

A Biblical Response to Mother's Day

Romans 12:15

May 12, 2024 am

HDBC

This morning I am going to preach an unconventional Mother's Day sermon, at least for me. I don't often determine what I'm going to preach based on the calendar. Every year I preach a Christmas series in December. More times than not I will be very strategic with what I preach at Easter. But when it comes to many of the other holidays, I'm not generally prone to preach with those in mind. That is true of Mother's Day. I've only preached 2-3 MD sermons in last 10 years.

Full disclosure. I preached a version of this sermon four years ago. But it was during the Covid shutdown and I was looking into a cell phone camera, rather than your eyes. So, I want to come back to it today.

We are tempted to look at most of our national holidays through a very narrow lens. It means this one thing to everyone. That is a very simplistic perspective and fails to account for the various impacts that holidays have on people.

Independence Day. From a simplistic perspective we would think that every American would rally around this day in celebration of the freedoms in our nation. But not everyone does. There are those who hear the opening words of the Declaration of Independence and appreciate the meaning of the words, but also know that in their own family history are those who never experienced anything close to what those words mean. Because their personal experience and history are not the same as others, they may not view this day in the same way.

Valentine's Day. Cool for those who are married and for those who have romantic relationships. But for those who long for and yet do not have a romantic relationship this celebration rings hollow.

Then there is Mother's Day. From a simplistic perspective it's all about celebrating motherhood. Moms are bragged on and honored. But that is far too simplistic. Not everyone views Mother's Day through the same lens. For the female who longed to be a mother and it never happened, it can be a difficult day. For the mom who has experience the death of a child, this day can be gut-wrenching. And there are all kinds of other situations that can temper the celebratory nature of this day. If we approach this day from a single lens, we fail to love and care for many among us for whom this day is difficult.

Romans 12:15 instructs us to *Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep*. This Mother's Day, as with all Mother's Days, there are those among us who rejoice and those among us who weep. Today, I want to call us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. Let's rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.

1. Rejoice with those who rejoice

Mom's we rejoice with you and for you today. You deserve a day of honor and respect. You may have most difficult job in all the world. Expected to be *fashion queen, taxi, short order cook, drill sergeant, plumber, math tutor, interior decorator, lawn engineer, doctor, counselor, financial wizard* all at the same time. You can't list the job description for a mom on a single page, even with single-spaced lines, even with 8 pt. Times New Roman font. Impossible!

Someone said *compromise is the art of dividing the cake so that every child believes he or she got the biggest piece*. That's mom.



Kathy Pasley posted a version of this on FB on Monday.

Mom. Noun. One who sacrifices her sleep, sanity, social life, spending money and peeing alone. (see also, superwoman).

Moms, stay at it. Never give up. You are not just passing time, but are shaping lives. Not just shaping lives, but shaping next generation. May feel that you are not very successful because you never see name in lights, never get recognition. Be faithful in spite of the obstacles. Stay at the task and see it through. Your job, your role is important.

Thank you for . . .

The sacrifices you make for us.

The unconditional love you give to us.

The dedication you have to us.

The perspective and wisdom you bring to us.

I want to honor my mother. At 89 years of age she continues to serve Jesus, serve others, and to influence her family.

I want to honor my wife, the mother of our three daughters. She remains a steady influence in their lives and continues to sacrifice daily for them.

I want to honor my three daughters, who are raising my grandchildren to know Jesus, love God, respect others and be great individuals.

I want to honor the moms of HDBC. You are loved today and every day. Thank you for what you are doing in your families and in your church.

To all the sons and daughters (of every age), honor your moms . . . not just today but every day. Obey her when you are young. Respect her during your teen years. Learn from her as a young adult. Care for her in her later years.

She is not perfect, but she has done more for you than you will ever know in this lifetime. She has made hidden sacrifices throughout your life that have benefited you, while costing her greatly.

If she is no longer with you, honor her life and memory. Thank God for her. Extend her legacy by being a godly man or woman. Write about her, talk about her, especially to the generations behind you.

2. Weep with those who weep

As I shared, this day is a day of sadness for some in our fellowship. For some this day brings sadness rather than joy. So, we weep with . . .

1) Those missing the moms they once knew

I'm speaking of those who no longer have their moms in their lives because of death. Many of you are in that situation. In the natural course of things, most of us will bury our moms. Not all, but most. When that happens there will be a terrible loss. Someone whom you had known and relied upon your entire life will no longer be there.

Though this is expected, it still hurts. Mother's Day for many will be a day of remember fondly a wonderful mom, mixed with the sadness that you can not give her a call, ask her opinion or just tell her you love her.

2) Those missing the moms they never knew

I'm speaking here of those who never knew their moms. Some were raised without a mom. Some in children's homes or orphanages and others in foster homes. Some who have been raised by wonderful adoptive parents, but with a nagging inside, a longing to know the birth mother, the one with whom you are genetically connected.

I would also include in this category those with moms who were not loving, not supportive, not helpful. On Mother's Day we are tempted to assume that all moms are wonderful. But that is not reality. There are some children who were and are abused, neglected and mistreated by mom. For them, this day is a day to grieve what they never had.

