

A Mother's Day Message

5/12/19 – Pastor Randy

Exodus 2:1-10

About this time, a man and woman from the tribe of Levi got married. The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She saw that he was a special baby and kept him hidden for three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she got a basket made of papyrus reeds and waterproofed it with tar and pitch. She put the baby in the basket and laid it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile River. The baby's sister then stood at a distance, watching to see what would happen to him. Soon Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe in the river, and her attendants walked along the riverbank. When the princess saw the basket among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it for her. When the princess opened it, she saw the baby. The little boy was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This must be one of the Hebrew children," she said.

Then the baby's sister approached the princess. "Should I go and find one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?" she asked.

"Yes, do!" the princess replied. So the girl went and called the baby's mother. "Take this baby and nurse him for me," the princess told the baby's mother. "I will pay you for your help." So the woman took her baby home and nursed him.

Later, when the boy was older, his mother brought him back to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted him as her own son. The princess named him Moses, for she explained, "I lifted him out of the water."

The name of the mother in the story we just read is Jochebed. The baby she gave birth to was Moses. There are three lessons we can learn from Jochebed's actions in this story that apply specifically to moms, but which are also valuable to dads, and anyone who cares about the next generation.

A. Mothers Must Be Intentional and Assertive Protectors of Their Children.

When Jochebed heard that the Egyptians, according to Pharaoh's orders, were taking any Hebrew baby boys that they found and killing them by throwing them into the Nile River, she didn't just resign herself to a position of helplessness and hopelessness. She took action. She hid him for three months.

We don't know why she determined that she could no longer hide him safely

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in the home, but when she realized the home could no longer provide him a safe haven she didn't lose hope. Instead she used her ingenuity to create a maritime crib and she put him in the reeds along the bank of the Nile.

Mother's, you must not give in to the forces - physical, social, and spiritual – that want to destroy your child. You can't be complacent or uninformed about the dangers that exist in today's culture.

Since I was a child our society has implemented a lot of measures to protect the physical well-being of our young people. When I was a kid, if bicycle helmets existed, I never saw one. By the time my boys were riding bikes, wearing a helmet was mandatory. When I was a kid it wasn't unusual for kids to ride in the front seat of the car, even on mom's lap. We would pile in the back of my father's station wagon – no seats, no seatbelts...no problem!

But while we might take greater measures to provide for our physical safety today than we did when I was young, we were much better protected against psychological, emotional, and spiritual dangers than kids are today.

For years, social science research has continually affirmed the critical impact that stable marriages have on the well being of children. Children who are raised by parents with intact marriages are two to three times less likely than their peers raised without married parents to suffer from serious social or psychological pathologies. Unfortunately, we don't seem to be getting the message as the number of children being raised in homes with a married mother and father continues to decline. The church is called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to be a counter-cultural institution, so let's be one!!

Our children are being exposed to pornography and violence through the internet at an alarming rate. We have a ton of research informing us of the destructive social, psychological, and emotional, and relational impact on our children and youth, but the well being of our sons and daughters has taken a back seat to the appetites of selfish adults! Moms and dads, it doesn't matter if no other parents are doing anything to protect their children; you still have to protect yours.

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In September we will be hosting a viewing of a documentary on the adverse social, psychological, and spiritual impact of digital technology.

I believe the challenges that parents face today are even greater than when I was still raising my boys at home only 7-10 years ago. The good news is that God is greater than any enemy that comes against you.

It is true that you can't provide ultimate and absolute protection for your children. You need to do what you can do and trust God to do what only He can do.

B. Mothers Must Make the Most of Their Opportunities to Influence

God orchestrated events so that Jochebed was able to nurse and raise Moses for the first few years of his life. Hebrews 11:24 and 25 tells us that, "...Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin." Jochebed apparently used the time she had with Moses to instill in him a strong sense of his identity as one of God's people as well as a sense of right and wrong.

When children are born to parents in our church, we give the parents a large jar that contains one marble for every week in their child's life until high school graduation. They are directed to keep the jar in a visible place and remove a marble every week as an exercise reminding them of the limited time they have to influence their child before graduation. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Ephesians that we need to redeem the time because the days are evil.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-9 we read God's instructions to his people:

And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Our children are bombarded with so many confusing, false, perverted, corrupt

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messages from the outside world. As a result, parents must be ever so diligent to constantly speak truth into their minds and hearts.

You must spend quantity time in order to gain quality time. Quality time cannot be microwaved. Make use of the discussion resources provided to you by our Calvary Kids Dept. We can resource you, but you need to do!

C. Mothers Must Be Willing to “Let Go and Let God”.

There came a time when Jochebed had to release Moses into God's hands. The job of a parents is to become unnecessary but not unwanted. We don't want our children to *depend* on our presence, but to *desire* our presence and our influence.

Over the years I have counseled parents of young adult – and sometimes not-so-young adult children – who were struggling because their adult children were pulling away from them, even to the point of estrangement. What I often discovered in these situations was that the parent had not properly adjusted the way they related to their child. They were relating to their son/daughter as if it was still their parental responsibility to “CONTROL” their son/daughter's decisions.

The fact that this letting go needs to happen gradually makes it all the more challenging. When our sons and daughters are in their 30's it ought to be quite clear to us that we are not to direct their decisions. Likewise, when they are very young – from birth through much of elementary – it is quite clear that parents need to exercise control over most of the decisions of their children. It's the middle – HS years where it gets tough and great discernment is required to decide how much control to should maintain and how much control you should surrender.

Here is the reality, and I have repeated this principle to parents of older teens and young adults on countless occasions: In order to increase your level of influence you must resist the temptation to control. The more you attempt to control, the less true influence you will have.

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This is difficult for moms to do and consequently, moms, and their teenage and adult children need to understand this struggle.

Moms, you need to be aware so that you can fight against your natural instinct to want to nurture your child and to have your child be dependent upon you. Letting go does not come easy. For those of you who still have only young children, prepare yourself now - letting go will not come easy. True love requires us to let go at the proper time. Trying to hold onto them is often a symptom of parental selfishness rather than love.

Solomon demonstrated great wisdom when two women came before him, each claiming the same child as her own. Solomon said, "I know what we will do, we will cut the baby in half". I know that doesn't sound like words of wisdom, but when he said that, immediately the true mother who was concerned more with the welfare of her baby than with her own desires said, "No, give the other woman the baby, just don't kill him." Immediately Solomon knew who the true mother was and granted her custody.

Here are four things we need to give our parents, but specifically our moms, are on a regular basis.

1. **Affection** – Hug them. Kiss them. Pray for and with them.
2. **Attention** – Ask questions. Show interest.
Just simply spend time with them.
3. **Appreciation** – Write a note. Don't buy a card! Be specific.
4. **Acts of Service** – Do something for them. Surprise them by doing something unexpected.

Mother's Day is a day we designate to honor and encourage our moms for their love for us. It is a day intended to be filled with joy and love, and it is for many people. However, mother's day can also be a difficult day for some people. Those who were not able to conceive and bear children. Those who lost their moms, especially those who lost their moms at a young age. Those who were abandoned by their moms; those who were estranged from their moms; moms who have lovingly sacrificed so much for their children only to have their children rebel against them and reject them.

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Mother's Day can be a tough day for moms whose children have turned their back on God and have made decisions that have brought shame to their moms. It can be tough for moms who feel like they have failed their children; moms who carry the guilt of not caring for their children like they should have; moms who lost custody of their children because of sinful decisions they made; moms who aborted their children and are now living with the pain and shame of that guilt.

I am not sharing this to discourage anyone and to magnify anyone's pain, but to let you know today, that if Mother's Day is a difficult day for you, for any of the reasons I have described or for any other reason, God is here for you today.

If Mother's Day brings you grief, let me remind you that our God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He knows rejection and is here for you!

If Mother's Day brings you shame, you need to know that Jesus went to the cross to bear upon himself, not only the guilt of our sin, but also the shame of our sin. Your guilt is gone and your shame is gone with it!