

# Mother's Day

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Joel Greenwood

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Mother's Day is always a strange day for the church. This is now my 19th Mother's Day here at fairview, which is crazy to think I've been here that long. But Mother's Day is the third largest attended service throughout the year. The first are obviously Christmas and Easter. And on Christmas and Easter, people come because they want to hear a message about Jesus birth or about his death and resurrection. It's a celebration time.

And so people come excited, but on Mother's Day, sometimes there's people that come here that don't want to hear a message about mothers. Now, that can be for various reasons. I won't ask you to raise your hands, but some of you are only here today because your mom asked you to come and it was Mother's Day. So you had to say yes, right? There's other people who on Mother's Day don't want to hear a message about mothers because for them, this is a difficult day.

It's a day where they're going to experience loss in their hearts again and so for some, maybe even here today are watching online or listening on the radio. Maybe you just lost your mom recently. And this is your first Mother's Day without your mom. And so that just, it's just a reminder to you. It brings back up that heartache and that pain. And so I understand the hurt that can exist. For others of you, you maybe don't want to come on Mother's Day because you know it's going to be a message about moms and about how great they are.

But in your heart and in your life, you were raised and maybe a dysfunctional home or a dysfunctional family where maybe your mom was even verbally abusive. And so you think to yourself, the last thing that I want to do is hear a message about how great mothers are when I have all of this pain in my heart and in my life from how my mom was. For some of you, Mother's Day is a difficult day because you've lost a child.

And it's a reminder to you. Again, of the pain of going through losing a child and understanding that that's not how it's supposed to work. That's not how life is supposed to happen. And so you carry this burden inside of you. And so Mother's Day can be difficult for that reason as well. Or maybe you're like my wife and I who for many years would come to church on Mother's Day and it was just a reminder of the struggle with infertility or the inability to become pregnant.

Maybe for some you're here and you wanted to marry and you wanted to have children and have a family, but for whatever reason, God hasn't allowed that to happen in your life. And so you come and again, it's just another day of potentially being hurt. So I want to say something special at the beginning of the message.

For those of you who maybe didn't want to come today for any one of those reasons or maybe even one that I didn't list or maybe you're watching online or listening on the radio, I want to thank you for overcoming that fear, maybe that anxiety, that loss and pushing through today, maybe because your mom wanted you to come or because you felt that fellowshiping with other believers was more important than maybe that pain that you were going to feel.

I want to just ask for God's blessing upon you today. I pray that you would be blessed for your faithfulness. I also pray for healing and for hope and for peace for you. I want you to know that if for any reason during the message today, you have to walk out or leave or turn it off or whatever else that you will not be judged because of that. It's okay. If it just gets a little too much for you emotionally, I fully understand.

And for the rest of us, my prayer is that you would be gentle with all of the women that you encounter today because you don't know their story or what's going on in their life. And so for some, this may be a hard day. And so I encourage you as I will do my best to walk around with mercy and with grace, to all of the women that you come in contact with. Now, today, we're going to be looking at scripture.

We're going to be looking at what the Bible has to say about mothers and about motherhood and aren't you glad for those of you that have read scripture that the moms and the Bible also had struggles and doubts and fears that when we look at scripture, we are able to recognize we're not alone in our mistakes or in the moments that we regret that we have not done everything perfectly. You and I are going to find as if we didn't already know this, but being a mom isn't for the faint of heart.

It's a difficult job. It is a hard task. And the honesty of the struggle for the moms in scripture is just another reason why I love to point people to Jesus and to the Bible because these are real and authentic stories. These are real individuals that had ups and downs and twists and turns in life that they did not expect to happen. It isn't a sugar coated, beautiful story of everything working out.

It's not watered down. It isn't the Facebook version with all just the good pictures of their lives. It also shows the difficulty, and so when we are reading through this, I encourage the mothers out there to recognize that you are not alone. There are stories and scripture about sacrificial mothers and forgotten mothers. There are stories of mothers who gave everything.

Again, the purpose of this of going through scripture today for the mothers is for you to recognize that you are normal. And that no one is perfect. We all make mistakes. We all have things that we regret, but that you would recognize that God has specifically designed you to be the mother to your child, whether they're two years old or 52 years old.

