

Mother's Day

May 14, 2006

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NLT)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. [2] We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. He was willing to die a shameful death on the cross because of the joy he knew would be his afterward. Now he is seated in the place of highest honor beside God's throne in heaven. [3] Think about all he endured when sinful people did such terrible things to him, so that you don't become weary and give up.

Today is Mother's Day, the day that our nation has set aside to honor mothers.

Let me read a few quotes from some famous people about mothers.

- “Never have children, only grandchildren.” Gore Vidal
- “Parenting can be learned only by people who have no children.”
- “You know your children are growing up when they stop asking where they came from and refuse to tell you where they are going.”
- “ What my mother taught me about JUSTICE - "One day you'll have kids, and I hope they are just like you, then you'll see what it's like.... Bill Cosby
- “If evolution really works, how come mothers only have two hands?” Unknown
- “An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.” The Queen Mother
- “A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after.” Peter De Vries:
- All mothers are working mothers. Unknown
- It kills you to see them grow up. But I guess it would kill you quicker if they didn't. Barbara Kingsolver:

- A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie. Tenneva Jordan:

Mother's Day is a wonderful day if you have a wonderful mother or if you had a wonderful mother. It's a wonderful day if you have wonderful kids who remember you on Mother's Day. It's a wonderful day if you are part of a loving family.

But Mother's Day can be a sad day for some people.

- It may be that your mother has recently died and it's a lonely day for you without your mother to celebrate with.
- It may be that you have bad memories of your mother. Maybe you had a mother that abused you or neglected you or deserted you.
- Maybe you have longed to be a mother but have been unable to have children.
- Or perhaps you have children who seem to have forgotten about you.

There are many reasons why Mother's Day is **not** everyone's favorite day of the year.

The other day I read about a lady who had given birth to triplets and all three of them died. Mother's Day was a sad day for her. She wrote..." In the first weeks after their deaths, I couldn't bear to look at a calendar because it showed only days and days of sadness ahead. Even a clock seemed too much, displaying minutes and hours ahead in which I would have to bear the absolute goneness of my children. This sharp bitterness has mostly passed, but this month the calendar shows Mother's Day coming. Holidays are frequently hard for bereaved people, especially the holidays that celebrate the very someone you've lost."

A couple of nights ago I was watching a program on television about children who had grown up in a orphanage in the 40's and 50's. They were now in their 50's and 60's and it was very interesting to hear them talk about growing up without their mothers and fathers.

As Evangelical Christians we often promote an idealized image of marriage and motherhood.

We talk about a marriage between two young people who are virgins and the husband being the financial provider, the wife staying at home doing the housework, they have two or three children arriving just on time, and a dog

or cat thrown in for good measure. “Ozzie and Harriet”, “Leave It To Beaver”, “Father Knows Best”, etc.

However, that is no longer an accurate picture of most American families, (if it ever was). Marriage between young virgins has become increasingly rare, and well over 80% of young people are sexually active before they get married. Nearly half of American adults are unmarried, and about half of those who are, get divorced. One in five Americans struggle with infertility at some point, and millions experience miscarriage, stillbirth, infant death, or child death. Not to mention the millions of abortions that are performed in America every year.

When we quote the Bible on Mother’s Day, we usually read about the wonderful examples of motherhood that are recorded there.

But the truth is, the Bible also records the stories of mothers who had very difficult experiences. **Ruth** was a wonderful lady but her husband and her three sons died and left her in a very tough situation. **Rachel, Hannah and Sarah** were all infertile. **Mary**’s son was crucified on a cross while she watched him die. The prodigal son acted with terrible disrespect for his parents.

The Bible tells it like it is. Motherhood can be and often is a very tough assignment.

But for most of us, **Mother’s Day** is a favorite day because we want to honor our mothers and they deserve to be honored.

Modern day mothers are absolutely amazing. When I was a kid, most mothers stayed home and took care of the kids while the father went to work to make the money necessary to pay the bills. That’s the way it was at our house. Mom stayed home and took care of the kids, did the housework, cooked the meals, helped with school work, took us to church three or four time a week, and did a dozen other things that had to be done.

