

JESUS GIVES US MOTHERS FOR OUR OWN GOOD

Selected Verses

Good morning! Happy Quarantine's Day! I mean, **Happy Mother's Day!** Praise God for giving us another day. As you know, this is a special day. We're here to celebrate another set of heroes. They are frontliners as well. 24/7. They face challenges and hurdle obstacles that even the President of the United States is no match for. They are superheroes in their own right and can do almost anything. No wonder Rudyard Kipling once said, **"God could not be everywhere, and therefore he made mothers."** Well, of course, that's not theologically correct, Kipling is a poet anyway, but he expressed a common sentiment among us that mothers are, in fact, heaven-sent.

Did you know that the existence of mothers also just blows away the theory of evolution? Because, as the great theologian **Milton Berle said, "If evolution really works, how come mothers only have two hands?"** So, if you see a mother with three hands, she must really be overworked. ¹

Anyway, I salute our mothers this morning and so let me greet again our mothers, Happy Mother's Day! The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

Children, I hope you already greeted your mothers, and husbands, I hope you already said, "I love you" and gave her a gift of a diamond ring. But a simple "I love you" is fine. I don't know what your plans are after the service. Today is a bit different just like anything else since the start of the pandemic. If you want to go out, that's up to you. Just maintain social distancing. Although I'm not sure whether there are any open restaurants. Maybe just for take-out or delivery.

BTW, do you want to hear a dirty joke about a mother? Some of you are going, Pastor we're in church and children are listening. That's ok. Children can listen.

A door-to-door vacuum cleaner salesman knocks on a woman's door. The woman answers, and the salesman says "Lady, I have the best vacuum cleaner in the whole world."

Before she could decline, he invited himself in. "Lady," he said, "This vacuum cleaner can suck up anything. In fact, if you leave it running, it'll probably suck the carpet up!"

The woman was very irritated at this point, but the man would not stop talking. He walked over to the fireplace in her living room, picked up a handful of ashes, and threw them on the carpet. He also dumped a bag of trash he was carrying onto the carpet as well.

The woman was aghast, but he continued. "Lady, if this vacuum can't suck up all of this from your carpet," he said as he produced a plastic spoon from his pocket, "I will eat all of it from the ground with this spoon!"

"Well," she said smugly, "You better start eating, sir, because we don't have any electricity."

I told you it was a dirty joke.

But I'm glad we have mothers. I'm glad for mothers who take care of us, Amen? Most of us can't take care of ourselves and so Jesus gives us mothers to take care of us.

So, today I have entitled this message **"Jesus Gives Us Mothers for Our Own Good"**. This is the fourth part of our series we have entitled "Jesus Gives". We're looking at the various blessings the Lord Jesus, our God and Maker, gives to those who follow him. We looked at his blessing of peace, his blessing of eternal security which Bro. Brandon talked about two weeks ago, and his blessing of a way out of temptations last week. So, today we're looking at another blessing. A blessing in the person of a mother.

Since the start of the pandemic I'm sure mothers have been in the forefront. They have been busy praying for us, teaching us to do the right thing, working hard to make us comfortable, doing anything to keep us safe from harm, and always there in our time of difficulty. Folks, those five things I mentioned form the outline of my message this morning. We're going to look at five mothers in the Bible who have done those five things for the sake of their children. For sure, there are so many others but let me share with you just five this afternoon.

5 Things that Mothers do for us for our own good.

1. Mothers pray for us to know and serve the Lord.

Who is the first person in the Bible that comes to your mind as far as committing her child to the Lord is concerned? If your answer is Hannah, that's correct. You'll find the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1. If you recall, Hannah was barren. She couldn't bear a child for Elkanah, her husband. But Elkanah had a second wife, Penninah who bore him a child. Now, during that time they could have multiple wives. God permitted it but he never approved it. Just like with Jacob who God permitted to have two wives, Leah and Rachel. And why? I don't have time to answer that right now and so that'll be the subject of another sermon.

So, Hannah is actually the first wife of Elkanah. But because after several years and they didn't have any offspring, Elkanah took Penninah as wife who then gave him children. What made matters worse for Hannah was that her rival even taunted her. So, Hannah was truly heartbroken and one day cried out to God. In 1 Samuel 1:11, this is her prayer, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

This is Hannah praying for a child who wasn't even born yet.