Now, before we begin to look at some of these stories, I just want to take a moment and ask for God's blessing upon our time here as we do look at scripture, as well as to pray for healing and for peace for those that may be going through just a difficult season right now as we celebrate Mother's Day. So let's just take a moment to pray. Heavenly Father, we gather before you and I thank you for the time of praise and worship that we were able to have.

As we sing these songs, thanking you for our Salvation, thanking you for the life that you have given us through Jesus Christ. And father, as we gather today, and celebrate Mother's Day. We do thank you for our mothers and for the sacrifices that they have made for us and for the ways that they have loved us and provided for us.

I thank you for the beautiful ways that you have created them that father some of your characteristics are best shown through a mother's heart in a mother's love. Father, I also pray for those that are here today that it's a difficult day. It's a hard day. I pray for a piece that surpasses understanding that can only come from you. That they would lay at your feet, lay in your lap, and allow you to love them in this difficult moment.

That they would feel your comfort. We pray all this in Jesus name, amen. Now, naturally, as we talk about mothers in the Bible, we're going to start with the first mother eve. The very first mother who would be the example for all mothers to come, she would be the first human being to experience the joy of carrying a child in her womb.

Now, as I think about this time in scripture, as I go back to genesis, I would be willing to guess that both Adam and Eve were pretty scared as their first child Kane was entering the world. We only get a very short one sentence summary of this moment of what Adam and Eve would have been feeling as they are gifts. She is giving birth to their first child, the first time that this has ever happened in history.

And yet we get this one line in genesis chapter four one where we read Adam made love to his wife, eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain, and she said, with the help of the lord, I have brought forth a man. Can I just go out on a limb here and say that she probably said a lot more than just that one sentence? As she was giving birth, right?

As I think about this and I try to put myself in the scripture and in the situation, think of all of the competing emotions that they both would have had during the birth of Cain. The thrilling excitement and the joy of bringing to life somebody that comes from you, along with the emotions of being terrified and being nervous of what this is going to look like and what this means.

Imagine the questions that Adam would have had as he's delivering this first human being from the womb of his wife. And what is he supposed to do? Think about the questions they had after Kane was born. How are we supposed to take care of him? Think about eve asking the question, how long does it take me to recover from this process? She couldn't call the doctors. She didn't have any books to read. Imagine just wondering what that was going to look like.

How about the question of when is Kane going to be able to walk on his own? When is he going to be able to eat on his own? When is he going to talk? You see, they didn't have all these books with all of the markers of when they're supposed to be accomplishing certain things. And all of the confusion and wondering whether they're doing things the correct way or not the correct way. They were the first ones to experience all of that. So eve would be the first of all mothers, what a joy to have.

She would set the standard, but I also want you to know that she would be the first to experience the loss of a child. The first to bring a child into this world and the first to experience the loss. Imagine how eve felt when she has able, their second son. And they begin fighting with each other and there's jealousy and their sibling rivalry and they don't know if that's normal or not normal. They don't know how they're supposed to fix it or what they're supposed to do.

Can you imagine the emotion that is going through them when Kane kills his brother Abel? If you have ever felt like a failure as a mother, just remember it's hard. Being a mom is not for the faint of heart. All of you have experienced times in your life where your children have made decisions that hurt you deeply.

Maybe they've said something, maybe they've not said something. Maybe your children haven't even talked to you in a while because there's some kind of fight that's going on. Maybe your children have made decisions even in their adult life that you don't approve of because you know that it's not what's best for them and it's brought pain in their lives. And so your children continue to make these decisions. I want you to know that you are not alone.

You don't get to control the decisions that your children make. You see, there's this time when they're infants and when they're toddlers that a mother will put that protective bubble around their child and want what is best for them and have dreams of what their life is going to look like. And for that brief moment in time, they get to control what happens with their child. But as they grow, they begin to make their own decisions. I want you to know that you are in good company today.

God's children also make decisions that deeply hurt him. We all do. And so if you want somebody who understands your pain, you're hurt, what is it like when your child makes a decision that causes you pain, you can bring it to God, knowing that he understands completely. He knows what it's like to have a child. Make a decision that causes pain and hurt. He will understand. So now we move on to Sarah.