Daddy went to work every Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Reed Roller Bit Company. He did that for 48 years. I don’t know if he ever missed a day’s work in all of those years.

They both worked hard. I don’t know who had the hardest job. I think it was my mom though because her job was 24/7. She never got a day off.

I think it may be even tougher to be a mom today than it was back then.

Mothers today have to do all the things mothers have always had to do, but in addition, most mothers today, have to work at a full time job in order to help make the money necessary to pay the bills.

I want to honor you today.

I received this e-mail the other day. It really touched me. It deals with all the various aspects of motherhood and varieties of situations that mothers face today. It's entitled MOMS.

MOMS

This is for the mothers who have sat up all night with sick toddlers in their arms, wiping up barf, laced with Oscar Mayer wieners and cherry Kool-Aid saying, "It's okay honey, Mommy's here."

Who have sat in rocking chairs for hours on end soothing crying babies who can't be comforted.

This is for all the mothers who show up at work with spit-up in their hair and milk stains on their blouses and diapers in their purse.

For all the mothers who run carpools and make cookies and sew Halloween costumes. And all the mothers who DON'T.

This is for the mothers who gave birth to babies they'll never see. And the mothers who took those babies and gave them homes.

This is for the mothers whose priceless art collections are hanging on their refrigerator doors.

And for all the mothers who froze their buns on metal bleachers at football or soccer games instead of watching from the warmth of their cars.

And that when their kids asked, "Did you see me, Mom?" they could say, "Of course, I wouldn't have missed it for the world," and mean it.

This is for all the mothers who yell at their kids in the grocery store and swat them in despair when they stomp their feet and scream for ice-cream before dinner. And for all the mothers who count to ten instead, but realize how child abuse happens.

This is for all the mothers who sat down with their children and explained all about making babies. And for all the (grand)mothers who wanted to, but just couldn't find the words.

This is for all the mothers who go hungry, so their children can eat.

For all the mothers who read "Goodnight, Moon" twice a night for a year. And then read it again. "Just one more time."

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to tie their shoelaces before they started school. And for all the mothers who opted for Velcro instead.

This is for all the mothers who teach their sons to cook and their daughters to sink a jump shot.

This is for every mother whose head turns automatically when a little voice calls "Mom?" in a crowd, even though they know their own offspring are at home -- or even away at college ~or have their own families.

This is for all the mothers who sent their kids to school with stomach aches, assuring them they'd be just FINE once they got there, only to get calls from the school nurse an hour later asking them to please pick them up. Right away.

This is for mothers whose children have gone astray, who can't find the words to reach them.

For all the mothers who bite their lips until they bleed when their 14 year olds dye their hair green.

For all the mothers of the victims of recent school shootings, and the mothers of those who did the shooting.

For the mothers of the survivors, and the mothers who sat in front of their TVs in horror, hugging their child who just came home from school, safely.

This is for all the mothers who taught their children to be peaceful, and now pray they come home safely from a war.

What makes a good Mother anyway? Is it patience? Compassion? Broad hips? The ability to nurse a baby, cook dinner, and sew a button on a shirt, all at the same time?

Or is it in her heart?

Is it the ache you feel when you watch your son or daughter disappear down the street, walking to school alone for the very first time?

The jolt that takes you from sleep to dread, from bed to crib at 2 A.M. to put your hand on the back of a sleeping baby?

The panic, years later, that comes again at 2 A.M. when you just want to hear their key in the door and know they are safe again in your home?

Or the need to flee from wherever you are and hug your child when you hear news of a fire, a car accident, a child dying?

The emotions of motherhood are universal and so our thoughts are for young mothers stumbling through diaper changes and sleep deprivation... And mature mothers learning to let go.

For working mothers and stay-at-home mothers. Single mothers and married mothers. Mothers with money, mothers without.

This is for you all. For all of us...Hang in there. In the end we can only do the best we can. Tell them every day that we love them. And pray and never stop being a mom.

I don't know who wrote that, but it is powerful. Mothers have so many things they must do. How do they get it all done?

