

Mother's Day Notes

Mother's Day is an opportunity for us as Christians to thank God for the gift of our **biological, adoptive, or spiritual** mothers and to affirm their value through words, acts of kindness, and prayer.

- Some of you may already know this but I want to share with you a statistic about Mother's Day, it is the day when the least amount of crime is committed in the United States. I think that says a lot about how many moms are out committing crimes every day and today they can't because they tied up having brunch with their kids.

Many of us have stories we can share about the love our mothers showed us:

I have 1 such story to share with you today

After my bike accident it was 2 months before I was able to go back to school. The plastic surgeon gave my mom instructions how to clean my wounds so the scarring would be minimal. Every day my Mom meticulously cleaned my face, the persistent love of my mother is a trait shared by so many mothers in so many situations had to have like the story of the next mother I want to share with you:

I. The persistence of a Mother Mathew 15:21-28

Mat 15:21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."

24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."

26 And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

28 Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

1. Jesus encounters a Canaanite (Syrophenician) woman who begs Him to cure her daughter.

- Jesus initially refuses her request by saying, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs". Taken out of context, this poorly translated verse can easily be mistaken for Jesus insulting this mother. But that is not His character so there must be more.
 - In the story, Jesus is creating a metaphor meant to explain the priorities of His ministry.
- Jews in Jesus' day sometimes referred to Gentiles as "dogs." In Greek, this word is *kuon*, meaning "wild cur" (**Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:21; Philippians 3:2**).
 - Non-Jews were considered so unspiritual that even being in their presence could make a person ceremonially unclean.

2. Jesus explained in verse 24 **at that time**, His duty was to the people of Israel, not to the Gentiles.

- Changing His mission and giving His attention to the gentiles instead of Israel, would be like a father taking food from his children in order to throw it to their pets (**Matthews 15:26**).
 - The exact word Jesus used here, in Greek, was *kunarion*, meaning "small dog" or "pet dog." This is a completely different word from the term *kuon*, used to refer to unspiritual people or to an "unclean" animal.

- We are told in **James 1:6-7** to make our requests in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.
 - This mother shows us the importance of asking in faith without doubting
 - It was this mother's **humble persistence** and **bold trust** in Jesus' power and mercy that moved the Lord to answer her prayer.

II. Mothers have a unique and crucial role in the lives of their children.

- Motherhood is hard, it can be a chore with many unpleasant tasks. A mother's role changes all the time starting when a mother bears a child during pregnancy, typically for 9 months.
 - then feeds and cares for a child during infancy,
 - I watched Lisa's role change in the lives of our children, during adolescents, the teen years, as young adults, and even as adults with children of their own.
- The role of motherhood changes and develops as needed, but the love, care, nurture, and encouragement a mother gives really never ends it seems to get stronger.

The next mother I want to share with you was not wanting to lose her children due to a bad financial situation. This mother's faith was seen through her obedience

2 Kings 4:1-7 A certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the Lord. And the creditor is coming to take my two sons to be his slaves."

1. This is an account of a widower whose husband, was the son of one of the prophets who had served under Elisha, before passing away, leaving her with no money.
 - Mosaic law prohibited her from declaring bankruptcy, leaving her with no option but to offer her sons into slavery as payment for debt.

2 So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

2. Though she sought wisdom from God through the prophet Elisha, her expectation for God's provision was at first limited. In verse 2 when Elisha asks: "What shall I do for you? Tell me; what have you in the house? she responds, "nothing . . . except a jar of oil."
 - *They have no wine* **John 2:3**
 - *We only have five loaves of bread and two fish.* **Matthew 14:13-21**
 - Sound familiar?

3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few. **4** And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels and set aside the full ones."

3. But as we all know a "jar of oil" is more than enough for God to work with.
 - This woman found the answer to her need in her own home. Elisha's question is a good one not only for this mother but all who trust in God:
 - **What do you already have that God can use?**

5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured *it* out. **6** Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another

vessel.” And he said to her, “*There is not another vessel.*” So the oil ceased. **7** Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you *and* your sons live on the rest.”

