

Sermon - May 13, 2018 - Easter 7

## Honor your Mother!

Exodus 20:12 and Phil. 2:5 NIV



Dear Friends in Christ,

There is the story of a mother who put her son to bed on the eve of his fifth birthday. Over the years, she kept teaching him how to count, and give thanks to God for his birthdays. But that night she asked “John, this is the last night of your fourth year. Do you understand that?” John was ready to show the numbers with his hands. For a full year, he had shown people four fingers for his four years, and now he was ready to add a thumb. Seeing his four fingers, his mother nodded, and said: “When you go to sleep tonight, you’ll still be 4-years-old. But do you know how old you’ll be in the morning, when you wake up?” John nodded enthusiastically, added his thumb to his four little fingers and said, “Tomorrow, I’ll be a handful!”

Today, on this Mother’s day we honor all mothers who have had their hands full! Honor our mothers is what God instructs us do in the fourth commandment. Actually the actually, what God commands is to honor our parents and grandparents, and even those who assume in some ways the parental figure of some.

And that fourth commandment we find in the book of Exodus chapter 20, “Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” (Ex. 20:12) is the commandment. To which the apostle Paul later in the New Testament says: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.<sup>2</sup> “Honour your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),<sup>3</sup> “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” (Eph. 6:1-3)

While the world wants to do the same, to honor and celebrate mother’s day, we have the best of everything as we hear from God’s word. And God’s word commands us to honor our parents.

So on the light of the fourth commandment, we pray for a blessed mother’s day to all mothers here gathered and the absent ones too. Although, it is not just today that we are to honor them but every day, after all the vocation of a mother doesn’t happen

just on mother's day but always, even when even mothers don't live with their children anymore, they still think, serve and pray for their children and their families. Yes even after all their children are grown up, they still have their hands full!

And, do you know that what they do for you mirror something special? Even if its but a glimpse, they reflect what God does for us through his Son Jesus Christ.

All the selfless care they give their children! All those nights that mothers stay up feeding babies, or the sleepless night a mother endures because she is thinking in that son or daughter who is away. Or, all the sleepless nights a mother has to endure because one of her children is going through tough time! Reflect God's care for us.

Mothers even endure the troubles we children give our mothers, from toddlers messing up the house, to teenagers who think they know better and try to correct them disrespectfully, and there are those who are even ashamed of their mothers.

Once upon a time, there was a teenage girl who didn't want to be seen in public with her mother, because her mother's arms were terribly disfigured. One day when her mother took her shopping and reached out her hand, a clerk looked horrified. Later, crying, the girl told her how embarrassed she was. Understandably hurt, the mother waited an hour before going to her daughter's room to tell her, for the first time, what happened. "When you were a baby, I woke up to a burning house. Your room was engulfed in flames. I could have gotten out the front door, but I decided I'd rather die with you than leave you to die alone. I ran through the fire and wrapped my arms around you. Then I went back through the flames, my arms on fire. When I got outside on the lawn, the pain was agonizing but when I looked at you, all I could do was to rejoice that the flames hadn't touched you." Stunned, the girl looked at her mother through new eyes. Weeping in shame and gratitude, she kissed her mother's marred hands and arms." (adapted from: Billy Ricks, *Suffering*, 2/27/2011)

All what mother's do for their children! That's why God commands to honor our mothers.

But there is a higher honor Mothers need to receive. The honor of not only mothering their children with the utmost care, but having a greater priority that not only will teach good values to their next generations but crucially important the spiritual life that brings salvation and life eternal.

You can be an extraordinary mother in the world, one of a kind, but unless there fruits that extend beyond this life, into eternity, then that extraordinary best will die as anything else. And that extraordinary lies in the fact of being used by God to plant spiritual seeds that the Holy Spirit uses to bring her children to Christ.

A mother who doesn't conform to the ways of this world, that doesn't receive "the testimony of men," but relies on the "testimony of God" that "is greater" as today's epistle reading explains.

"For this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. <sup>10</sup> Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself....<sup>11</sup> And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life."