And everything doesn't always go the way we want it to go. Children don't always do what we want them to do or act the way we want them to act. They don't always make the choices we want them to make but mothers hang in their through the good times and the bad. They're amazing!

Children can be so exasperating! Every age has its challenges.

Stephanie told my wife about how **Makayla**, our little two year old granddaughter, was acting the other day. Stephanie went a meeting and had to take Makayla along. After Stephanie stood in line and got her card out of a file box, Makayla said, "My turn". Stephanie said, "No, you don't have a card in the box" and walked away.

The next moment, Stephanie looked back and Makayla was saying to a lady who was getting her card out of the box, "My turn." The lady said, "You better ask your mommy about that." Makayla stuck her bottom lip out and stood there looking pitiful. She was wearing her sun glasses and so the lady said, "Those sure are pretty sunglasses." And Makayla took them off and threw them on the floor.

That's when Stephanie wanted to "**get away for a while**" like the Southwest Airline commercial.

We've all be there.

I remember when Stacy was a little boy and there was a local children's program on Channel 13. I think it was called Kittrick's Korner or something like that. Anyway, television was a lot less sophisticated back then and you could take your children to the station on their birthday. and Kittrick, who was dressed up like a black cat, had what she called "Kittrick's Carousel".

Little Stacy was all dressed up and how proud Janet and I were when it was his turn to be interviewed by Kittrick. The summer before that, I had worked for Parker Brother's Concrete Company driving a Concrete truck and Stacy thought that was just wonderful. So every time anybody would ask him what he wanted to be when he grew up he would say, "Concrete truck." He meant, "A concrete truck driver."

So when the moment arrived and Kittrick said, “And what do you want to be, little boy, when you grow up?” Stacy said, “An Indian.” And she said, “What do Indians do all day?” And Stacy said, “kill”.

That was one of those embarrassing moments when we said, “I wonder whose little boy that is? If you are a parent, you know the feeling. Kids don’t always say the things we want them to say or act the way we want them to act.

You take a big chance when you decide to have children. There is no guarantee that your baby will not be born with physical or mental challenges. I salute the mothers who have loved and cared for their babies who were born with special needs. The hours and days and weeks and months and years that they have poured their hearts and time and energy into the lives of those precious children with special needs. **They deserve special recognition. (Deborah Arrona, Salvador), (Karen Solis, Joe, Zachery)**

And I want to give special recognition to those mothers today who are having to deal with kids who, for whatever reason, have gotten into trouble.

Many times on Sunday mornings, when I pray for the needs of people who come forward during prayer time, I pray with mothers who say, “Pray for my son who’s in jail. Pray that the judge will be merciful. Pray that my boy will turn his life around and serve God.”

Every week we get prayer cards from mothers requesting prayer for children and young people who have become rebellious and have gotten into trouble. Those mothers need special grace to love those children and guide them through those rebellious times.

And I want to give special recognition today to mothers who have recently had to plan the funeral for one of your children. This past year I preached the funerals for two young adults whose mothers attend this church. Lisa Michie-Gaitan, Cynthia Posey’s daughter, was 39. Robert Keith Wooted, Lee Anna Dolton’s son, was 45. I can’t imagine how difficult it would be to experience the death of one of my children.. But I want you to know that God loves you and Elim Church loves you.

Every mother would like to have perfect children who are perfectly healthy and well behaved and straight a students and who always make right choices and serve the Lord and live to enjoy old age. But life is just not like that.

Even in families who attend church and try to do every thing right, there are children who rebel and get into trouble. That doesn't mean you've been a bad mother. It simply means that ultimately every child grows up and becomes responsible for his or her own choices.

Today I want us to celebrate the women who have happy families and wonderful children. If you are one of those, be very thankful. I also want us to remember the women, men, boys and girls who have been hurt by their mothers. I want us to remember the mothers who have been hurt by their children. I want us to remember the mothers who have lost their children. I want us to remember the women who long to be wives and mothers but aren't.

Each and every one of you is very important and significant in God's eyes. He loves you and so do I. So today, as we celebrate this special day, let us look to Jesus for the grace and the wisdom and help we all need to run the race that He has given us to run.

Give invitation.