

A Mother's love - Sunday May 13th 2012

***For You are my hope;
O Lord God, You are my confidence from my youth.
By You I have been sustained from my birth;
You are He who took me from my mother's womb;
My praise is continually of You. Psalm 7:5-6***

Beloved in the Lord,

The one thing that we all have in common is that we have or have had a mother. Since the creation of man, with the exception of Adam and Eve, all human beings have had a mother. Today here in Australia and also in many other places it is Mother's Day. This day is celebrated in many different ways, but I think that one of the best ways is what we are doing here today and that is thanking God for our mothers.

Family was created by God. It is His institution. There is something so very special about a mother, a mother's love, a mother's heart. A mother has a different bond or tie to her children than a father does. Both parents of course are equally important, but today we celebrate mothers.

In the Bible we often read about mothers who have played an important role in God's plan. Often men and women who are used mightily of God, come from a family where their mother has been faithful; and obedient to God.

Let me give you a few examples. Moses mother Jochobed did not heed Pharaoh's orders to drown her male children in the river Nile. Instead she built an ark and placed baby Moses inside it. God orchestrated events, as only He can, so that Pharaoh's daughter would find this little baby. She then subsequently needed someone to nurse baby Moses for he was not yet weaned. Guess who got the job. Moses mother! To top it off she got paid for doing it. So Jochobed got to keep Moses a little longer and was able to influence him in faith till he was old enough to go to Pharaoh's house. This event is a great illustration of what happens when we operate in faith. When we trust in God, we are constantly amazed at what He does. He can take a totally desperate looking situation and turn it around to His glory and our good.

Another great example is Samuel's mother Hannah. She was a God fearing woman but was barren. She prayed this great prayer on one occasion:

““O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.” (1 Samuel 1:11)

God heard her prayer and she became pregnant and bore a son, whom she named Samuel. Hannah was true to her promise to God, and when Samuel was weaned she brought him to the priest Eli, and so Samuel grew up in the priests household. While Samuel was still a youth, God appeared to him and began to speak to him. Samuel became a mighty man of God, a great prophet.

God did not forget Hannah and he blessed her: “The Lord visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the Lord.” (1.Sam.2:21)

See what great things God does when we trust in Him!

There was another man born of a miracle in the time of the Judges, which was historically before Samuel. We read in the book of Judges how an Angel appeared to a woman and gave her very specific instructions about what will happen and what she and her husband were to do: “ Now the sons of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord, so that the Lord gave them into the hands of the Philistines forty years.

²There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren and had borne no *children*. ³ Then the angel of the Lord appeared to the woman and said to her, “Behold now, you are barren and have borne no *children*, but you shall conceive and give birth to a son. ⁴ Now therefore, be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing. ⁵ For behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and no razor shall come upon his head, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines.” Judges 13:1-5 What I want you to notice here is the obedience of Manoah and his wife. Because of their obedience Samson was born and became a mighty man of God.

Of course the greatest example we find in the New Testament – Mary – the mother of Jesus. We all know the story. What I would like to emphasise is Mary’s reply to the Angel Gabriel: “Behold, the bond slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” Luke 1:38.

Mary absolutely and totally gave herself into the Lord’s hands. She was a willing bond servant of the Lord. She was humble and faithful. Behold I am a handmaiden or a bond servant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word. Hallelujah!

Where would we be, how would our families look if all mother’s saw themselves as bond servants of the Lord?

Many of the problems we face today stem from the fact that people are selfish. They follow their own will, they live for themselves, try to attain their own goals and purposes and not God’s.

In the last chapter of the book of Proverbs we read: “Many daughters have done nobly, But you excel them all.”

³⁰ Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.
³¹ Give her the product of her hands,
And let her works praise her in the gates.” Proverbs 31:29-31

A woman who fears the Lord shall be praised. Where there is a faithful, God fearing mother, there is blessing.

I can testify to this from my own family. It was my beloved mother who taught me to pray, to live for God, to trust in Him and to obey Him. The Lord called her home to Glory when I was just 16 years of age, but even today almost 33 years later her influence and advice is with me every single day. The greatest advice she ever gave me was to teach me to pray this beautiful Hymn: “Take Thou my hand and lead me, O’er life’s rough way. With Heavenly manna feed me from day to day. Without Thy grace and favour I go astray, Take Thou my hand O Saviour, Lead Thou my way.” I was about ten when she taught me this song. She told me that if I prayed this everyday and trusted Jesus to lead me I would be ok, but if not I would get into trouble. Oh how right she was. Praise God for a God fearing, God loving mother!

It is not only important, but also right to thank God for our mothers and fathers. God included the in the 10 Commandments.

Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”

Luther wrote in his Small Catechism: “We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honour them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.”

Luther emphasises something of vital importance, namely that we are to fear and to love God. If we do not fear and love God, then we cannot even begin to properly keep this Commandment.

To fear and to love god is the foundation of real life. As I often say, I say it again, if our relationship with God is not right, then our relationships with one another will also not be right. If our relationship with God is right, then our relationships with one another will also be right. Without God’s love, we cannot really fully love.

In closing as we thank God for mothers I would like to share with you a story I read in a booklet written by the first archbishop of our Church, the Very Reverend Teodors Grinbergs:

Mother and love are two words that are bound closely together. We see this in nature: wherever there is a mother, there we see a mother’s love. This is found not only in human beings but also in the animal kingdom. What love compels a bird to bring sustenance to her young, and to keep them warm under her wings; or the way a cat carries her young from

one place to another as the need arises; how animal mothers not only care for their young, but also play with them. They will even often sacrifice their own lives trying to protect them. Hunters know better than to draw near to a mother with her young nearby. A mother Lion will never leave her cubs if there is danger present and is ready to sacrifice her own life. There is a tale of a stork: In a certain village fire has broken out and many houses have been razed. Finally the house in which a stork has made her nest also catches fire. The stork desperately tries to save her young, who are not yet able to fly. She tries in vain to lift them in her beak and carry them away. As the flames rise higher and higher, the stork finally settles on her nest., spreads out her wings over her young, and together they are burned up.

When the fires of sin and hell threatened to annihilate us, God sacrificed His Son Jesus on the cross, shed His blood to save us.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” John 3:16

God has loves us with an everlasting love.

Jesus said standing outside Jerusalem: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.” Matthew 23:37

May it never be that we reject God’s love which is higher than any other love.

Amen.

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.

All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.