

“A Mother’s Love”

Proverbs 31:25-31, 2 Timothy 1:3-7

Mother’s Day

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^{ESV} **Proverbs 31:25-31** Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. ²⁶ She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. ²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ²⁹ "Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all." ³⁰ Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 1:3-7** I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Mother’s Day is a special day that we honor those women who have loved us before we knew what love was. We were loved before we were born by them as they cared for us while we were in their wombs. Here is a tip my father gave my, when we were expecting our first child. If your wife wakes you up in the middle of the night, and asks you can you feel the baby kick, please agree with her. It will save some hurt feelings and she will feel your love and support during her pregnancy. It was one of those life tips I never will forget.

Having children is a blessing from God. As Christians we believe that life begins at conception, and that God describes in Psalm 139 that **13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. (Psalm 139:13-14)** We all have had mothers since we are here today to honor them. I do not know what kind of mother or father you had in your live, I hope it was a good one, but I know statistically speaking with a congregation our size, and there are some people here who did

not have the greatest mothers in the world, which might make holidays like this one taste a little bittersweet. Most mothers I know are good moms, they care for and raise their children the best way they know how, and they constantly want their kids to have a better life than they had as kids. I think that last sentiment is a common one, we want the next generation to do better than the previous generation.

King Solomon wrote many of the Proverbs and in chapter 31 there is a hymn to a good wife, I enjoy the more modern translation from the Message, when I am reading this section of Scripture. I think it is meant to be words of praise and encouragement for all the hard work that our mothers do, and not a litmus test for being a good mother.

Proverbs 31:10-31 The Message (MSG)

Hymn to a Good Wife

10-31 A good woman is hard to find,

and worth far more than diamonds.

Her husband trusts her without reserve,

and never has reason to regret it.

Never spiteful, she treats him generously

all her life long.

She shops around for the best yarns and cottons,

and enjoys knitting and sewing.

She's like a trading ship that sails to faraway places

and brings back exotic surprises.

She's up before dawn, preparing breakfast

for her family and organizing her day.

She looks over a field and buys it,

then, with money she's put aside, plants a garden.

First thing in the morning, she dresses for work,

rolls up her sleeves, eager to get started.

She senses the worth of her work,

is in no hurry to call it quits for the day.

She's skilled in the crafts of home and hearth,

diligent in homemaking.

*She's quick to assist anyone in need,
 reaches out to help the poor.
 She doesn't worry about her family when it snows;
 their winter clothes are all mended and ready to wear.
 She makes her own clothing,
 and dresses in colorful linens and silks.
 Her husband is greatly respected
 when he deliberates with the city fathers.
 She designs gowns and sells them,
 brings the sweaters she knits to the dress shops.
 Her clothes are well-made and elegant,
 and she always faces tomorrow with a smile.
 When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say,
 and she always says it kindly.
 She keeps an eye on everyone in her household,
 and keeps them all busy and productive.
 Her children respect and bless her;
 her husband joins in with words of praise:
 "Many women have done wonderful things,
 but you've outclassed them all!"
 Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades.
 The woman to be admired and praised
 is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-God.
 Give her everything she deserves!
 Festoon her life with praises!*

Our mothers deserve to be honored and celebrated on Mother's Day. Like I said before this part of scripture is supposed to be read to encourage mothers and not to make them feel guilty about not measuring up. Mothers like everyone else, are not perfect. We all make mistakes, and those mistakes are dealt with by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The most influential thing a person can ever do, is to raise children. They will learn to live what they see in their parents, the good things and the not so good things sometimes.

The world today doesn't make it easy for parents to raise their children. In the time we live there is all kinds of information, including things that we don't want our children seeing or

hearing about until their young minds can mature. Yet everything is just a click-a-way. Parents we need to be diligent about our children's online activities to protect them from the world that can easily corrupt or even harm them in certain situations. Stranger danger is real even in the virtual world of the internet.

Also our own sinfulness and learned behaviors can make it difficult to be the godly parents we strive to be for our children. When it comes to applying Christian principles in parenting, one of the most important ones is the giving and receiving forgiveness from each other. Children will sin against each other, against their fathers and their mothers, and yes even parents will sin against their children at times. If things get a little too out of control we can lose our tempers and regret some of the harsh words that we spoke to our children. It is important that we give and receive forgiveness, Paul called it the ministry of reconciliation.

Mother's Day might have its roots as a Hallmark Holiday, but honoring our fathers and mothers is a Biblical idea. It is straight from the 4th Commandment. ¹² **"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Exodus 20:12)**

Paul in the New Testament reinforces this idea of honoring our parents. **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, because this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise – that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life. (Ephesians 6:1-3)**

In the late 1800's into the turn of the century there was a female impressionist painter, Mary Stevenson Cassatt, the bulk of her work is focused on capturing moments between a

mother and her child. I found her work inspiring this week, as I was reflecting on a mother's love for her children. And how a mother's love reflects God's perfect unconditional love to the world that is given in Jesus Christ. [If you want to look at some paintings that capture the love of a mother and her child from over one hundred years ago look up www.marycassatt.org and page through her works.)

I especially like the one where the mother is lying down in bed and the daughter is sitting next to her wide eyed and awake. It captures a moment of motherhood few paintings every try to capture. The sacrifice of sleepless nights and early mornings. Mothers give so much of themselves for their families, it is a glimpse of the love and care that God, Our Heavenly Father has for all of us.

The next passage I chose to honor mothers is from Paul's letter to a young pastor, named Timothy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. (2 Tim. 1:5) St. Paul doesn't mention Timothy's father as a believer, but instead focuses on Timothy's grandmother and mother. Passing the faith from one generation to the next, I think probably the most important thing Christian mothers and fathers can do for their children. We don't just want them to succeed in this life, but we want to point them and place them in the arms of the Savior of mankind, Jesus Christ.

We want to share our faith in Christ not just with the world, but also especially with our families that God has blessed us with. Paul encourages Timothy to continue growing in his faith, a faith that has been passed from grandmother, to mother and now to her son. ⁶ **For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the**

laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

Lois and Eunice raised their families in the Christian faith, and Timothy became a servant of the Word, when he was serving as the pastor in Ephesus. Parents, and mothers especially have a calling from God to share Christ and the love of God with their children and grandchildren, and in that spiritual sense help grow God's kingdom one child of faith at a time. So let us celebrate our mothers and grandmothers who have been extensions of God's unconditional love for us in our lives. Let us be thankful to our moms who have given us a mother's love, which is actually an example of our Heavenly Father's unconditional love which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.