

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor Rolly Estabillo
12 May 2013

“Lessons from Mary”

Most of you are familiar with the Calvin and Hobbes comic strip. Well, on one Mother’s Day, Calvin is pictured standing by his mother’s bed. "Hey, Mom! Wake up. I made you a Mother’s Day card." "My, how sweet of you." she says. Then, Calvin says, "I did it all by myself. Go ahead and read it."

She begins to read: "I was going to buy a card with hearts of pink and red. But then I thought I’d rather spend the money on me instead. It’s awfully hard to buy things when one’s allowance is so small. So I guess you’re pretty lucky I got you anything at all. Happy Mother’s Day. There, I’ve said it. Now I’m done. So how about getting out of bed and fixing breakfast for your son." Signed, "Calvin."

"I’m deeply moved." said his mother.

Then Calvin asks, "Did you notice the part about my allowance?"

Well, some of you may feel like Calvin’s mother this morning, wondering if anybody’s going to say, "Thank you, Mom, for all the good things you did for me." Being a mother is a tough job. It’s the toughest job in the world, tougher than the President’s job. Why? The President works as a president for eight years at most. But a mother works as a mother all her life.

For a Christian mother, the job is made more difficult by the kind of society we live in today. You see, in the past, our educational system encouraged development of Christian principles and attitudes. But today that is not necessarily true. Too often, children are being taught that there are no absolute standards of

right and wrong. Anything goes, and everything is permissible, as long as it feels good.

Also, mothers recognize all too well that as they send their children off in the morning all kinds of things lie in wait to waylay them - things like drugs and gangs and alcohol and pornography and stalkers who could kidnap them. So, mothers must be strong if they are going to overcome all these things.

It's difficult being a Christian mother today. But as hard as that may be, we need to realize that difficulties are not unique to our time. In every age Motherhood has had its share of problems and difficulties.

For example, let's look at Mary, the mother of Jesus, and consider some of the difficulties she faced, and apply them to our lives today.

I. THE DIFFICULTIES MARY FACED

First of all, she faced the difficulty of a tarnished reputation. Mary was pregnant out of wedlock. Now we know the rest of the story, and that the child in her womb was of the Holy Spirit, and is the Son of God.

But do you think they believed that story in the little town of Nazareth where Jesus grew up? If you came from a small town you know that juicy gossip is a hot item in small towns. And here's this unmarried teenage girl expecting a child. Oh, how the gossips must have enjoyed talking about that! In fact, 30 years later when Jesus was beginning His ministry, His enemies said to Him sarcastically, "We are not illegitimate children."

On this Mother's Day you may not feel too comfortable. Maybe there are some things in your past that you're not very proud of, and you feel guilty. Maybe there are dark skeletons in your closet and you feel unworthy as a mother.

Let me remind you. God not only forgives, He also forgets. Encourage your children not to repeat the mistakes you made, but help them realize that God is a God of mercy and grace. You have had a new beginning with Him, so encourage them to live lives that are worthy of His love.

Secondly, Mary experienced the difficulty of poverty. The Bible tells us that when Jesus was brought to the Temple as a baby for the first time, Joseph and Mary offered two doves. You see, the law actually says in Leviticus that they should bring a lamb. But the law also says that if you cannot afford a lamb, two doves will do. That tells us that she and Joseph didn't have the means to procure a lamb.

Are you poor? If you have experienced the pressure of trying to buy the things your children want - the right running shoes, the right designer clothes, and all the other things they may want very much - then take the time to teach them that life does not consist of the abundance of things we possess. Teach them that there are other things much more important, eternal things we can't see that will last forever and ever.

Jean Barron spent several years living in a little mobile home that was pretty dilapidated. She tells about raising her kids in that kind of environment. Then one day her son came home and announced that his best friend had run away from home.

Jean Barron said, "I looked at my child and said, 'I don't understand. He lives in such a nice house and seems to have everything any child could ever want. Why did he run away?'"

Her son answered, "Well, in their home they have a lot of environment, but not very much love. In our home we have lots of love, but not very much environment." Love is free. It doesn't cost money. It just costs time and attention and emotion.

Thirdly, Mary faced the difficulty of people's hatred for her child, even at His birth. Matthew 2:13 says, *"An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and His mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him.'"* When Jesus was born evil was set in motion to do away with Him.

The same thing happens when a child is born today, for Satan sees that child as God's gift to you. Psalms 127:3 says, *"Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him."* Satan knows that the quickest way to destroy your family is to attack your child who doesn't have the maturity or power to deal with him.

Jesus said of Satan, *"He's a murderer from the beginning. There's no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native tongue."* (John 8:44)

What does it mean for us today? To protect your children in their vulnerable years you may have to curtail the television or computer and iPad and monitor what's being viewed in your living room or in your child's bedroom. That's what we have done with our children. It used to be they can play with their iPad and Kindle Fire every day. But no longer. They get their hands on them only during the weekends. They are a distraction during the week plus we have less control. So, you will need to discipline them and train them. You will need to teach them to respect adults and authority, and to grow up to be strong Christian men or women.

One other difficulty Mary experienced was being a single mom. We don't know what happened to Joseph. Many scholars assume that he must have died when Jesus was in His late teens or early twenties, for the last time he is mentioned was when Jesus was 12 years old and in the Temple at Jerusalem. After that trip, Joseph is never mentioned again. In fact, at Jesus' crucifixion, Mary was accompanied by John the disciple of Jesus not by Joseph. Then, the Bible says *"And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home."* (John 19:27)

suggesting that Joseph was nowhere. So Mary became a single mom, raising Jesus and their other children by herself.