This is a mother who vowed to raise a child in a godly way and then commit him to God in service. This is Hannah, a mother who lived a prayerful life. Why do I say that? Because in chapter 2, you will see a poem she wrote which is actually a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God. In fact, Bible scholars have compared her prayer to Mary's Magnificat. No doubt then that Hannah is a godly mother who prayed not only for Samuel but also for the other five children who came after Samuel.

Throughout Christian history we read stories of people who have become followers of Jesus and also served him because of their mothers' prayers. Great Christians like Augustus, John Newton, and Hudson Taylor.

Let me share with you a more recent story. On YouTube, I also found out the story of Dr. Paul Kim, a Korean who came to the states when he was 13 in the 70's and didn't want to have anything with Christianity and religion in general. He was an atheist. His parents were Christians though. His mom especially was very caring and gentle with him. And she always prayed for him that he would someday come to the Lord and serve him, too. In college, Paul's mom would always call him and ask him whether he went to church. So as not to lie to his mom, he would go to church. But his mind wasn't on the church. After church, he would go out with his college friends and go drinking and what not. This went on for a few years until he was invited by his future brother-in-law to a college retreat where he was the speaker. Actually, it was his mom who convinced him to go. She said that he should go at least for the sake of the family because his sister was going to get married to the speaker who was his future-brother-in-law and a pastor. So, Paul went begrudgingly but a week before he told his sister that he didn't like the idea of her getting married to a loser and tried to convince her to change her mind because he was going to support her sister's ministry when he became a Yale professor. In the retreat, Paul grumbled and said that everything sucked.

On the last day, he was looking forward to go home but there was still another worship time. So, he went. As he was listening to the songs, there was one song the praise and worship team that suddenly grabbed him. It was the song by Keith Green from 1 Samuel. When the team sang the lyrics which went, “To obey is better than sacrifice, I don’t need your money, I need your life”, it pierced his heart so much that he found himself sobbing. He said that he was bawling. He never cried since he was 9. He cried because he felt like God was speaking to him directly. That night, he gave his heart to Jesus. And then he became involved in church and is now a professor at Yale, at the same time an apologist for Christian faith.

Perhaps, some of you can testify of a similar experience. I would be glad to know your story. And maybe you can share that with us in the future. Let me know.

So, prayers are important. God is always close to those who pray earnestly to him. God says in Jer. 33:3, “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”

Mom and even dads, if you are frustrated about your children or disappointed with them or you feel like giving up and maybe you’ve been crying to the Lord to change your children’s hearts and even minds, please don’t give up on them. Bring your pleas to the Lord like Hannah. And like Hudson’s mom, pray persistently because nothing is impossible with God.

Folks, there is power in prayer. And there is more power when mothers pray.

The second thing that mothers do.

2. They teach us to do the right thing.

The second mother I’m going to talk about is the mother of King Lemuel. Who is King Lemuel? No one knows exactly. Some guess that he is King Solomon himself.

You'll know why because the only time he is mentioned is in Proverbs 31:1-9 and we know that most proverbs are attributed to King Solomon. And if it is King Solomon, then, perhaps, the mother is Bathsheba. But that is just a guess. Some say he was King Hezekiah. Or maybe just a fictitious figure.

In any case, the unnamed mother has really wise advice to her son. This mom's specific advice begins in 31:3-5: "Do not give your strength to women, or your ways to that which destroys kings. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, or for rulers to desire strong drink, for they will drink and forget what is decreed, and pervert the rights of all the afflicted." At first, this mom's advice looks fairly predictable: "Don't chase women, and don't drink beer!" But if you think that's what this lesson is about, you've missed the point. The question that's being answered is, "How will you use your power when life presents you with great opportunities?"

King Lemuel's mom is no dummy; she targets the area that most young men struggle with - sex. She urges her son not to have intimate relationships with women. Please notice the plural women, not woman. Sex inside of marriage is wonderful; sex outside of marriage is not. In 31:3, the concern is that Lemuel will try to build a large harem. This was something kings did in ancient times, but it was a distortion of power and lust. This behavior also leads to destruction. I think of King David, who ruined his career because of an adulterous relationship, and Solomon, who ruined his career because of all the wives he acquired - wives who led him astray. Although he wasn't a king, do I even need to mention Samson?

Many of you know Rocky Balboa, right? One of the classic lines from all six Rocky movies is from Rocky I (1976). Mickey, Rocky's trainer, is busy coaching him while he is working the heavy bag. All of a sudden two young women approach him seeking his autograph. The crotchety old Mickey says, "Get out of here!" He then turn to Rocky and says, "Women weaken legs!"

If this is indeed true in the physical realm, how much more so is it true in the spiritual realm? Nothing can get a young man or woman off track quicker than an inappropriate relationship with the opposite sex.

In verses 4-5, the queen mother shares a concern about the abuse of alcohol. What is probably meant is an excessive and unwarranted use of alcohol. In the Bible, wine can be a source of joy. Israel was called "the vine." Jesus and the disciples drank alcohol. But alcohol is frequently misused. Therefore, the Queen warns her son not to abuse it. Verse 5 says that those who cope with the pressures of being king by drinking forget what they've decreed. I'm sure you've heard of Mother's Against Drunk Driving. Lemuel's mom was the founder of Mother's Against Drunk Ruling! The King's mom gives two reasons for abstinence: wine affects memory and judgment. The king cannot forget the Lord's commands. The mother's admonition focuses on the responsibilities of the king and not his privileged position. The primary duty is to administer justice. Wine and women can't get in the way of these responsibilities.

You and I also have to decide if we want to exercise our freedom to drink alcohol. While we are free to drink (just not unto drunkenness), there are advantages to abstaining. You don't have to explain or justify your freedom to your children and grandchildren who will likely abuse alcohol in their teen and young adult years. Furthermore, you can maintain sensitivity to other believers who may struggle with limiting their alcohol consumption. Also, you can maintain a good Christian witness to unbelievers who associate alcohol with drunkenness and unruly living. However you decide to exercise your freedom, it is important to be sensitive to other believers and unbelievers, and be prepared to explain your freedom to your children and grandchildren.

In all these, I'm sure we have all been brought up by mothers who always gave us gentle reminders not to overindulge in sex and in alcohol.

She's like the Nike advertisement that says, "Just do it" except she adds in the end, "right!" Just do it right.

Now, we go to the third thing our mothers do.

3. Mothers work hard to make us feel comfortable.

We come to the second part of Proverbs 31 which is more familiar with us. The mother mentioned here is also unnamed like the mother of King Lemuel. In your Bibles perhaps it is labeled "The Wife of Noble Character" or "The Virtuous Wife" or something similar. We're not going to read all 22 verses. But you can take a quick glance and see what it is trying to say. I'm sure we would have different ideas and that's all right because we can mine different nuggets of wisdom even just from a single verse in the Bible. In any case, the thing that was impressed upon me when I read the verses is that they show a really hardworking mother. Notice all the action that's taking place in these verses – brings, selects, gets up, provides, buys, plants, holds, grasps, opens, and I can go on and on. And notice also these verses mention her hands and arms doing all the action. Probably she has three hands to do all these things. She's a mighty busy woman.

And for what purpose? To make her family comfortable – so they can have food, and clothing, and shelter. In fact, she works so hard that she's even able to help those outside her family. And all the while, what is the husband doing? Sitting and chatting. Verse 23, "Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land." Lucky guy!

If you're married to a Super Woman, guess you'll be the most blessed man alive. Now, in reality these verses give us the picture of an ideal mother. I think hyperbole is involved here. There's a bit of an exaggeration since this is a poem. And proverbs are sayings, they are principles to observe. I believe the point of the writer is that a mother really plays a significant and important role in keeping the affairs of the home straight and in order. Without a mother, the home can be dark.

In the Philippines, we have a saying, “Ang ina ay ilaw ng tahanan”. The mother is the light of the house. I guess that pretty much sums up it up.

