

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Introduction

Happy Mother's Day to the mothers in attendance here this evening. We have this day as a holiday here in the United States to honor our mothers by setting aside a day specifically for them. While some churches do not preach a Mother's Day message because it is a civil holiday, others do have a Mother's Day message that is completely devoid of scriptural reference. Both of these cases are a sad reality. We should honor our mothers and having a day for them is a good thing. God tells us to honor our mothers in scripture.

Exodus 20:12 (KJV)

¹² Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

It is a special commandment from God, in that, it is the first commandment of the Law with a promise associated with it. You honor your mother, and father, and your days upon the land that the LORD thy God has given you will be long. Now, while this is part of the law given to Moses by God for the Jews, the command still makes sense for us Christians today.

Mother's Day in the United States began officially by an act of Congress on May 9, 1914. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. This was prompted by a woman named Anna M. Jarvis, who at a memorial service for her mother on May 10, 1908, showed her deep love for her mother by giving a carnation, her mother's favorite flower, to each person attending the memorial service. Over the next few years, the idea of honoring mothers continued to grow until Congress created the holiday called Mother's Day.

In honor of Miss Jarvis, it was customary to wear white carnations to honor departed mothers and red carnations to honor those still living. Whether you would wear a red carnation or a white carnation, it is good to honor our mothers. Not just on Mother's Day, but on each and every day of the year; on each and every day of your life. For without our mother, we would not exist, nor would we exist without our father. We therefore honor our father and mother.

God's Commandment

As we read a few moments ago, we are commanded to honor our father and our mother. This is truly a special commandment. If we look closely at the commandments of God, the ten commandments, we find the first commandments deal with our relationship with God. God must come first in every aspect of our life. We are to worship and honor God and have no other gods before Him. That is our responsibility to do this and thereby set everything else in its rightful place. We love, honor and worship God first, and everything else will be done correctly because we seek Him first.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

The very next commandment, however, the one we are taking a look at in this message, deals with our relationship with our family and specifically our father and our mother. First God and then our parents. We who have parents who believe on God, and in this day, believe on Jesus are truly blessed. It makes for a special relationship because it is centered around God; God who is love. When I speak to couples about marriage, one of the pictures of marriage I bring up is the marriage triangle. With God at the top of the triangle and the couple at the bottom corners of the triangle. We see how as each of them draw closer to God, they naturally draw closer to each other. The same is true with us. As we and our mother and father draw closer to God, we draw closer to each other. Our Christ centered relationship allows us to be closer as a family.

This commandment is special for another reason. It is the first commandment with promise!

Ephesians 6:1–3 (KJV)

¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

² Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

³ that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Paul, brings out this point about the commandment being the first commandment with promise. He also starts this off with children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. How many of us, even as adults, still feel the necessity to obey our parents in the Lord. This, of course, means to obey our parents when they tell us to do something that is within the bounds the Lord has set. God fearing parents will do this and we should always be obedient to this. If we are obedient to God first, we will be obedient to our mother, also. So, we see a truth here, that obeying our parents in the Lord is akin to honoring them. We honor them in action and not just word alone. Just a note here, that with a mother who believes in the Lord, we can be sure that she will follow the same commandments put in place by God. So, don't worry about things like what happens if we have to deal with this next verse of Scripture.

Genesis 2:24 (KJV)

²⁴ Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

When a man and woman get married, they will now be the parents of their own children. The parents of that man and woman will understand this and only provide the assistance of their wisdom when needed; when asked for. God comes first, then our relationship with our parents.

Now, back to our original text. We have seen how Paul speaks about this commandment being the first with promise. I also like how it is presented in Deuteronomy.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Deuteronomy 5:16 (KJV)

¹⁶ Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

This passage helps further refine what is meant by the promise part of the commandment. I don't know about anyone else, but when I first started studying this, I was not sure if the phrase, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" was speaking of being able to stay in the land which God had given the Israelites, or whether their lives would be prolonged. Maybe it is referring to both. One of the good things about studying scripture and relying on it for understanding is Scripture will bring out the truth of what is being said and will show us it, if we are looking for it. It certainly appears that Deuteronomy 5:16 starts bringing the promise of our commandment into a better focus.

