

What MOTHER Really Means Proverbs 31:29

Good morning everyone! And a Happy Mother's Day to all our mothers this morning. Mothers are the most wonderful and beautiful beings created by God. Amen? They come in different sizes and shapes, but one thing that is definitely common among them is a heart that is shaped like a home. You'll find refuge in her heart. You'll find comfort in her heart. You'll find joy in her heart. Her heart is big enough for all your fears, heartaches, anxieties, wishes, and desire.

This morning I'd like to talk about "What MOTHER Really Means". This message is dedicated to all our moms. I'd like to pay tribute to our moms this morning. Because being a mother is the most difficult job of all. It's a 24/7 job. Even the President takes a day off. But moms don't. It's a volunteer work. She doesn't get paid. Unlike the President who gets paid \$400,000 a year. On top of other perks and benefits that run to more than \$150,000. After I retire as pastor, I think I'll run for president.

So, if you're sitting next to a mom, tell her "Thank you, Mom! Why didn't you marry a president?"

Joking aside, the Bible has choice words for a mom. It all begins in Proverbs 31 verse 10 which is subtitled in the NIV and the NLT as "The Wife of Noble Character". In the ESV it is "The Woman Who Fears the Lord". In the NASB, it is "Description of a Worthy Woman". In the Message, it is "Hymn to a Good Wife". In the KJV, well, I didn't find a sub-title but maybe RJ, our in-house poet, can provide one like "An Ode to My Wife Norma". Anyway, as you read verses 10 through 27, you'll see how King Solomon describes the qualities of a loving and affectionate wife or mother.

In fact, in Judaism, this passage is the definition of a perfect or ideal woman. He talks about how a mom takes care of the needs of her family from morning till evening. In fact, she even tends to the needs of others who are not part of the family. Then, in verses 28 and 29, he says this about a mother and let us read together: *"Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: 'Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.'"* Amen?

So, without further ado, let us then give our praises to our mothers. What does MOTHER really mean? Let me use the word MOTHER as an acronym to define the qualities of a real mother.

1. Merciful

Deep in her heart, a mother is merciful. She has a soft heart, a loving heart, a compassionate heart. She will not let her children go astray and be put in a dangerous situation and if they are, she will do everything in her power to protect them and to fight for them. That is what is called a mother's instinct. Mothers are like that. They're protective of their children. I mean, she carried a child in her womb for nine months, protecting and caring, naturally, that extends up to the end of her days on earth.

In the Bible, there are two women who showed mercy to a little baby boy. Who am I talking about? Jochebed, the mother of Moses, and Pharaoh's daughter.

In Exodus, we are told that the pharaoh of Egypt became afraid of the increasing number of Hebrews in Egypt. And so, he ordered the killing of newborn baby boys. Jochebed, in an effort to save him, put him in a basket and let it flow down the Nile River hoping and praying that he wouldn't be found by the soldiers. Until he was found by Pharaoh's daughter. The Bible tells us what she did. I'm going to read from Exodus 2:5-10:

“Then Pharaoh’s daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. ‘This is one of the Hebrew babies,’ she said. Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?’ ‘Yes, go,’ she answered. So the girl went and got the baby’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you.’ So the woman took the baby and nursed him. When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh’s daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses, saying, ‘I drew him out of the water.’” (Exodus 2:5-10)

So, pharaoh’s daughter became the adoptive mother of Moses. We don’t know much about her. The Bible doesn’t even mention her name. Bible scholars say that her father must be Rameses II. They conjecture that she never married. So, she was a single mom.

You know, single moms must truly be appreciated. Because they raise a child or children on their own. They rely on their own resources to give the best to their children. If you’re a single mom, I salute you. You are worthy of honor. You deserve to be commended.

2. Omniscient

What does omniscient mean? All-knowing. And mothers are all-knowing, right? They are a know-it-all, in a good way. Folks, you don’t need Google, you need your mom. Amen? It’s no wonder automated personal assistants have female names like Siri, Alexa, Cortana. You ask them, they respond right away.

Meanwhile, an intelligent computer which turned out to be dangerous aboard a spaceship in the film Space Odyssey 2001 is named Hal, a guy’s name. Men, sorry, it’s not your day.

So, moms know everything. They have the answer to everything. And they know what to do in every situation, especially in emergencies.

Somehow, they don't lose their cool and have presence of mind especially when it involves their children. Like when we were eating in a restaurant one time a few years back, Eze suddenly felt itchy and his face turned red. I thought and thought what to do and while I was thinking, Anabel was giving him Benadryl already. While my mind was in a standstill, her mind was running 80 mph.

So, moms are omniscient. Of course, that's an exaggeration but you know what I mean. And what I mean is that mothers are always there to answer many of a child's simple questions. They won't turn away a child. They always lend their ears to their children. They listen and when they speak, you can be sure of profound wisdom coming from their lips.

Can you think of a wise mother in the Bible? The person I have in mind is Naomi. Naomi is mentioned in the book of Ruth.

