

Happy Mothers Day

Exodus 2:1-10

Introduction

The idea for having a special day set aside for honoring the mothers of our nation dates back to a woman who attended a small church in Grafton, West Virginia.

It was 1876, and the nation still remembered and mourned the men who had been killed in the Civil War. A woman named Anna Reeves Jarvis was teaching class one day, explaining the meaning of "Memorial Day" when she thought about all the mothers who had lost their sons in the war. Then and there, she prayed that one day there could be a "Memorial Day" for mothers. The prayer made a deep impression on one of Mrs. Jarvis' eleven children. Young Anna Jarvis had seen first-hand her mother's efforts to hold the war-split community and church together. As she grew into adulthood, she continued to remember her mother's prayer. Then, on the day of her mother's death, Anna determined to establish Mother's Day in her honor.

On May 12, 1907, a local observance was held that later spread to Philadelphia. By 1910, Mother's Day was celebrated in forty-five states, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Canada, and Mexico. Anna Jarvis was elated and told a friend in a letter, "Where it will end must be left for the future to tell. That it will circle the globe now seems certain."

On May 8, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day, a day for "displaying the American flag and for public expression of love and reverence for the mothers of the country."

As a part of our observance of Mother's Day, I would like to take you to the account of a young mother of three little children who lived during one of the darkest hours of Israel's history. Here day was not a good time to be raising children. Even life itself was a huge chore. Each morning before dawn her husband would leave their tiny living quarters where they slept crowded together and go the mud pits where he made bricks. He came home later and later each night as more and more production was demanded. With two children to care for already amid the perils of their life, she must have met her third and latest pregnancy with mixed emotion. By edict of the king, all male children were to be drowned at birth, thrown into the crocodile infested River. To disobey meant death. To obey meant the emotional tearing of her mother's heart as she turned her baby over to the soldiers. A woman could only hope that the child who grew daily inside her was a girl and not a boy. As the day approached for her to give birth, Jocabed, the wife of Amram, came to make the most difficult decision of her entire life. If her child was a boy, she would defy the authorities and keep him as long as she could.

The time was 1500 BC. The place was Egypt, near one of Pharaoh's massive storage cities. Jocabed and Amram were Hebrews, part of as many as a million others, enslaved by the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Let's read their story.

(Read Exodus 1:8-2:10)

Implied in the description of the role of Moses' mother in his life are *three qualities of motherhood that we want to affirm today*. The first is what the Bible calls:

1. Natural Affection

A super-cautious mother was known to always wear a gauze mask when coming near her baby and insisted that all visitors do likewise. Several older and wiser women tried to tell her tactfully that she was carrying things a bit too far, but the young mother insisted that most parents were absolutely criminal in their carelessness about their children's health.

Then the mother mentioned that she thought her baby was beginning to cut a tooth and she wished there were some way she could know for sure. A friend with more experience said, "Why, just put your finger in his mouth and..." She was stopped in mid sentence by the horrified expression on the young mother's face! Then she quickly added, "Of course, you boil your finger first..."

While that is certainly an extreme case of overprotection that isn't repeated by many women, there is a special bond of concern that a mother has for her child that is simply unparalleled in any other relationship.

That same "natural affection" is what caused Jocabed to defy the king's edict and keep her baby boy. It is well known in the Scriptures. Isaiah 49:15 says, "*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and have no compassion on the son of her womb?*" The idea is that that bond is so strong and so special that it is nearly unthinkable that it could be violated.

In Romans 1:31, where Paul is describing the people that God abandoned to their own devices after they became so wicked they were impossible to reach, of their characteristics mentioned is that they were "*without natural affection.*"

The Greek word their means, "hard hearted toward ones own kindred." It refers to those who are so corrupt that they don't even love their own children!

Do we see any of that in the world around us? We surely do. Child abuse is epidemic! Abortion is common.

We should do all we can to put a stop to things like that, but in the meantime be sure that we affirm motherhood and it's great value to us. It is abnormal for a mother not to love her children! It is a sign of selfishness and perversion!

You moms, who sacrifice for your children in the face of criticism by the feminist sympathetic media, let me say to you that we appreciate you. We hold you in high esteem. What you are doing is in perfect arrangement with God's order of things. Keep it up.

Love your children. Devote yourself to their raising - even if some around you say you are crazy and are wasting your life in doing so. God doesn't think your are crazy. He says you are "right on" and so do we.

The second quality of motherhood I want to point out from this account of Jocabed is her:

2. Profound Influence

Jocabed didn't know she was raising a prophet! She had no idea that her brave act would preserve The Deliverer of Israel. From her perspective, she was just doing what was right. She was just taking care of her little boy. Yet think of it. That little boy would influence the world right

down to our own day! If something were to somehow come in the middle of the night and remove the influence of Moses, what would our world be like as we got up the next morning? Would there be a Jewish nation? What would Middle Eastern politics look like? What would world politics look like? Where would Christianity be?

The chain of God's providence very often is held in place by some pretty fragile links - in this case, the tender protection and care of a young Hebrew slave woman for her little son. Far from being an insignificant happening of an unclear, out of the way place, God was working in that little home through the faithfulness of this brave woman.