4. The widow did what Elisha told her to do, it is through her obedience, that God provided for her needs from what she already had.
 - The small amount of oil was more than enough for God to use, it was more the lack of not understanding of what she had and how God could use it.
 - In fact, it was enough to pay off her debt, and she had enough money left to live on.
 - We all have been given gifts by God that He can use for his good purpose even when we are convinced, we have nothing.

In James 4:2–3 we are told You do not have because you do not ask You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

- This mother was driven to seek out what she needed. She showed her faith after asking for help, by doing what was asked of her by the prophet.
- Just like we read in **James 2:14** What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?
- This widow asked for help from God and in faith believing she would receive what she needed, she was blessed with abundance.

III. That same relentless, faith-filled love coupled with prayer is beautifully displayed in the life of another mother I want to introduce to you today — though she is not found in the pages of Scripture she gets an honorable mention for the work she did.

Monica was born in 331 AD, she was a devoted Christian mother whose steady prayers shaped the life of her son. She was married to Patricius, (**Pat**) a pagan Roman official, but she remained steadfast in her faith, praying for her husband’s conversion while using good conduct as evidence of her beliefs to win Pat over. Eventually, **Patricius** became a Christian, a testament to the power of applying God’s word to her life:

1Peter 3:1 we are told, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,

- Several years later Monica gave birth to a son. She raised him in the Christian faith, hoping his education would lead him to God.
- However, he rejected her teachings, indulging in a life of pleasure, philosophy, and eventually embracing the **a dualistic religious system with Christian, Gnostic, and pagan beliefs**. He lived with a mistress, fathered a child, and mocked his mother’s faith.

Monica didn’t give up she lived out **Romans 12:12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.

Monica did not give up. She followed him to Rome and Milan, praying constantly for his salvation.

- The son himself later wrote that she “wept for me, more than mothers weep over the death of their children”
- Her prayers were persistent and she maintained her self-control even when her son mocked her **1Peter 4:7** The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

She had sought out a wise and godly leader whose teachings would influence her son. **Eph 6:18** praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

- Over time, her prayers and efforts seemed to bear fruit. Her son started reading the bible which led him to abandon his former life and embrace Christianity.

At the age of 33 when he was baptized Monica, now 56, was overjoyed.

- She died shortly after but expressed peace in knowing her son had become a Christian.
- She had waited so long for that day, and God had answered her prayers abundantly.

Saint Augustine went on to become one of the great Christian theologians, dedicating his life to God's service.

- He later acknowledged the profound role his mother's perseverance in prayer played in his salvation and ministry.

Monica modeled what it means to fully embrace the word of God and live it.

- It is easy to read **1 Thessalonians 5:17-18** which tells us to **17** pray without ceasing, but it is another thing to do it year after year after year when your child is living a life contrary to your beliefs, is mocking you and shows no real love for you.
 - But Augustine's mom didn't just write him off she Continued steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving as we are told to do in **Colossians 4:2**.

IV. This next mother impacted a world empire and every generation thereafter with her perseverance and willingness to fight for her sons survival.

- This mother gave birth to a son who was beautiful in God's sight according to (**Acts 7:20**) Something about him was unique. Even so, by law her son should have been executed—and going against the king's command would have meant certain death for the mother.
- Yet the Bible is clear: we “must obey God rather than man” (**Acts 5:29**).
 - Even Jesus taught the value of life over law when he healed on the Sabbath: “Which one of you who has a sheep, if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?”
 - Of how much more value is a man than a sheep! So, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (**Matthew 12:11**).
- **Hebrews 11:23** says that “By faith [in God]” **Jochebed** hid her son for three months—to protect him from Pharaoh's decree to kill Hebrew boys (**Exodus 2:1-3**)
- Hiding Moses for three months while neighbors could have reported her
- Jochebed herself was then hired to nurse her own son Moses and was even paid wages for it (**Exodus 2:7-10**).
 - This is God's providential care and love for the mother; restoring mother and son back together
 - The moment of surrender: when placing her son in a basket on the Nile river must have been the hardest thing anyone could imagine, then the joy of being brought back together must have been truly overwhelming.
- The Bible does **not** record what Jochebed taught Moses during the nursing years, (which in ancient times could last 2–4+ years).

- But it's reasonable to believe the early influence from **Jochebed** played a significant role in Moses' strong convictions.
- Moses grew up knowing he was Hebrew and he identified strongly with his people — **Exodus 2:11-12**.
- His parents Amram and Jochebed are listed among the faithful in the “hall of faith” (**Hebrews 11:23**), and their courageous actions show deep trust in God.
- **Jochebed** knew Moses was going to be taken away into Pharaoh's palace to be educated in a pagan environment. We are told once in the palace, Moses was raised as an Egyptian prince (**Acts 7:22**) educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians polytheism, royal education steeped in Egyptian religion and worldview.
- The Faithfulness of Jochebed a mother nursing her child, trusting God with his future, for a few short years is a model for parents today. She knew her time was short, so she diligently taught Moses as **Proverbs 31:27** says She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.
- In the same way, as parents we have a relatively short window of time, about **18 years**, to intentionally instill Christian beliefs and shape our child's worldview. After that, outside influences like schools, peers, and culture become much stronger and often pull in the opposite direction.
- It is up to us to use the years the Lord has given us to ground our children in our faith, as Jochebed did.
 - Understanding the time we have with our children under our direct influence is limited, we have to intentionally and diligently apply the wisdom of **Proverbs 22:6** and Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Our faith and willingness to surrender to the Lord for His will not ours is really the strength of this next mother who painfully and willingly waited on God's timing, and His provision.

V. Hannah, Mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 1)

1. In **1 Samuel 1**, we meet Hannah, a woman of deep faith who teaches us the importance of persistent prayer.
 - Despite her initial despair over being childless, Hannah continually poured out her heart to God.
 - prayer is not just a one-time event but a continuous conversation with our Creator.
 - Hannah made a vow to God, promising to dedicate her son to the Lord's service if He granted her a child.
 - When God answered her prayer, she faithfully fulfilled her promise.
 - The importance of keeping our commitments to God, shows the seriousness of our belief in God and what we are willing to sacrifice.
 - By giving her son to God's service, Hannah showed that true worship includes letting go of what is most precious to us.
 - This act of sacrifice reflects a heart fully devoted to God's purposes
 - True worship often involves sacrifice, this what we learn from Hannah is a powerful reminder that our relationship with God should be marked by a willingness to sacrifice for His purposes.
 - Hannah approached God with a humble spirit, acknowledging her need for His help. This humility is essential for receiving His blessings

- Hannah's dedication of Samuel to the Lord set the stage for his future as a great prophet.
 - Her faithfulness in raising him in the ways of the Lord had a profound impact on his life and ministry.
 - We can see the importance of godly parenting and the influence a mother can have on future generations.
 - Our personal devotion has lasting spiritual impact
- Eli, the priest, initially misunderstood her, but once he realized her sincerity, he blessed her. This is the importance of supporting and encouraging one another in our faith, as we are told in **Hebrews 10:25** not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - We need to live out our faith boldly, knowing that our actions and testimony can inspire others to seek God. As we see a faithful witness can have a lasting impact.
- Hannah teaches us to pray with honesty, trust God's timing, honor our promises, and live with sacrificial devotion. It's a model of how faith, humility, and surrender can lead to God's blessing and lasting spiritual fruit.

We see The Canaanite woman,

- the widow with the oil,
- Monica,
- Jochebed,
- and Hannah

All had a love that refused to quit. All of them were humble, yet bold, practical, deeply spiritual, persistent in prayer and faithful in actions.

Whether facing demons, debt, wayward children, genocide, or barrenness, they trusted God with their children and saw Him move.

If you're a mother today, know that your seemingly small, daily acts of love and faithfulness matter more than you can see. And if you had (or have) such a mother—give thanks. That persistent, prayerful, sacrificial love is one of the closest earthly pictures we have of the heart of God.

I strongly believe that we should bless those who have blessed us—and that is why we celebrate Mother's Day.

If you have more than 1 mother in your life, you have a lot to celebrate. The mothers in our lives can be a grandmother, stepmother, our bio-logical mother or if you're one of the fortunate people, like I am, you have a great mother-in-law, take the time to celebrate the mothers in your life