If you're a single mom, our hats are off to you. You're having to be both mom and dad to your kids. Like Oma who raised her children by herself when her husband passed away when she was only xxx. She didn't remarry. And look at the product now. There are others more and we're just so amazed that you could tackle all the responsibilities by yourselves. May God bless you and your children for what you're doing.

II. THE RESOURCES MARY HAD

Mary faced many difficulties, but she also had some valuable resources. Her first resource was a strong commitment to doing God's will. It says in Luke 1:35 that the angel said to her, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."* Then in vs. 38 Mary answered, *"I am the Lord's servant...May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.*

Mary knew that the baby in her womb was God's only begotten Son, and that by giving birth to Jesus she was doing exactly what God commissioned her to do.

James Keller says, "Every mother has the breath-taking privilege of sharing with God in the creation of new life." And when God places a child or children in your arms, His will for you is to bring them up in a home where they will know God and His word, and Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Secondly, she had the resource of having an obedient child in Jesus. The Bible tells us that when Jesus was 12 years old, he stayed behind the temple in Jerusalem after his parents had left because he realized his life's calling. He knew

he was different from other children and he knew he had to do God's will for his life. But he received a mild rebuke from his parents and Luke 2:51 says, "*Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.*"

Mary had the wonderful blessing of a child who was obedient. Kids, the best thing you can give your mom on Mother's Day, is to be obedient. It's better than cards, better than flowers, better even than chocolate - just be a loving and obedient child!

That's commanded in the Scriptures. Ephesians 6:1 says, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*" Luke tells us that Jesus was obedient to them.

I like the story about the little boy who came into the living room and told his mom that he had two pieces of candy. She asked, "What are you going to do with them?" He answered, "I'm going to eat them."

Thinking this was a great teaching opportunity, she said to him, "Don't you think you ought to share the candy with your brother?" He answered, "I don't have enough to share. So I'm going to eat them myself."

Well, it was obvious that he needed to be taught about generosity. So she asked, "What do you think Jesus would do if He had two pieces?" He answered, "I think Jesus would make two more pieces of candy and give them to His brother."

It's nice to have a smart child but wouldn't it be great to have an obedient child?

Thirdly, she had a supportive husband. Now again, we know that Joseph was with her for at least 12 years, and probably a few years longer before he died. But however much time God allowed them to have together, it is obvious that Joseph was supportive of Mary. The Bible says that when Joseph learned Mary was pregnant not because of him, "*... he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife*" [Matthew 1:24].

So I've always imagined that Joseph was a caring, supportive man in Mary's life, who was there for her whenever she needed him.

May I say to all the husbands and fathers here: The best thing you can give your wife, the mother of your children, today, is not flowers and chocolates and cards, but to be supportive of her, to pray for her, to encourage her, and always to be there for her. Amen? That's why I told my wife, "That's what you're getting today."

Billy Graham says his favorite story is of a husband who was not very attentive to his wife. But one day he started feeling guilty about that, and decided to change. So on his way home from work he bought a box of candy and some flowers to surprise his wife.

He walks up to the door and rings the doorbell. She opens it, and there he stands, candy in one hand, flowers in the other, singing, "I love you truly, truly, Dear." Instantly she starts crying, big old tears just gushing out of her eyes. She sobs, "Oh, Harry! Everything went wrong today. We had a leak in the plumbing. The kids were terrible. The house is a wreck. And now you come home drunk!"

So love your wife constantly not only when you feel guilty. Be a good, supportive husband.

Finally, she had a close friend who encouraged her. Luke 1:42 tells us that Elizabeth *"In a loud voice exclaimed: `Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!'"*

If you remember the story, as Mary is expecting Jesus, she went to be with Elizabeth, her cousin who was older than her, who was also expecting a child - a miracle birth with her as well. She was expecting John the Baptist. And they spent about 6 months together - encouraging one another.

Hebrews 3:13 says *"Encourage one another daily as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."*

If we become discouraged, it becomes easy for sin to harden us, and the deceitfulness of sin to take over our lives. So we need to encourage the moms today, and help them realize they're doing a job that no one else can do.

Mary was rewarded for her faithfulness as a mother. She was there to see Jesus resurrected from the dead. She was in the upper room when the 120 gathered to pray and the Holy Spirit came upon them. And she lived to see her other children accept Jesus as Messiah and Lord, too. And the God who rewarded her has promised to reward us, too.

Folks, Mother's Day is kind of a mixed bag. I always come to it with a bit of fear and trembling. I'm never sure exactly how to handle it because I know that there are all kinds of different people who will be present.

If you have experienced the death of your mother, this could be a day of sadness and sorrow as you remember her, and how much you miss her, and how much you would like to talk to her again.

If you're childless, you may feel empty and perhaps unfulfilled. If you had a poor relationship with your mother, you may feel a bit guilty, and wish somehow you could undo that. But it may be too late.

But here's the good news: We may have imperfect families here, but one day we'll have a perfect family in heaven - with God the father and all his children who have gone on before.

So hang in there, Mothers! God's power is yours, and He will help you as you mother your children. God bless you on this very special day.

Let us pray.....