This is good news because in the Son of God we do have and receive the forgiveness of our sins. In Christ we do have access to God, have life eternal, and newness of life that begins to be experienced even here, in hope, in love and in God's strength.

That's one of the challenges yes, but also privilege Christians mothers have to instruct their children in the way of Christ for the forgiveness of sins, but also to grow in the model God intends and wants for his people. Mothers then, need to be influential in the lives of children. You would want to capture the hearts of your children for Christ, you can begin to do that by becoming little Christs to your children, and we become little Christs to each other by doing what the Scriptures teaches: "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 NIV)

To have the attitude of Christ, dear friends begins with the confession of Christ and who he is, that is God made flesh, who became like one of us so he will save us from our sins.

Having the attitude of Christ, a mother would not follow the ways of the world in the way of consumerism and believing all kinds of fake news from false teachers, Internet bloggers, social media users, misguided co-workers and fellow students, or even the news media itself, but will rely on God's words.

God's Word is full of instructions on how to live in such a way where God uses you to enable your children to enjoy the abundant life promised in Christ. For that purpose I would like to offer some insights on the light of God's word.

First, let the humility of Christ flow in and through you. A Christian mother who has been taught of the Lord will raise children in the knowledge and joy of sacrificial living. In the humility of Christ a mother will learn the difference between working to get all she wants in life for selfish pleasure, and of working for the good and welfare of the family—especially for her children's eternal future.

Second a Christian mother will train, equip and care for herself in a way that benefits the family, keeping herself healthy, alert and well equipped for the work God as the Lord calls her to do, and prayerfully seeking God's will in the things that will ensure benefits, spiritual benefits to her children. Her equipping and training will help her to be sensitive to the spiritual needs of their children and she will sacrifice self to support them according her children's needs.

Third, God's Word and commandments will be in her speech as she teaches her children day and night, doing what we are commanded in the Old Testament: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. <sup>6</sup> And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." (Deut. 6:5-9)

As she teaches God's commandments, will help her children not to be polluted by the world view through movies, books, video games, music and friends.

And forth, a Christian mother will devote herself to prayer. Not only will teach her children to pray but herself will be a life of prayer, asking the Lord to take control of her life through and by the power of the Holy Spirit. She will also teach her children of the many gifts of grace the Lord provides and encourages them to receive them faithfully.

A Christian mother will also lead them to see that God gifts us with spiritual gifts that we need to exercise. It may be the gift of helping others, showing compassion,

music, preaching and teaching God's Word, and so on. When children discover their identity in Christ and what He has done in them, for them and what He has called them to do, they overcome the anxiety and the frustration that can come with trying to measure up to everyone's standards, because they themselves will enjoy of the ever-present help of the Holy Spirit.

Remember that a Christian mother's prayer life has a powerful effect on her children, for prayer works!

And lastly a Christian mother will speak to her children frankly but lovingly, to their level without exasperating them through kind clean word. Showing them, in love, those occasions when they are letting the sins of the flesh, the lures of the world and the lies of Satan overcome them. We need to tell and show them frankly what sin is.

And not only a mother is to do it, but both parents, it is our responsibility. Unfortunately not all fathers can do that. Sometimes fathers don't connect as well with our children as mothers do. I have seen that fathers tend to walk away from troubles more often than mothers do. How many fathers I know have walked from their families, abandoning them, of course they still support them financially, but that is not the same. Yet mothers stick with their children, they see them through thick and thin, they will sacrifice their lives for them. Now, it is true that there are some fathers who have actually taken the role being a mother to their children, I certainly admire them, and pray that the Lord will bless their work. It's not easy doing so, is it.

Yet when it comes to the vocation of Motherhood, the Lord calls mothers to be in a higher level, the spiritual level.

Today is Mother's day, may you be honored, and may you receive the highest honor as you guide your children in the ways of Christ, may you set the example of trusting Christ forgiveness. Remembering that in Christ you have been made a new Creature, and in baptism you have been made a Child of God, so you have the assurance that you are not alone, but that the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit is with you, strengthening you, comforting you and upholding you day in and day out.

Dear Mothers and future Mothers, may the Lord bless you greatly, today, and always. Amen.