



## Stronger Than Blood

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Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

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*Mark 3:31-35*

His mother and his brothers arrived. Standing outside they sent word to him and called him. A crowd seated around him told him, "Your mother and your brothers and your sisters are outside asking for you." But he said to them in reply, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking around at those seated in the circle he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

**Introductory Prayer:** Today I want to encounter you as a friend and brother, Lord. I believe that you want to encounter me and transform me. Thank you for working in my heart, calling me to a deeper identification with you. I trust that you will lead me along paths of growth and fruitfulness.

**Petition:** Lord, help me to put my will in conformity with yours.

**1. Maybe He Needs a Break:-** Jesus was very busy. Perhaps he was tired. Perhaps his mother arrived to give him a bit of food or a

word of encouragement. But we find in today's Gospel a Christ who is strong. He has strengthened himself through intimate contact with the Father. He has filled his heart with a love for souls. He finds nourishment in doing the Father's will. Surely his mother was encouraged by what she found. Do I let the will of God be my strength? Does prayer transform me to the point where charity and evangelization become my natural way of being?

**2. Closeness for the Right Reason:-** As Jesus taught and healed, people were naturally attracted to him. Yet simply being physically close to him did not count. One had to open one's heart to receive his message of conversion. He was looking to transform people, to make them capable of living as sons and daughters of God. If I am willing to learn Jesus' standards and act as he does, then I can be close to him. He will allow me into his intimacy if I make God's will mine.

**3. Accompanying Christ:-** There is a mysterious reality here. I can actually bring consolation to Christ's heart. I can accompany him on his divine mission. I must be willing to renounce my will and do only the will of the Father. Can Christ point to me and say, "He is my brother; she is my sister, she is my mother"? I must look at my life and see what is not in conformity to his will. I must make a firm resolution to show my faith and love in the very thing that is most difficult for me.

**Conversation with Christ:** Lord, you give me this short life in order to become part of your family. I want to make the Father's will my own as you did. Help me to put God's will above everything else, so that it becomes what I most deeply desire. Then I will truly be yours.

**Resolution:** Today I will make an act of charity towards someone with whom I find it difficult to get along.