3) **Those missing children whom they love**

This has to be one of the most heart-wrenching things any parent can go through. To have the joy of being a mom or dad for a season, assuming that you would have that role with that child for the rest of your natural life. Then to have that suddenly taken from you is unimaginable to those of us who have not lived it.

But some of you have. You've buried the bodies of your babies, your children, your teenagers and your adult children. You have felt the **suffocating grief** that comes in waves, often with little or no warning. You have experienced the pain of watching other people's children going through the stages of life that your child should be going through. You have clenched your jaw, trying to be gracious to well-meaning friends who, in trying to say something helpful, do just the opposite. Those of us who have not walked your road cannot identify, **but we can grieve with you, and we try to do so.**

4) **Those missing children they never knew**

Mother's Day can be so hard for those who for various reasons never saw their dreams of children come reality. At least five reasons.

a. **Infertility**

Infertility affects about twelve percent of the American population. Many in our church family. Some that I know about and others who have never shared it with me. Some are young and still hopeful. Others have long passed the time of bearing children, but still carry the pain and hurt even years and decades later.

Most young couples enter this stage of their lives with a dream of having children. Not all, but most. For those who face infertility the dream seems to die one excruciating disappointment at a time. Life is a roller coaster of ups and downs. **Many go through this silently,** unsure how others will react. **This can challenge faith and marriage.**

Others still feel the pain of that season long ago. I want to say . . .
You are loved! We can't fully know your pain or always know what to say, but please know that you are loved!

b. Miscarriage

15-20 percent of pregnancies end in miscarriage. Jan & I experienced that twice. We believe there are two very real human beings who went to heaven from the womb before every taking their first breath in this life. We never held them. Never saw their faces. Never even knew the gender. For those who have never experienced this, there might be a temptation to think that this is not much of a loss. They would be wrong. There is a loss. It does not matter how many other children you might have, the loss of that one is still very real.

c. Abortion

There are women who grieve the child or children they never knew because at an earlier time in life they chose to end pregnancy through abortion. Even without a name given by you, that was a real person created in the image of God, who is known and named by God. I'm not here to add guilt, but to offer comfort. You cannot undo what was done. But God can offer grace and forgiveness. Hopefully for any who are hearing my voice you have already receive those blessings from God. But there is still a missing voice, a missing face, a missing history of the one whom you never knew. And that causes grief.

d. Adoption

There are many moms who chose to give their children to another family through adoption. Regardless of the reasons, there is a person missing in her life. A little boy or girl that she never knew or knew only briefly. For some, there is a longing to know that person. As with many who chose abortion, it is likely that most in our church do not even know about this. You've chosen to keep this to yourself all these years. That is absolutely ok. But I want you to know that we are your family and we will not judge, we will not condemn, we will not even ask why? We will simply affirm your grief and attempt to grieve with you. We are open to hearing, loving and grieving with you.

e. Singleness

There are some among us who grieve the children they have never

known because they have chosen to remain faithful to God in midst of their singleness. They have not married and have refused to bow to the pressure of the secular culture around them to bypass marriage, which is God's best plan for bringing children into the world. Not all adult single women long to have children. Not all long to be married. But some do . . . and they grieve this part of the life they dreamed of as a child that has not been realized.

I want to dispel some myths about marriage that the church may have inadvertently helped support and reinforce.

Marriage is not the ultimate goal for women or men. Serving Christ is. Marriage is not a necessary prerequisite for a fulfilling life.

Marriage is not necessary to serve Christ.

So, let's stop assuming that every single adult needs/wants a spouse.

Some may desire this and if so we can pray with them to that end. But we must also recognize that a person's value is not increased one bit through marriage. We have done a great disservice to single adults to assume that marriage is the pinnacle of life and that without it there must be something missing.

5) Those caring for children with physical or mental challenges

There are moms (and dads) who are doing an outstanding job of loving, raising, caring for children with disabilities, some severe. There are moms who grieve the fact that their princess will not experience some of the things she did. They struggle to keep in check feelings of loss for their child, loss of the life experiences that most enjoy.

Moms, let me reassure you that there will come a time when all that is not perfect will be made perfect. I have a sister who is severely mentally challenged. She is going to be made whole one day and all the things that she has missed in this life, things that my mom has grieved over, will fade into insignificance.

So, to those who on this Mother's Day are weeping because they are . . .

Missing the moms you knew; we grieve with you.

Missing the moms you never knew; we grieve with you.

Missing the children you knew; we grieve with you.
Missing the children you never knew; we grieve with you.
Caring for children with challenges, we grieve with you.

Most importantly, God sees. He knows. He cares. He loves.

So, on this Mother's Day, if you have reason to rejoice, like most of us will, do it! Don't hold back. Be thankful. Be gracious. Be joyful.

If, on this Mother's Day, you have reason to weep, then weep with the assurance that you are loved, your grief is not forgotten, and to best of our ability we grieve with you.

God has provided the ultimate answer to all the chaos, heartache and suffering of this life. He sent His Son to die on a cross for our sins that we might one day escape the penalty for our sins and live with Him in Heaven forever. Trust Him.