He is doing the same thing today. God works through things that seem insignificant to us. We read in I Corinthians 1:27: *"God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that he might nullify the things that are."*

If you think, brethren, that what goes on inside our homes is insignificant and unimportant, then you haven't been reading and understanding your Bible.

I know it's hard to see sometimes. I read about a woman who telephoned a friend and asked how she was feeling. "Terrible," came back the reply. "My head is splitting and my back and legs are killing me... the house is a mess, and the kids are simply driving me crazy."

Very sympathetically, the caller said, "Listen, go lie down. I'll come over right away and cook lunch for you, clean up the house, and take care of the children while you get some rest. By the way, how is Sam?"

"Sam?" the complaining mother asked. "Yeah, you know, your husband, Sam. Hasn't he been sick, too?"

"My husband's name is Mike," said the housewife.

"Oh my," exclaimed the caller. "I must have dialed a wrong number!"

There was a long pause and then these words: "Are you still coming over?"

Moms, sometimes in the midst of it all, it's hard to see that what you are doing is worth anything, much less significant in history. Yet, it is.

Let us just for a minute see what kind influence Marie had on Jesus. From John 19:25-27 we learn that Marie risked her own life to be with her son in the dying minutes. Why? Because she loved her son. She was a mother and that what mother's do. Even at death, Jesus mind was still set on taking care for others. He was touched with the feelings of Mary's hurt and pain. In the last moments of his life upon earth, He made arrangement for her care.

Influence... Mothers have it. Either for good or evil. What you do in your homes, moms, is crucial to the survival of our nation. Do a good job. We affirm you.

The third quality I want to affirm to you from this account of Jocabed is her:

3. Strong Faith

We read in Hebrews 11:23: *"By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict."*

Where does one get the courage to make the tough decisions and stand against the tide of wrong that threatens to sweep us away? It is found in faith. It was faith in God that gave Jocabed her courage.

The Hebrew writer defines faith as: *"...the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."*

Jocabed had the conviction that there was more happening in the things that were going on around her than could be seen with the physical eye.

Moms, if you allow your natural vision of things through your physical eyes to dominate your view of what is happening in your home, you will get discouraged. You have to develop 20-20 vision in your eyes of faith! *"...the conviction of things not seen."*

The cornerstone of mothering and motherhood is the development of your own strong faith first. To do that, you have to keep your priorities straight. Motherhood is a full time job. It saps the time and energy of even the youngest, most vigorous women. It is easy to neglect your own spiritual resources in the press of things.

Many of you mothers can identify with that time when you thought you would never get the kids out of diapers (some of you are still there!). Then just about the time you thought you were finished with that stage, along came another little bundle of joy! When you got it all together and finally made it to church, you began to think you would be a permanent resident of the church nursery or cry room.

It is quite easy during that time to lose sight of your faith, not from lack of concern, but just from the crush of responsibility.

But you can maintain strong faith in times like that. I know that because I have seen women do it and I can tell you that Jocabed did it, too. Imagine the crush of obligation she was under! In a day when they didn't have Pampers and Luvs! No washing machines and no prepared baby food or formula.

I'm not suggesting that it was harder or easier for her. Our lives seem to get more and more complicated. I'm just saying that it can be done. Don't lose heart. Take every opportunity to strengthen your faith. Let your children see your faith. Let them know that you are a woman of faith in God.

A teacher in a public school put this question to little James in the mathematics class: "James, suppose your mother made an apple pie, and there were ten of you at the table - your mother and father and eight children. How much pie would you get?" "A ninth, ma'am," was the prompt answer. "No, James. Now pay attention," said the teacher. "There are ten of you. Ten, remember. Don't you know your fractions?" "Yes, Ma'am," was the swift reply. "I know my fractions, but I know my mother, too. She'd say that she didn't want any pie."

That boy knew that his mother was a woman who sacrificed for the family, even when it meant going without herself. What I am suggesting is that a mother instill into her children that she is a woman of strong faith, one who puts God first in everything. Let it be known to your children that you are a woman of God, that He and His will are important to you, so that whenever someone

from the outside makes a suggestion about you, your children know that their mother is a woman of faith. They can say with assurance, "I know what my mom would do under that circumstance because she loves God."

Conclusion

Like Mary you all experience times of joy and sorrow. What a joy when Jesus was born. What excitement when the shepherds and later the Wiseman came to worship Jesus. What uneasiness when Simeon prophesied that a sword would pierce her soul. And what heart-wrenching grief as she watched her son dying on the cross. But her season of motherhood didn't end with a terrible scene. She saw Jesus alive after He rose from the grave. And because she trusted Him s her savior, she is now in heaven with Him.

A Mother experiences great joys and intense sorrows. But if she submits her life to God, as Mary did, every season of her motherhood serves His eternal purposes.

Motherhood is a partnership with God.

Mothers, that is why we honor you. You are special to us and vital to our Island. Don't let anyone belittle your important role. Without you, we cannot continue to stand. God bless you, mothers!