The Bible tells us that when there was a famine in the land of Judah, she and her husband and two grown-up sons, went to Moab to live. Their two sons then married Moabite women, and one of them was Ruth. Then, Naomi's husband died. Soon after, his two sons died one after the other. When the famine ended in Judah, she started out toward her hometown which is Bethlehem together with her two step-daughters. But after a while, she tried to convince them to go back to Moab. One of them went back but not Ruth. Naomi relented and allowed her to come with her to Judah.

In Bethlehem, she then became the wise mother that she was. She came to know that Ruth met a local landowner named Boaz. He was kind to Ruth. Naomi recognized the providence of God in providing a kinsman-redeemer for Ruth. Seeing God's hand in these events, Naomi encouraged Ruth to go to Boaz as he slept in the threshing floor in order to request that he redeem her and her property.

Naomi's concern was for Ruth's future, that Ruth would gain a husband and provider.

To make a long story short, Ruth became the wife of Boaz. And they became the parents of Obed who was the father of Jesse. And Jesse became the father of King David, the greatest king of Israel, the ancestor of the Lord Jesus. And so, because Naomi knew what to do exactly in the situation that Ruth had with Boaz, God's purposes to save mankind through the Messiah was fulfilled.

3. Teacher

Because mother knows everything it follows she would teach what she knows. Teaching is actually her forte. That's why there are more female teachers than men. They want to impart knowledge. They want their children to learn. They want their children to be educated in the best possible way especially when it comes to their spiritual welfare.

Pop quiz: Can you guess who is this mother in the Bible who taught her daughter and grandson the principles and truth of God's Word? Lois. She is mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:5, where Paul writes to Timothy, *"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."*

Lois was a devout Jewish mother who had instructed her beloved daughter and grandson in Old Testament Scriptures. We can infer this in another letter that Paul wrote to Timothy. In 2 Timothy 3:14-15, he says, *"You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* Paul's mention of those "from whom you have learned them" probably refers to Timothy's godly mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, who taught him the Jewish Scriptures from infancy.

Here in our church, we have a lot of mothers who are teachers in Sunday school. And we salute you. You're doing a good job. If you're a teacher our children, whether our kids or our youth, why don't you stand so we can recognize you.

Teachers, I hope you realize how much valuable contributions you are making in the life of your students. You just don't know how helpful that would be in their lives later on. I remember the story shared by a fellow missionary years ago during our sharing time. She said that when she was in her early 20's, she became disappointed with her faith. She went through some really tough times. One day, feeling so depressed, she left church in her car and drove not knowing where to go. She was driving fast, tense and crying. She felt abandoned by God. But as she drove with tears in her eyes, verses she learned from her Sunday school days suddenly flooded her mind. Verses about the goodness of God, his faithfulness, his promises, his love and care. Until she felt relaxed and peaceful. She then felt God's grace over her whole being. She slowed down and returned to God.

So, continue what you're doing. You don't see the fruit yet, perhaps, but the fruit will grow in time and you will reap the harvest. Thank you for your faithfulness. Just keep on keeping on because God who is faithful will finish what he has started in you and your students.

And at home, I know it's mothers usually who are the Bible teachers. I can speak for myself. Dads are usually busy. But moms even though they're busy have time for their children, always. Amen?

Susanna Wesley had 19 children. And she taught them all the things about God. In the end, two of the most influential religious ministers came out of that household of hers – John Wesley, the great Methodist preacher and revivalist, and Charles Wesley, the prolific hymnwriter.

4. Healer

A mother is a healer in many ways. Not only can she give you the right medicine when you need it or apply the necessary band-aid on that knee wound, she can also utter words that bring comfort and healing to your wounded heart or provide the loving embrace to encourage you when your circumstances get you down.

One mother in the Bible who we can say fits this characteristic is Mary the mother of John Mark who is believed to be the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Mary is mentioned only once in the Bible, but it speaks volumes about her ministry of spiritual healing to others. *“When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.” (Acts 12:12)* Now, the verses prior to this talk about the situation of Peter who was put in prison because he was preaching the good news. So, the disciples gathered, maybe every day, at the house of Mary, which was believed to be large, to pray for Peter for his release.

Mary was a great encouragement for Christians at the time. During that time, Christianity was a persecuted sect and having a place where they can meet and have fellowship and worship God together is surely a balm in anyone’s restless and fearful heart. And, of course, her example and reassuring words have helped John Mark to get back on his feet after he suffered rejection at the hands of Paul when the latter did not want to bring him anymore to his missionary journeys. It seems like John Mark was a wishy-washy Christian, someone who gets easily discouraged. That’s the reason why he abandoned Paul at first which made Paul decide not to bring him along anymore. In time, however, John Mark matured, and he was even commended by Paul. For sure, this was because of Mary, his mother, who without a doubt offered words of encouragement to him and therefore, healed his wounded spirit.

