

Mother, O What a Gift

Texts: Acts 9:36-43

Revelation 7:9-17 (Series C, Fourth Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day) Ps. 23

John 10:22-30

Prayer:

People are fiercely loyal to their mothers. You have seen the scene a hundred times. It is so commonplace you probably never thought about the meaning behind it. It is an expression of something we assume so deeply that we expect it. It is something so basic to us it is almost instinct.

The scene is the Super Bowl, or the Hula Bowl, or the pro bowl, or the World Series, final four.... It is near the end of the game. One of the two teams is ahead enough that the celebration has begun.

The camera starts panning the sidelines of the winning team. And all the players are holding up a #1. Then one after another we hear them, or maybe we just read their lips. They are all saying, "Hi Mom!"

This tells us something. Think about it. Of all the people they could say hi to on national T.V., why is it always Mom? Why not a wife, or children, or a father? Why not that high school coach who taught them the basic skills that are earning them millions.

It is always Mom. People are fiercely loyal to their mothers. Even the physically strongest men in our society display their loyalty to their mothers for all to see. People are so loyal to their mothers, because a mother's love is so great.

There is an ancient legend about two warring tribes in the Andes in South America, one that lived in the lowlands and the other high in the mountains ...The mountain people invaded the lowlanders one day and, as part of their plundering of the people, they kidnapped the baby of one of the lowlander families and took the infant with them up into the mountains.

The lowlanders didn't know how to climb the mountains. They didn't know any of the trails the mountain people used. Consequently, they were unable to track the mountain people in steep terrain.

Nevertheless, they sent out their best and strong men of the village to try to climb the mountain and rescue the baby. These men tried one trail, and then another. They tried one method of climbing, and then another.

After several days of futile efforts, and without success and feeling helpless and hopeless. The men decided that the cause was lost, and they prepared to return to their villages below.

As they were packing their stuff for the descent, they saw the baby's mother walking toward them. They realized that she was coming down the mountain that they themselves were unable to climb. And then they saw that she had her baby strapped to her back. How could that be?

One man greeted her and said, "We couldn't climb this mountain. How did you do this when we, the strongest and most able men in the village, could not?" She shrugged her shoulders and said, ***"It wasn't your baby!"*** This is Mother's Love, the most powerful instinct in women. Faith of our Mothers.

A mother's love is so unconditional and exceptional that it is in a category by itself. Some give it its own name. They call it "Motherlove." It is a degree of love that is only fully expressed by the love of a mother. O! What a Gift.

And once the child is born, most of the work of child rearing falls on the mothers. Often it is out of necessity. The father can earn more so he goes and earns while the mother stays at home. But studies show that even in two career families, force of habit places most of the burden on the mother. All that time and energy, for what, so that the child can live?

A mother gives and gives and gives asking nothing in return. And no matter what happens, they still love. A person can commit an unspeakable crime and everyone will abandon that person, but their mother won't. Consider Mary, Jesus' mother.

When almost everybody else fled in terror, who was one of the few at the foot of the cross: Mary, the mother of Jesus. A mother's love is so unconditional and exceptional that it is in a category by itself.

It is the kind of love that persists no matter what wrong is done to it. Even among wild animals, a mother will give her life to save her offspring. So, people respond to that degree of love with an equally fierce loyalty.

Jesus told us to call God "Father," but God's love is much like a mother's love. The Bible is full of examples of God's "motherlove." God is constantly feeding and nurturing his children. God is the one who gave us life, who breathed us into existence, just as our mothers birthed us into this world. And God is constantly giving for our benefit. And God hurts when we walk away and reject love.

The image of God as Shepherd is a good example of this. God cares for us as a good shepherd. God provides for our every need. God takes us to green pastures and leads us beside still waters. And God protects us from wild animals that would devour us.

Like a mother God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies. When others would flee, God remains steadfast. Just like a mother who stands by her child even though others ridicule, deride and even crucify him. And what is God doing in the face of our enemies? God is providing for our earthly needs by preparing a table for us.

Of course, God's love is greater than any love a human can produce. "Motherlove" is only an analogy that helps us understand God's love. But it's a good analogy. It helps us understand how loving and giving God's love is. The most unconditional example of human love is a Mother's love. To say that God loves us more than that at least gives us a frame of reference.

Jesus is the prime example of God's "Motherlove." In Jesus God died for his children. The ultimate expression of love is to give one's life for another. (John 15:13) We see that expressed when a mother risks her life to save her child.

The amazing thing is Jesus died for humanity even though we rejected him. God's love in Christ loved even though people spat upon him and cursed him. One might think that the God of the universe would punish people for treating him so. But God's love does not depend on us loving him back. We can reject God, and God hurts, but like a mother's love God's love continues.

Paul preached about this love. He said, *"Though they could charge him with nothing deserving death, yet they asked Pilot to have him killed."* And yet God sent them the good news of the resurrection that they might repent and live. (Acts 13:26-33) That is love. God could have condemned those who killed Jesus.

But instead God sent them Paul and other preachers to try to save them. God continued to love them even though they rejected Jesus, God in the flesh. God loves us even though we do the same.

The problem is that most people don't know this aspect of God's love. They mistakenly think God is vengeful or mean. God is righteous, and God seeks justice. But it is more like the punishment that a loving mother gives a child. Its purpose is to keep the child safe.

The greatest quality of God is God's love and God's forgiving spirit. Ideally a mother will always love her child no matter how evil they get. God will always love his children no matter what they do. God loves us even though we reject him and hurt him. Even though we crucify him daily with our sin, he still loves us. And he sent us the good news of that love.

Love God! Why? For the same reason we love our mother. God gave us life. God loves us, and gave his life for us. Like the Martyrs of old, let us decided to love back by giving our whole lives to God. You would die for your mother. Why not be willing to die for God? Why not be willing to live for God? Be blessed. Amen.

Happy Mother's Day

May 8, 2022

Prayer concerns: *Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Shirley Walker, Hanne Bourgeoise, Sven Berg, Astrid Hylland, Ellen Eriksen, Euclide & Ellen Dahal-Lanteigne, Karen Abazio, Wilhelmina Tiemersma, Matilda Molyneaux-Piper, Soo Young, Shirley Walker, Pastor Timothy, Sharon Nielson (in Herbert, Sask.) the dire tension between Russia and Ukraine, Protectors at various places in Canada, Covid -19 patients, essential and Frontline workers, Note: of thanks to God as the Covid-19 virus is easing off and more restrictions are being lifted, and finally Families of departed souls in recent weeks and months.*

Prayer: O Christ, our Messiah, grant us the faithfulness to awaken each day with You first in our thoughts, then inspired by Tabitha and others, to live in deep devotion to You. May our own prayers, good works and acts of charity among Your flock, fill us with such depth of faith, that our moments of unbelief are few. We ask through the Holy Spirit, our Comforter; and the Almighty, our Creator; who together with You reign as One God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Make melodies in your heart with these hymns:

- **The king of Love My Shepherd Is # 502**
- **Saviour, Like a Shepherd Lead Us # 714**
- **Alleluia! Sing to Jesus # 392**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

n/a

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

n/a

Happy Mother's Day