So, mothers pray for us, mothers teach us, mothers make us feel comfortable, and the fourth thing

4. Mothers will do anything to keep us safe from harm.

This time who is the mother in the Bible you can think of as keeping her child from being killed? The mother of Moses. Her name is Jochebed. We all know the story. How Pharaoh ordered that all newly born Hebrew boys be thrown into the Nile. And how she hid Moses for three months and when she couldn't hide him any longer put him in a papyrus basket and let the basket float in the Nile among the reeds. Her son was saved as a result. Pharaoh's daughter saw baby Moses in the basket and brought him home to the palace as her own.

This is a great example from the Bible of how a woman went to great lengths to protect her son. She knew there was punishment but it didn't matter. She knew she was putting her own life on the line, but it was out of the question. Because she was godly, I'm sure she prayed and asked God for wisdom. So, she got the idea of placing her baby in a basket. Mothers can be truly creative when it comes to protecting their children.

We know that to be true during these uncertain times. She is the one who is most concerned about our health and well-being. She is the one who makes sure there's enough food in the ref and enough snacks for the children. She's the one who orders from Giant or Amazon and have the groceries delivered. And then she carefully washes the food even applying soap to the fruits and vegetables. She's the one who puts the mail aside and opens them after 24 or 48 hours and cleans them with sanitary wipes before opening. She's the one who keeps reminding us to wear gloves and put on face masks when going outside and texts us “social distancing, ok?”

She's the one who greets us with concern after coming from outside, instructing us to carefully remove the gloves and face mask and then leave the shoes outside and then sprays us all over with disinfectant. Does that sound like my wife, yes it does. And all the while, what do I do? I'm sitting in front of my computer and chatting with whoever. I'm the most blessed man alive! If you can relate, let me know on the chat box.

Why do mothers do this? Because they love us. They're an extension of God. Their mother's instinct tells them to care for us and keep us safe. I'm not saying it's just gut reaction. I'm saying it's love reaction. They are a reflection of God who says **in Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."**

Finally, we come to the fifth thing mothers do for us.

5. Mothers are always there in our time of difficulty.

Who is this mother that I'll be describing? This is no other than Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary, for sure, was always there for Jesus. When Jesus was dying on the cross, she was there. **John 19:25** tells us, **"Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."** A mother wouldn't abandon their children in their most difficult time. Probably this is not true all the time because I myself have read stories of mothers or parents disowning their children because of an evil deed. But, in general, you can count on your mother to be with you at your most difficult time. Like this mother who was interviewed just before her son was going to be executed by lethal injection. The interview asked, "What can you say about your son who is going to be executed any moment now?" The mother said, "I believe he is innocent." "But overwhelming evidence shows that he is really guilty," the interviewer said. "That's what they said. My son is a good boy".

Jesus was not a criminal. He didn't do anything wrong. He was crucified because of a wrong charge. But Jesus knew that it had to happen.

He knew that it was the only way to save us. He willingly went to the cross for our sake. He went through terrible pain and sorrow. He was whipped, struck on the face, wounded by the crown of thorns, and subjected to all kinds of physical torture you could ever imagine. His flesh was coming off, and his blood was oozing. He carried his cross on his back and his hands and feet were nailed on the cross. Just before he died, his side was pierced. The pain and suffering he felt was agonizing and excruciating. In fact, the word Cross or Crux has the same root word as excruciating.

Mary was there at the most difficult time of her son's life. Mothers are like that. They feel your pain. They want assuage that pain by their presence. They want you to know that you're not alone. And they're willing to walk with you through that pain.

Folks, we honor our parents on Mother's Day by giving them flowers, gifts, cards, singing a song for them, preaching about them, extolling their virtues, and what-have-you. We treat them in a really special way. But you know what would really honor them? When we ourselves emulate the fine examples they are showing us. Meaning, we do to others like to our loved ones what they have done and are doing for us.

So, do we also pray for our own children to know and serve the Lord? Do we teach them to do the right thing? Do we work hard to make them feel comfortable? Do we do all we can to keep them safe from harm? Are we there always in their times of difficulty?

As the saying goes, imitation is the best form of flattery. Following their example is the best way to honor them. And when we do that, we honor Jesus

himself because our mothers are imitating the very things that Jesus does for each of us.