5. Enduring

A mother endures. She has the patience of Job. She will bear whatever pain or sorrow she can for the sake of her children. She will continue to love her children even though they may not love in return. And even when her child has done the most heinous crime, she will not abandon her child. I read the story of a man who was convicted of murder and sentenced to 50 years in jail. As they walked out of the court, a reporter asked the mother of the convicted murderer, “What can you say about your son who was just convicted of this major crime?” She replied, “My son is the sweetest boy any mother could have.” That’s a real mother. Faithful to the end.

A couple of years ago, Dr. Phil had a guest, a teen, who claimed she was pregnant with “baby Jesus”. The 19-year-old woman asserted that she felt her unborn baby moving, and despite an ultrasound proving otherwise, said she would not turn her back on her child. The woman said she plans to remain strong. “My family, my friends, my pastors at church, they don’t believe that I’m pregnant,” she said on the Dr. Phil show. “I know it’s Jesus. I don’t care if my family disowns me. It really comes down to if you’re a true believer in Jesus or not.”

That woman has shown admirable endurance and patience. Unfortunately, she may end up as a patient in an institution somewhere.

But there’s a woman in the Bible who was enduring to the end. The real teenager who became the mother of Jesus. Her patience and perseverance were evident since the time she became pregnant with Jesus because of the Holy Spirit. Imagine, she is only maybe 15 or 16 and she suddenly becomes pregnant. No one knows who the father is. Her fiancée Joseph intends to leave her. She’s the talk of the town. How did she endure such a thing? If she were not enduring, probably, she would have said, “Lord, take it away. I can’t bear it. This is too much to handle. I feel like an outcast. In fact, I’m an outcast now.”

But, Mary took it all with poise and confidence. Then, as the Lord Jesus grew up, those talks of her bearing an illegitimate child continued. And that's why Jesus was never received in his own hometown. But Mary kept on and completely trusted God. And, of course, the greatest pain she felt was when Jesus was crucified on the cross. I'm sure any mother seeing her son go through the terrible torture and physical harm that he did would feel emotionally weak. And when he died on the cross, she must have felt like she died as well. But she endured.

Finally,

6. Reliable

A mother is a great example of reliability. You can always count on her. You can depend on her. She wakes up early in the morning and goes to bed late at night, like my wife. I often wonder where she gets her energy. She never runs out of battery. With a full-time job, cooking for us, cleaning up the house, taking our kids to this and that activity, I'm amazed she's still standing. But I know she goes low-batt too at times. And when I realize that, I say, "Sweetheart, let's go to the mall." And her eyes lit up, and she's recharged right away.

The truth is, a mother is there when you need her. You can ask her questions. You can make a request. You can ask for advice. You can tell her your corny jokes. She's just amazing. Awesome and phenomenal. Amen, Men? She's like Captain Marvel and Wonder Woman rolled into one.

Now, compare what a kid would usually tell a mom to what he would say to his dad:

Show slide

In the Bible, we know that all God-fearing mothers are reliable. They are reliable, why? Because they all rely on a reliable God. Which brings me to the conclusion of this message and that conclusion is that: all these qualities I've mentioned are the same qualities that God himself possesses.

In fact, the Bible says that God is like a mother. Deuteronomy 32:11-12 say, *“Like the eagle that stirs up its nest, and hovers over its young, God spreads wings to catch you, and carries you on pinions.”* Also, in Matthew 23:37, Jesus says, *“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”*

So, let us enumerate these qualities again and apply them to God.

God is Merciful. The Bible says *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”* (Eph. 2:4-5) Friend, if you’re not sure you’re going to heaven, come to God through his Son Jesus. Believe he died for you to forgive your sins. And he rose again to give you eternal life. You can be born again because of God’s mercy. God is not going to give you what you deserve. That is mercy. But he is going to give you what you don’t deserve. That’s grace.

God is Omniscient. He knows everything about you. He knows your circumstances. He is aware of every pain you feel, every heartache you have, every anxiety and worries you carry. Nothing is hidden from him. And he wants to let you know that he loves you. Psalm 139:1-3 says, *“You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.”*

God is a Teacher. He teaches us from his word. He teaches us through his Holy Spirit. He teaches us through our circumstances and experiences. He teaches us through other people. God will use everything to draw us close to him. But his primary tool is the Bible. It contains everything we need to live a blameless life. *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching...”* (2 Tim. 3:16)

God is a Healer. He heals us not only physically, but also emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. He promises to heal our broken bodies, our broken hearts, and our broken spirits.

He also heals broken relationships and broken dreams. *“I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security.”* (Jer. 33:6)

God is Enduring. He is patient and persevering. He never tires of loving us. No matter what we have done or what we are doing. He never punishes but he disciplines because he loves us as Hebrews 12:6 says. We can always rely on his enduring love. He will never leave us nor forsake us. Psalm 136:2 says, *“His love endures forever.”*

God is Reliable. No other person is as reliable as God in the entire whole universe. He is the Rock, our solid foundation. Feelings change, circumstances change, people change, but God never changes. Hebrews 13:8 says, *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”* Amen?