

True Mother's Love

Texts: Acts 7:55-60

1 Peter 2:2-10 (Series A. 5th Sunday of Easter) Ps. 31:1-5,15-16

John 14:1-14

Free Text: 2 Timothy 1:5 (Mother's Day)

"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."

Prayer:

On this Easter Six, I would like to change channel from Easter them to Mother's Day few thoughts on mothers. In 2nd Timothy chapter 1, verse 5 and we're going to be focus on this 'one verse' for our devotion this morning.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "No one is poor who had a godly mother." He went on to say, "I remember my mother's prayers, and they have followed me; they have clung to me all my life. All that I am and hope to be I owe to my angel mother." A mother's influence. We're here this morning in our homes due to social distancing to celebrate Mother's Day.

I love this story which I have shared many times on Mother's Day and I would like to share it this morning. There is an ancient legend about two warring tribes in the Andes, 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, 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 party of fighting men to try to climb the mountain and rescue the baby. The party of lowlanders tried one trail, and then another. They tried one method of climbing, and then another.

After several days of unsuccessful efforts, 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 to head home, 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 True Love, the most powerful instinct in women.

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 "Mother love." It is a degree of love that is only fully expressed by the love of a mother. 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.

The story of the modern celebration of Mother's day goes back to Ann Marie Jarvis. Ann Marie Jarvis was a woman who not only gave birth to 12 children, eight of whom died in childhood, but she founded a group called "*Mother's Day Work Clubs*" that offered humanitarian aid to soldiers on both sides during the Civil War.

After the Civil War she organized a "Mother's Friendship Day" to bring people from both sides of the war together and heal the wounds of the war. In other words she took the ideal of a mother's love and applied it to loving her neighbour - even when that neighbour was an enemy.

Ann Marie Jarvis died in 1905. After her death one of her daughters, Anna Jarvis, organized a memorial service for all mothers at St. Andrews Methodist Episcopal Church.

She also supplied **carnations** to be given to each participant in the service in honour or memory their mothers. The idea caught on and by 1914 "Mother's Day" was a national holiday. Mother's day is so popular, it is celebrated in most part of the world.

In the Christian faith, the church, all women are mothers. It doesn't matter whether you have any children or not. Miss. Smith of First United Methodist Church Somewhere never bore a child, yet she mothered every child who came into her class. In the world's eyes she wasn't a mother to even one child, but in God's eyes she was a mother to hundreds.

Sheila Patmore of Montessori School down stairs (St. Ansgar) never had a child yet mothered hundreds of children. Some great citizen of our society today. To understand this truth we have to understand the church.

The church is a family, the family of God. Through baptism we have been adopted as children of God. God is our father and Christ is our brother. And everyone else in the world who has been baptized is our kin.

When Jesus was told that his mother and brothers were looking for him, what did he say? He said, "who are my brothers and my mother? Those who do the will of my father are my brothers and sisters and mother." When we are baptized we are joined by the power of the spirit to a new family.

In God's eyes, we cease to be John Doe and Jane Doe. And we become John Christian and Jane Christian, children of our Heavenly Father. In this family the older and experienced members have the responsibility of raising and caring for the younger and inexperienced members.

In that sense we are all parents to those who are growing in the faith around us. (*Vitalis, who discipled me when I became a Christian in 1969, Maria Heuberger, in Kitzingen Germany, Maria Forum Jensen, Olgod in Denmark all nurtured me in the faith*). I give credit to many godly people who have help shaped my faith and believe in the living God in my Christian journey.

I believe that in Christ we are all foster fathers and mothers for God's children. So today we honour all women in the church, and outside the Church because in God's eyes you are mothers all.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, *“I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers”* (Eph.1:15-23).

" In this passage Paul gives thanks for the faith and love of the Ephesians. Obviously, they were a people who had great faith in Jesus. And obviously they were a people who lived out that faith in love for one another. They were a church of Christian mothers and fathers who cared well for God's children.

But Paul knew that the Ephesians faced trouble. So, he begins to pray for them. He prays that they receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation. He also prays that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened so that they may know of the hope they have in Christ.

It is important to note what it is he wants them to see. He wants them to see what is their **hope** and their **power**. Paul knew that the forces opposed to the Ephesians were greater than they were. The people of the church of Ephesus would be easily crushed by their foes.

But Paul also knew that Jesus had ascended into heaven. And that all things, all powers, were subject under him, even the powers which opposed Ephesus. This was their **hope**: the power of the glorified Christ, the power of God Almighty. Like Paul, I give thanks for the faith and love of the mothers of this church.

I remember the love and nurture of many of them. There was my own mother of course. Her example of faith, trust, and devotion to Jesus Christ had a great effect on me. She is one of the reasons I am a Christian. But there were many others whom I eluded to earlier.

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. *Mother is the symbol of Love.*

Like a mother, God prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies. When others would flee, God remains steadfast. Providing for our every need. Just like a mother who stands by her child through difficult times. *Mother is the symbol of Love.*

"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 need the insight to know what is true and good. We need the patience to persevere. We need the grace to be forgiving when little hands and feet do what they shouldn't. We need the faith to know that a point comes when we can't do anything and that it is all in the Lord's hands.

I also pray we might have the insight into the power, which is our hope. There is a power that can overcome all that threatens our children. The source of this power is the glorified Jesus Christ.

Don't try to be a Christian mother without it. It is impossible. You can only succeed at being a Christian *mother* if your source of power is the one who died rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God Almighty, *Jesus Christ. Amen.*

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

May 14, 2023