Sarah is a different story. She has a different struggle that she is experiencing, that she is going through. She has a desire to be a mother. It's what she has longed for. It's what would give her value and purpose in life. But for whatever reason, Sarah was unable to conceive. She was unable to be a mom, though she wanted that more than anything. She would go years scripture tells us she would go decades, wondering if she would ever experience what it was like to be a mother.

And so if you are here, wondering if you're the only woman that has ever felt that, whether it's because you're not married or you were unable to have children on your own, know that there are many other women that experience that. Sarah actually gets so desperate in her desire to feel what it's like to have a family to have a child that she decides to give her maid servant an Egyptian to her husband, Abraham, to have a child with. By the way, if you are wondering, that's not a good idea. All right?

I don't recommend that. Years later, we read in genesis chapter 18 where these two angels are going to visit Abraham on their way through. And one of them said to Abraham, I will surely return to you about this time next year and Sarah, your wife will have a son for those of you that know the story, Sarah's about 89 years old when this angel passes through. And so she is in the tent next door listening to this conversation and she laughs.

But God decides to bless her. And so Sarah, at the age of 90, will give birth to her first child. Again, I will tell you, not a good idea. All right? I don't recommend that. Scripture tells us that Sarah was blessed with the ability to live long enough to see her son's 36th birthday. She lived to be a 126.

And I wish that I could tell you that after Sarah gave birth to Isaac, that everything was great and everything went well between her son and her maid servant sons Ishmael, but those of you that have read the scriptures, you know that there was also sibling rivalry. They decided to fight with each other and not get along in life was difficult for Sarah even after giving birth to Isaac. Why? Because being a mom isn't for the faint of heart. So the next generation grows into adulthood and once more, we witness a mother's broken heart.

This time, the mom's name is Leah. Leah is the older sister to Rachel. And they both marry a man named Jacob. And that wouldn't have been a problem except for it was the same Jacob. Both Rachel and Leah Mary, this man, and we know from the stories that Jacob loves Rachel more than Leah. He didn't even want to marry Leah. He was fooled into doing so. And so his relationship between him and Rachel was a lot better than Leah.

And so she is feeling this, I feel like I'm loved. She's feeling uncared for. And so in genesis 29, 31 through 32, we read that when the lord saw that Leo was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel, her sister remained childless. So Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and she named him Rubin for she said it is because the lord has seen my misery.

Surely my husband will love me now. She thought, okay, if I can just give him children, if I can give him sons especially, he is going to now love me because I have provided in this way for him. And I know that my sister Rachel can not. And so she has this child and it doesn't fix the problem. And so this is another lesson for another message on a whole another time. But if you're having issues with your spouse, having children doesn't make it easier. It's one of the things that we talk about in premarital counseling when I perform ceremonies for individuals, adding a child to the mix doesn't make it easier.

It often makes it more difficult and so Leah has a child but this child is just born into a dysfunctional family where there's a lot of weird things going on. One of the things that Leah struggles with that I think all women and men struggle with is this issue of comparing. And so Leah is comparing her relationship with Jacob to Rachel's relationship with Jacob. And of course it's different. And that still happens today.

I can't tell you how often I have women and men in my office that are struggling because they're scrolling through social media and they're looking at all of the great things that other mothers and dads and people are doing and they think to themselves, I'm not even close to as good as that person. And I often will tell them what you see on Facebook is not the reality. They don't post all of the bad pictures, right? They don't post all of the struggles. And so moms will feel inferior because this mom put on this huge birthday party for their child and did this huge ornate thing and they think, well, I don't do anything like that.

You see, I often will tell people comparison is not a good thing to do because there's only two results when you compare. You're either gonna feel better about yourselves because you compare yourself to a complete failure, right? You think, oh, I'm doing better than so and so. Or you're gonna feel awful about yourself because you compare yourself to somebody that is way up here based on what you know and you just feel like I can't ever do that. You see, being a mother isn't for the faint of heart.

