have to picture the scene again. Verse 46 says, 'While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee'. So you see, here's Jesus and in the course of His ministry, He's talking to the multitude and on this occasion His mother and His brethren come along in order to have a discussion with Him. Why do they want to have a discussion with Him? Well, in Mark's gospel (which we won't turn up) but Mark 3 verse 21 says, 'that his relations said of Jesus at this time, that He is beside Himself', which is sort of a nice way of saying, He's gone potty! they felt that the rising popularity of Jesus was such, that the fame of it all had gone to Christ's head, and the Lord had become a little unbalanced. He felt that in the heat of the moment, there was a little bit of mental instability here, 'Look, He's beside Himself' they said, so they had decided to go and speak to the Lord. Now I believe that it was the brethren of Christ that instigated that, because we're told, aren't we? later, in John 7 that His own brethren didn't **believe in Him**; but what they did, you see, was to get Mary the mother on side, and said, 'look mom, we've got a problem with Jesus; He's just about beside Himself, we've got to do something'; and Mary's mother-love and her natural anxiety for Jesus was swayed by the brethren into joining them, and coming with them.

So here they are, verse 46, 'While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without **desiring** to speak with Him'. Now there was nothing wrong with Mary wanting to speak to Jesus, nothing wrong with that at all, but the problem was, what did she want to speak about? and you see, she wanted to speak about flesh and blood relationships, do you know what she's going to say? (it's not actually in the text, but I know what she said, you see) She was going to say, 'Son, you need a break, why don't you come home with mom for a while, come on!' Can you see Mary saying that? she wanted to protect Him, she wanted to look after Him, she wanted to mother Him, just for a while, 'come on, come home, Son, for a while; it's all getting a bit much, isn't it? But do you see how significant verse 46 is? You see, every word's powerful! His mother and His brethren (look at this) **stood without**'. Ah, there's the problem! there's the whole problem; you see, His mother's there but she **stands outside the circle of His disciples**, that's the whole problem. She's outside the circle of the spiritual relationship that He now has with His disciples. He has a **spiritual tie with these people**, not a flesh and blood one, and she is outside that circle. Now the lesson of that was, that because she stood without, outside the spiritual circle of the relationship that He had with His disciples, you see, the problem with this is, that Jesus could never have gone to her, could He? She **had to come to Him**. See Mary stood on the outside and expected Jesus to come out for a chat! But when you think about what that symbolized, Jesus could never have gone out to meet His mother, **she had to come to Him**, isn't that the whole lesson of this story?



Now just stop and think how this actually would have happened! Can you imagine the message? Here you are! There's this throng of people, this multitude, Jesus steps on a small rise in the middle, standing there exhorting the multitude. Here's the mother and the brethren who arrive on the outside; no way of getting in. Now how do you get a message through? Well, you tap someone on the shoulder, 'I wonder if you would mind passing this message on, a message to say that Jesus' mother is outside, and would like to have a chat with Him and his brethren, just pass it on. Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, I can see it going up on all the shoulders and finally, right in the front, verse 47 says, and here's the last one to get the message: 'Then one said unto Him (he was the one right in front of Jesus), and he steps forward, and Mary on the outside sees the man stepping forward to Jesus, 'your mother's outside and would like to have a word together with you!' Can you see that happening? and verse 48 says, 'But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is my mother?' (oh, what a sword thrust this was going to be) and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand (now just look at all the key words here, before we turn over the page, don't turn over the page). Now remember what the key words are, (**father, mother, son, brethren, disciples**) now here's two of them, verse 46, 'His **mother** and His **brethren** stood without, verse 49, He stretched forth His hand toward His **disciples**, verse 50, and said, 'For whosoever shall do the will of My **Father**' (there's the other word). Now do you see all those terms of relationship coming out in this record again? there they all are! here's the whole conflict, a spiritual relationship or a fleshly one; 'whose Son is this boy? He's not your son, any longer, Mary, and you've got to come to Him, as the Son of God'. Now you imagine how that message would have hurt Mary, because what actually probably happened, you see, was she saw the man go forward to address Jesus, and then she sees Jesus stretch forth His hands and turn around to the multitude, and stretched out His hands to the disciples, it says, and then He said, 'you pass that message back out again!' Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, tap, 'well, what does He say? well, Jesus says to tell you that His mother and His brethren are those that do the will of His Father in heaven'. Oh, wouldn't that have hurt Mary? can you imagine that? on the outside of the crowd. Oh, what a sword thrust that was! But the Lord had to do that, didn't He? She had to get over this problem of her relationship to this boy, and to see Him in a different light altogether! Those that do the will of My Father in heaven, that's the only thing finally that matters, verse 50. You know there's a principle that comes out of that and that's this: that we should never allow maternal feelings or paternal feelings for that matter, to override divine principles. We should never, ever allow our feelings as mothers or fathers to override divine principles. At the end of the day in the truth, the sole and final judge of what we do is, is it in accordance with the Father's will? That's all! that's it!

You know, the spirit of this, is all found in Psalm 69. Father, mother, brethren, disciples, son. Psalm 69 verse 8, 'I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up'; do you see what Psalm 69 verse 8 says, 'I am **become** a stranger'. He didn't seek to be a stranger, He didn't want to be a stranger to His brethren or His mother, He **became** such because He was committed to the Father's purpose and they weren't. It happened as a process because He had risen to the theme of God manifestation and they couldn't see God

manifest in Him. So what He didn't ask for, what He didn't want, He became; and notice this in verse 8, notice and read carefully because you see what verse 8 says, 'I've become an alien unto My mother's children', He would never be a stranger to His Father's children, because His Father's children were His disciples. He never made strange from them, it's the mother's children that He's alienated from, and the mother's in it together with them, it's the mother and the children involved in this alienation together; unless Mary can see Him as the Son of God, she'll always stand without, still desiring to speak to Him. I suppose the other good thing, the positive thing that emerges from that, is the fact that we're able to develop relationships in the truth, that are based on spiritual ties, even if we don't have family in the truth. Some people come in from outside and they haven't got families, they haven't got moms and dads in the truth, or grandmas or grandpas, it doesn't matter; in the truth we have. In the truth we're able to develop spiritual ties and spiritual relationships because the ecclesia is now our family. Now do you see how those words are all woven into the story, father and mother, son, brethren, disciples, it goes around and around over those words all the time, doesn't it? the struggle in Mary's heart to see who Jesus really was.

Here's the last one! John 19 verse 25, 'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus **his mother**, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene'. You know, you can understand Mary being there, can't you? this was her boy! and although it must have been a terrible thing for a mother to see a son crucified on a stake, she wanted to be there, right to the end. Her heart racked with grief, her mind numbed with the horror of it all, her eyes reddened with the salty tears that had coursed down her face, but she's there all the same, beside the cross of Jesus stood His mother.

Verse 26, 'When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman (oh, there's that word again, still didn't call her 'mother', did He? even now!) Woman, behold thy son!' Now when He said, 'behold thy son' in verse 26, what do you think He meant? was He asking Mary to look upon Him? what did Jesus mean when He said, behold thy son? He meant John! you're right, now read it carefully. 'When He saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He said unto His mother, Woman behold thy son. Then He said to the disciple, behold thy mother'. Do you see how there's a complete interchange here, He said to the disciple, behold thy mother; He said to the woman, behold thy son', so what He did was, He invited Mary to look upon John now, and to regard him as the son who would look after her, and then He invited John to look upon His mother and to regard her as his mother, and to look after her. So He invited them into a new relationship together, that they might care for one another and comfort one another after He was gone.

But do you see all the key words there? and this time you've got the two relationships brought together. You've got **son, mother, and disciple**, a spiritual relationship with the disciple who most loved Him. How does John's gospel finish, by the way? I'm treating chapter 20 as the conclusion. It says, 'Many other things did Jesus which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God'. John had a conviction on that, didn't he? Jesus said to Mary, you go and live

with him! There was wise provision in that, of course, because Jesus' own brethren, the Lord's brethren, didn't yet believe on Him, and I think He specifically asked John to take care of His mother, so that she didn't have to go back into the hostility of His own home, and no doubt Mary will be able to unfold all the things that she'd stored in her heart from the early days of Jesus, and John would be able to reflect on the ministry of the Lord and tell her many of the things that happened in the course of His ministry. Between the two of them, they would draw forth many thoughts, and what do you think that Mary would have learnt out of all of that! Well, I think it was the lesson that she had to learn as she stood at the cross here, and that was this; maybe she never heard these words, by the way, she might have been lead away by John, before she ever heard these words, which we know He was to utter shortly before He died. But the conviction that finally came upon Mary, and I think this was the final piercing sword thrust on this occasion was this; 'that whatever part she had played, whatever moment she might have been involved in, however she had been part of the birth and raising of this boy, that at His death she finally understood in the words of someone else, 'Truly this was the Son of God'. Shortly afterwards, Jesus was to say, 'Father, into thy hands I commend My Spirit'. Isn't that what she had to learn? that this was Immanuel, God with us! 'She that loveth son more than Me, is not worthy of Me'. She had to learn to come to Him as the Son of God, and not as her own boy. It must have been a very hard struggle, can't you sympathize with Mary on that? Can't you understand the problem that she must have had in that? because she naturally had an affinity to this child, and the very natural affinity she had, was the greatest stumbling block that she had to overcome to appreciate the work of Messiah. She had to encounter many a sword's thrust before she got there!

But we believe she finally did! and what a marvellous thing it was that she saw Him, no doubt, as a resurrected man. See her son forever beyond mortality and suffering, the first truly immortalized being; to recognize that her son was the firstborn amongst many brethren, and what a marvellous thing it would have been for Mary to know all that! Look how the story closes (isn't it always nice to have a nice close to a story) well here's the concluding chapter of this story in Acts 1, because in Acts 1 we have in verse 13, 'When they were come in they went up into an upper room where abode both Peter and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James'. Who are they, by the way? the apostles! These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, (and look at this) and with Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples!. Do you see all those words there again? the mother of Jesus, the brethren of Jesus, but where are they all now? they are all together in the midst of the disciples of Jesus. **She's joined the ecclesia! and so has His brethren**, they've all come in together. They've all seen **whose Son Messiah is!** It took Mary a long time to get there and many a sword thrust, to learn that lesson.

Well, that's the story of Mary, only part of the story, of course, but it certainly seems to be a thread, doesn't it? that runs through her life. Concerning this One we read in a

hymn,

Earth for Him had groaned and travailed  
Since the ages first began;  
For in Him was hid the secret  
That through all the ages ran  
Son of Mary, Son of David,  
Son of God, and Son of man.