Another verse that helps comes from Deuteronomy 4:39-40.

Deuteronomy 4:39–40 (KJV)

³⁹ Know therefore *this* day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none else.

⁴⁰ Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee *this* day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

God first! Keeping His statutes, that is, His commandments will allow it to go well with thee, **AND WITH THY CHILDREN AFTER THEE**, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever. You see our obedience to God's commandment not only helps ourselves, but also our children after us! Amazing how God's word is so finely fit together!

A Comparison of Mothers in Scripture

When I was praying about this message and reflecting on our portion of Scripture, my mind and heart were flooded with examples of mothers in Scripture. Interestingly, there are many examples of both good and bad mothers. So that this message would not go on for hours, I decided to compare two mothers spoken of in Scripture. One good and one, well not so good.

I've been fascinated about how Paul refers to Jesus as the new Adam. We had the first Adam that brought sin and death into the world, but then we had the second Adam that effectively reversed this.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

1 Corinthians 15:45 (KJV)

⁴⁵ And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.

1 Corinthians 15:47 (KJV)

⁴⁷ The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.

The first man was indeed created of the dust of the ground and God breathed His Spirit into him and he became a living soul. The second man is the Lord from heaven. He was born of a woman, namely Mary. Our examples will be Eve and Mary. Both were mothers. Both of flesh and blood.

Eve was the first woman and the first mother. Here is something to think about. When Eve was created from the rib of Adam, she was created before the Law. She was before the Law that we get our passage for this message from. However, she would have been told by Adam what God had said to him concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We read God's command to Adam in Genesis chapter 2.

Genesis 2:16–17 (KJV)

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Do you see what we have here? Prior to the Law that was given to Moses, God's first commandment with promise was given to Adam, which would have then been given to Eve. They were commanded by God to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The promise was that if they did eat of it, they would surely die.

Compare that with the commandment given to Moses to honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land. The first land was Eden and breaking the commandment, the only commandment given to them by God, would result in eventual death. Their days would be cut from eternal to finite. Their days in Eden were even shorter. But, the Law given to Moses, when kept, would result in their days being long upon the land, the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Eve chose to go against the word of God and ate of the tree that God commanded them not to eat. She gave of the tree to her husband, Adam, and he did eat. They were both cast out of Eden, the land, and they began to die, their days were shortened. Mary, however, found favor in the eyes of God; she was a keeper of the Law. Let's read from Luke.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Luke 1:28–31 (KJV)

²⁸ And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

²⁹ And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

³⁰ And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

³¹ And behold, thou shalt conceive in *thy* womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

This is a beautiful portion of Scripture. But Mary, being a follower of the Law and knowing something like this being said, even by an angel, would need to be tested.

Luke 1:34–35 (KJV)

³⁴ Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also *that* holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

The angel, Gabriel (Luke 1:26), also told her about the miraculous pregnancy of her cousin Elisabeth. Elisabeth was past the age where pregnancy was a possibility, but she was indeed pregnant with the son who would be called John, who we know as John the Baptist; the one who would pave the way for Jesus. After hearing all this, Mary said the following:

Luke 1:38 (KJV)

³⁸ And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

She understood her pregnancy would be of God and her son would be the Son of God. It was legal. Mary's response when speaking with Elisabeth, who we are told she visited after her visit from the angel, is recorded in Luke beginning at chapter 1 and verse 46. She glorified the Lord and gave him all the credit!

Eve conceived after she and Adam were cursed and cast out of Eden. She was present when God told the serpent that he would put enmity between her and the serpent and between his seed and her seed. God said her seed would crush his head and his seed would bruise her seed's heel. Eve's curse included being subject to her husband; that he would rule over her. Now when they came together after being cast out of Eden, she conceived a son; a son that was the product of Adam and her. Eve's only words that were recorded for us, were in Genesis 4.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Genesis 4:1 (KJV)

¹ And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

The man came from Adam, but based on what she said here, I believe Eve thought this would be the seed that would crush the head of the serpent. How mistaken. We definitely do not see the same honor and worship that Mary gave God from Eve.