Of course, we could talk about joke a bed and we could talk about Naomi and many others. It's amazing when you look at scripture. How much God is revealed to us about motherhood and the importance of moms and the story of what God is writing in our lives? These women took on the hard task of motherhood, but I want to spend our closing time talking about Mary. The mother of Jesus. I don't believe that I will ever be able to fully wrap my mind around what Mary went through.

Can you imagine being a teenage girl, an angel meets you, and tells you that you are going to carry God in the flesh? That you are going to give birth to the son of God, to Jesus, the messiah, your savior, and so she is given this task, this responsibility to raise the savior of the world. Talk about not wanting to make a mistake, right?

If you were nervous being a parent for the first time like I was and not wanting to mess things up, think about the responsibility that you would have to raise the messiah. Talk about not wanting to be a helicopter parent over the lord, right? You're trying to figure out how much do I control him? How much do I not control him? Do I need to protect him or can he protect himself? All of these questions that are going through your mind. And you're thinking the last thing I want to do is lose the savior. Well, they did that. Remember, they lost him in Jerusalem.

What a blessing it would have been, though, to have Jesus as your son. Imagine the infant, the toddler, growing into a child and a teenager, growing into a young man. Watching him grow and develop and learning from him, imagine how beautiful that would have been, now I wouldn't have won have been, I wouldn't want to have been the brother of Jesus.

That would have been difficult, right? But to have him as a son, I think about how amazing and beautiful that would have been. But then as you continue to read the story, I also imagine the heartbreak that you would have felt. As you

watched your son go through what Jesus went through, you see, Mary had to experience something different at the cross than any of us could ever understand or experience.

We, when we read the story of Jesus being crucified for our sins, we understand the pain and the hurt of watching what he went through because of me, but now imagine that you're not just watching your savior go through that, but you're watching your child go through that. He was both to her. And we know that she was there, John tells us that near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene, don't you wish that they would have had different names than just Mary for all of them?

It gets confusing. Must have been a popular name. Number one, female baby name in one AD, Mary. No. But just think about how difficult that would have been as a mother to watch your son go through that. To go through the pain and know there's nothing you can do to stop it or take it away. These competing emotions once again that she had. You see, being a mother isn't for the faint of heart.

I want you to take some time today. I want you to thank your mom. If your mom is still alive, I want you to make the phone call. I want you to go visit. I want you to do whatever you can do based on where you live and where your mother lives. And I just want you to thank her. Because whether you realize it or not, you gave your mom a headache a few days, right? You might have you might think you were the perfect child and that everything was great. But there were decisions that you made that were difficult for your mom to watch.

There was times that you scared her when you did certain things. Her job wasn't easy and still isn't easy. Take some time to let her know you appreciate her. Maybe you're the person who's mother didn't do things perfectly. And so I just encourage you to offer grace and mercy to your mom. I am sure she probably did the best she could. Tell her you love her. Her job wasn't easy.

For those of you that are here today, as mothers and you're constantly questioning whether you're doing a good enough job with your kids, can I just encourage you to have peace knowing that you aren't going to get everything right? And it's okay. It's okay. You're not alone. Look at the mothers and scripture. They had struggles. They had difficulties. They didn't always know the right answer. You're in good company.

And God loves you and created you for a specific purpose. For a specific reason. If you're raising children now and your child makes a bad decision or decides to throw a temper tantrum or anything else, I just want you to know that nobody is judging you here. And if they are, it's because they don't have kids yet. I can't tell you how many times I have the older generation come up to me and just share with me how much they love watching parents with their children.

And they love, you know, watching them go through certain things. And they also love laughing at them because they know what they're going through. Right? And so I just want to encourage you. You're doing a good job. You're doing a good job. And we appreciate you. Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we just take time to thank you for our mothers. We want to make sure that we let them know that we appreciate them.

It is a job that is not for the faint of heart. There are many difficult days and difficult seasons. And God, you promise that you will walk with us through those. For those that are here today and our experiencing loss or have experienced pain around this whole issue of motherhood, you know all the details. Again, I pray that you would provide peace and comfort as only you can.

For the mothers that are struggling today as they're watching their children and adult children make decisions that cause them pain, I pray that you also would give them a piece. Help the mothers here to know that they are loved. They don't often get thanked for everything they do. It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen.