

Mother's Day

I'm going to be traditional today. Though it is not in the Bible, I think the Lord is okay with us paying tribute to our mothers. In a time when good traditions are being tossed out with the bad, would you agree that Mother's day should be preserved?

A South African proverb states that **the hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation and its destiny**. Anyone with that kind of influence and responsibility should get a day, don't you think?

I want to begin with some history of Mother's Day, followed by some grandchildren eye-openers, and then some women, some of them mothers, who ministered to and with Jesus and the Twelve.

Mother's Day, in the US, is not quite 100 yrs old officially. President Woodrow Wilson officially established the second Sunday of May as Mother's Day in 1914. But, Anna Jarvis, the woman who campaigned to establish Mother's Day turned against it. The reason: commercialization of the holiday. In 1923, she filed a lawsuit to stop a Mother's Day Festival. She was even arrested for disturbing the peace at a Mother's Day convention where women sold white carnations.

"This is not what I intended," she said. "I wanted it to be a day of sentiment, not profit!"

Shortly before her death in 1948, Anna Jarvis, living in a nursing home, received Mother's Day cards from all around the world. But she told a reporter that she was sorry she had ever started the whole thing.

Commercialization: the same has been said about Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Halloween; man has a way of complicating simple things, doesn't he?

But kids don't. They say what's on their mind, don't they. Sometimes what they say is simple and profound at the same time; especially grandchildren. Kids are great, but grandchildren...I heard this one from Ken Davis, a Christian speaker and comedian:

A grandchild looked up at her grandma and said, "Grandma, you have so many wrinkles." Grandma smiled, and said, "I know, Honey. I'm a grandma. That's my job."

Here are some email grandchildren stories:

A young grandson called his grandmother to wish her a Happy Birthday. He asked her how old she was, and she told him, 62. Her grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

A second grader came home from school and said to her grandmother, "Grandma, guess what? We learned how to make babies today." The grandmother, more than a little surprised, tried to keep

her cool. "That's interesting," she said. "How do you make babies?" "It's simple," replied the girl. "You just change 'y' to 'i' and add 'es'."

A grandmother didn't know if her granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so she decided to test her. She would point out something and ask what color it was. The granddaughter would tell her and was always correct. Grandma was pretty impressed, and so continued. Finally, the granddaughter headed for the door, and said, "Grandma, I think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"

A grandmother was delivering her grandchildren to their home one-day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties. "They use him to keep crowds back," said one child.

"No," said another. "He's just for good luck."

A third child brought the argument to a close. "They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrants."

Grandpa was pushing his 8-year-old granddaughter Abby in the swing in her front yard, their favorite place. She and her twin Erin had been learning about childbirth from their mother. Abby did not like what she was learning. "I'm not going to have children, Grandpa," she said. "It hurts too bad."

His first thought was to say, "If your mother felt that way, you would not be here. And if your great-grandmothers felt that way, none of us would be here." But this is what he said: "You're right. It does hurt. But the pain goes away, and you're left with this beautiful child, and you decide that it was worth it."

Abby looked her Grandpa square in the eyes and said, "You're a man. What do you know?"

Abby was exactly right—all I know on this subject is what I've been told. Let us admit the obvious here: This is one experience where we men are on the outside looking in. We men are out of our league trying to assess what mothers go through and the challenges they face.

As a father and grandfather, I can love my kids and grandkids, hurt when they hurt, but I didn't feel that life inside me that is now an adult with their own kids.

Erma Bombeck has an interesting take on the way mothers were made to handle all they do.

When the Good Lord was creating Mothers he was into his sixth day of overtime when the Angel appeared and said, "You're doing a lot of fiddling around on this one."

And the Lord said, "Have you read the specs on this order? She has to be completely washable, but not plastic, have 180 moveable parts, all replaceable, run on black coffee and leftovers, have a lap that disappears when she stands up, a kiss that can cure anything from a broken leg to a disappointed love affair, and six pairs of hands."

The Angel shook her head slowly and said, "Six pair of hands, no way!"

"Its not the hands that are causing me problems," said the Lord, "Its the three pair of eyes that Mothers have to have."

"That's on the standard model?" asked the Angel.

The Lord nodded, "One pair that sees through closed doors when she asks 'what are you kids doing in there?' when she already knows. Another here in the back of her head that see what she shouldn't, but what she has to know, and of course the ones here in the front that can look at a child when he goofs and say, 'I understand and I love you', without so much as uttering a word."

"Lord," said the Angel, touching his sleeve gently, "Come to bed, tomorrow..."

"I can't," said the Lord, "I am so close to creating something so close to myself. Already I have one who heals herself when she is sick, can feed a family of six on one pound of hamburger, and can get a nine year old to stand in the shower."

The Angel circled the model of a Mother very slowly, "Its too soft," she sighed.

"But tough!" said the Lord excitedly. "You cannot imagine what this Mother can do or endure."

"Can it think?"

"Not only think, but it can reason and compromise," said the Creator.

Finally, the Angel bent over and ran her finger across the cheek. "There's a leak," she announced, "I told you that you were trying to put too much into this model."

"Its not a leak," said the Lord, "Its a tear."

"What is it for?"

"Its for joy, sadness, disappointment, pain, loneliness and pride."

"You are a genius!" said the Angel.

The Lord looked somber, "I didn't put it there."

According to the information that I found, on the first Mother's Day service, the pastor used words from the cross, "**Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother.**" (John 19:26)

When Jesus first began to call disciples, we are not told and have no way of knowing if the women, whether they be wives or mothers of these men, had much say or participated in their ministry in any way. However, in the book of Acts, we have a husband and wife ministry team; (Aquila & Pricilia).

We know this for sure: Jesus was assisted and supported by many women. And the epistles mention many women who ministered in various ways. So, on this Mother's Day, we are going to look briefly at some of these women.

From the first of his ministry, women responded to his teaching and supported

Jesus'. His first miracle was in response to his mother's request at a wedding feast.

The sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha, made their home at Bethany. Jesus made their home his earthly refuge and resting-place.

Women of all ranks in society found Jesus to be a friend. Luke records that women accompanied him, with the Twelve, in his preaching tours from city to city.

Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,² and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out;³ Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. (Luke 8:2)

He recognized even those women who were ostracized by society:

A Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner. A woman of questionable reputation brought a jar of expensive perfume to the Pharisee's dinner party and poured it on Jesus feet, after she had wet them with her tears, dried them with her hair and kissed them.

³⁹When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." (Luke 7:39)

Jesus then told Simon, the Pharisee, a story.

⁴¹"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii,[□] and the other fifty. ⁴²Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (Luke 7:41-50)

In the following list are women, some mothers, who were affected by Jesus in some way:

- Mothers had occasion to rejoice in Jesus blessing their children (Mk 10:13-16)
- in Jesus raising their dead (Lk 7:12-15)
- Women followed him on his last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem and ministered to Him on the way to Calvary (Mt 27:55, 56)
- witnessed his crucifixion (Lk 23:49)

- accompanied his body to the tomb (Mt 27:61; Lk 23:55)
- prepared spices and ointments for his burial (Lk 23:56)
- were first at the tomb on the morning of his resurrection (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1)
- were the first to whom the risen Lord appeared (Mt 28:9; Mk 16:9; Jn 20:14)
- had the honor of being the first to announce the fact of the resurrection to the chosen disciples (Lk 24:9, 10, 22).
- were among the first Christian converts (Acts 8:12)
- and suffered equally with men in the early persecutions of the church (Acts 9:2).

In the latter part of Acts chapter 9, Luke records the disciples sending for Peter on behalf of the poor and the widows.

³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas[□]), who was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

³⁹Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

⁴⁰Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the

widows and presented her to them alive. ⁴²This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

When Peter was arrested, Mary the mother of John Mark assembled the disciples at her home to pray for Peter's deliverance (Acts 12:12).

Women, just as men, were recipients of the charismatic gifts of Christianity.

Philip, one of the Seven (Acts 6:1-5) who ministered to widows in Jerusalem, had four daughters with the gift of prophesy (Acts 21:8, 9).

The first recorded convert in Europe was a woman, Lydia of Thyatira, whose hospitality made a home for Paul and a meeting-place for the infant church (Acts 16:14).

The church at Rome seemed to have been blessed with a number of gifted women. Paul, in the closing salutations of his Epistles, sent greetings to at least eight prominent women in Christian activity: **Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Persis, Julia**, and the **sister of Nereus** (Rom 16:1, 3, 6, 12, 15).

And Lois and Eunice, grandmother and mother of Timothy, who Paul credits for Timothy's faith.

In Titus chapter 2, Paul tells Titus to **teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to**

much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

I know that this kind of thinking in our society is old fashion and out dated. We live in a 'party hardy', equal rights and opportunity for everyone; do what seems right for you age. Even many of our churches today don't teach what Paul instructed Titus to teach.

I don't know about you, but I think that the South African proverb says a bunch: the hand that rocks the cradle rules the nation and its destiny. I think that Mother's Day is more than just a tradition that can be tossed out of the window or not.

I bring this message to a close with these questions. What would our society be like; what would your family be like; what would our church be like without faithful women and mothers?