In Honor of Mary

We can definitely hold Mary in high esteem. After all, God found her to be highly favored. We do not worship Mary, however, and Mary, based on her words and actions in Scripture would strongly agree with this statement. I base this partially on Mary's own words to the servants at the marriage in Cana. The same place Jesus performed his first miracle, changing water into wine.

John 2:5 (KJV)

⁵ His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it*.

Here is John 2:1-2 to further refine the point this is Mary speaking.

John 2:1–2 (KJV)

¹ And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

² and both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

So we see, Mary tells us to do whatsoever he saith unto you. This is further enhanced by the fact that Jesus only spoke what the Father told him to say.

John 8:28 (KJV)

²⁸ Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these *things*.

We do as Jesus and Mary tell us to do. Mary instructed those to do as Jesus said and Jesus says what the Father teaches him to say.

We should follow Mary's example, especially the example she showed when finding out God had chosen her to bring to the earth the promised Messiah. She glorified God. She is a wonderful example of what a mother should be.

The greatest description of a virtuous mother is provided to us in Proverbs 31.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

Proverbs 31 (KJV)

- ¹ The words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him.
- ² What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? And what, the son of my vows?
- ³ Give not thy strength unto women, Nor thy ways to *that which* destroyeth kings.
- ⁴ *It is* not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings to drink wine; Nor for princes strong drink:
- ⁵ Lest they drink, and forget the law, And pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.
- ⁶ Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, And wine unto those that be of heavy hearts.
- ⁷ Let him drink, and forget his poverty, And remember his misery no more.
- ⁸ Open thy mouth for the dumb In the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.
- ⁹ Open thy mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy.
- ¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price *is* far above rubies.
- ¹¹ The heart of her husband doth *safely* trust in her, So that he shall have no need of spoil.
- ¹² She will do him good and not evil All the days of her life.
- ¹³ She seeketh wool, and flax, And worketh willingly with her hands.
- ¹⁴ She is like the merchant's ships; She bringeth her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She riseth also while *it is* yet night, And giveth meat to her household, And a portion to her maidens.
- ¹⁶ She considereth a field, and buyeth it: With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She girdeth her loins with strength, And strengtheneth her arms.
- ¹⁸ She perceiveth that her merchandise *is* good: Her candle goeth not out by night.
- ¹⁹ She layeth her hands to the spindle, And her hands hold the distaff.
- ²⁰ She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.
- ²¹ She is not afraid of the snow for her household: For all her household *are* clothed with scarlet.
- ²² She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; Her clothing *is* silk and purple.
- ²³ Her husband is known in the gates, When he sitteth among the elders of the land.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

- ²⁴ She maketh fine linen, and selleth *it*; And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.
- ²⁵ Strength and honour *are* her clothing; And she shall rejoice in time to come.
- ²⁶ She openeth her mouth with wisdom; And in her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
- ²⁷ She looketh well to the ways of her household, And eateth not the bread of idleness.
- ²⁸ Her children arise up, and call her blessed; Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her.
- ²⁹ Many daughters have done virtuously, But thou excellest them all.
- ³⁰ Favour *is* deceitful, and beauty *is* vain: *But* a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.
- ³¹ Give her of the fruit of her hands; And let her own works praise her in the gates.

We honor our mothers today, but as said earlier, not just this day. She should be praised each and every day of our life. Our mothers give us much in life and they are to be found worthy of our honor. Once again, we see in Proverbs 31:30 that she is one that feareth the LORD and therefore shall be praised. She teaches her children to fear the LORD, also.

When we follow our mother's example like this, we will, in this present age, come to believe on Jesus. When we do this, as noted in Scripture, we are saved.

Romans 5:6 (KJV)

⁶ For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

Romans 5:8–9 (KJV)

⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

We who believe on Jesus will be saved from wrath through him, being justified by his blood. Paul shared a wonderful presentation of the Gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 as we see here.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER

1 Corinthians 15:1–4 (KJV)

¹ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand;

² by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

³ For I delivered unto you first *of all* that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

⁴ and that he was buried, and that he rose *again* the third day according to the scriptures:

Honor your mother this day and every day so that your days may be prolonged. This is definitely good advice if you are not saved. Give yourself the time to believe on Jesus and be saved. It is the only decision in this life that determines what happens in the next life.