

## **Mother's Day**

**Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins - May 13, 2018**

**Mother's Day is such a special Holiday in which we can all be grateful for the gift of life that God gave to each of us through our mothers. The one thing that I have learned to be grateful for is the love for the Bible that was instilled in me from childhood and it has been with me all of my life. The Lord's Prayer has been the key to the knowledge that I gained by realizing that God will forgive me in the same portion that I forgive others.**

**Last week, a young man asked me the question, "Should we be saying the Lord's Prayer or is it one of those things that Jesus spoke about concerning vain repetitions?" I explained that the Scriptures are always appropriate to repeat as a prayer and we should follow the example of the prayer, yet it should not be the sum of our communications with God. It has great meaning to me and I never get tired of praying it and including it in our worship services wherever we are involved. That is one memory of home and of school that has helped me when I struggled with bitterness and anger from life's disappointments.**

**Today I want to share some stories from the Bible that illustrates the key roles that mothers and women played in the lives of individuals. The Old and New Testament speak about the decisions that women made that shaped, formed, and protected the lives of individuals.**

**I love the story of Hannah found in 1 Samuel chapter 1-2. Hannah was childless and she desired to have a son. Year after year she longed for a son and her husband, though he loved her very much was not able to comfort her. He even made the comment to her, "Aren't I better to you than having 10 sons?" See 1 Samuel 1:8.**

**Hannah finally went to the temple after the bitterness in her soul got to the point where she could not bear it and wept and prayed to God promising that if he would grant her a son, she would give him back to God all the days of his life. Eli, the priest, saw her kneeling before the LORD and he thought she was drunk for her lips moved but no words were coming from her mouth. Eli accused her of being drunk and asked her how long she would continue imbibing on strong drink. He told her to put away the wine.**

**Hannah didn't take offense at the words of the priest, but answered him that she was a woman of a broken spirit. She had not indulged in drinking wine, but was bringing a petition to the LORD. She pleaded with Eli not to put her in the category of daughters of Belial, for out of the abundance of her complaint and grief had she come to talk to God. Eli said, "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant you your petition that you have asked of him." In verse 20, God answered her request and she bore a son and called his name, Samuel, meaning that she had asked him of the LORD. Hannah kept Samuel at home until he was weaned and then she took him to the temple and left him with Eli, the priest to be raised in the house of the LORD. She also took with her 3 bullocks, one ephah of**

flour and a bottle of wine as an offering to the LORD. In verse 28, she explained to Eli that God had answered her request and now she was willing to pay her vow. She would lend him to the LORD as long as he lived and there they worshipped the LORD.

Hannah's prayer is so beautiful as she worshipped and called on the name of the LORD who answered her prayer. She rejoiced in her salvation and she declared that there is none holy as the LORD. There is none beside him and neither is there any rock like our God. Samuel grew to be favored by God and by men. Every year, Hannah brought clothes that she had made for Samuel to the temple to clothe him. God blessed her with more children for her obedience to Him. Eli didn't train his sons to walk in the fear of the LORD; Eli got reports of their evil deeds, but he did nothing to correct or restrain them from their wicked deeds. Because they had no respect for God and the temple, God caused them to die and Samuel was chosen to be a priest and a prophet unto the LORD to guide Israel in the ways of the LORD. 1 Samuel chapter 3. We are responsible to teach our children in the ways of God. In 1 Samuel 3:20 it states that all Israel knew that God had chosen Samuel to be a prophet in Israel. He loved and respected Eli and also the temple and everything that was in it. God blessed him all the days of his life.

In the New Testament, there is a story of parents bringing their little children to Jesus so he would put his hand on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them and departed thence. See Matthew 19:13. From this story, I think of the generations of parents who daily bring their children to the throne of grace and asking Jesus to bless their children and to save their souls.

A woman that I admire was James and John's mother. In Matthew 20:20, the wife of Zebedee came with her sons to worship Jesus and to bring a request to him. He asked her, "What wilt thou?" She said to him, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on your right hand and the other on the left in your kingdom."

Jesus told her that she didn't know the details of what she was asking for. He asked them if they were able to drink of the cup that He was going to drink and be baptized with the baptism that he was going to be baptized with. They said they were able because they didn't realize the road that was ahead of Jesus. He told them that they would indeed experience some of the things that He was going to endure but to promise a position of sitting on his right hand and on his left hand was not his to give; it was reserved for the ones to whom his Father had prepared. When the 10 disciples learned about the request, they were moved to indignation against the two brothers.

This is the only mother of any of the disciples recorded that made such a request for her sons. She desired the best that Jesus had for her sons and she was courageous enough to ask for the positions for them. As a mother, my heart's desire is that my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren will hear the call of Jesus "Follow Me" and will leave everything behind to follow Him. I pray that the example of my life will be such

a light that they will understand the value of following the path of righteousness and will hunger and thirst for it until they are filled. The mother's love and devotion was manifested in the request that she brought to Jesus. She desired his very best for her two sons. She didn't ask for anything for herself; she wanted her sons to be blessed and noticed by Jesus when he set up his kingdom. We are encouraged to bring our requests to God and God promises to answer all the requests that we bring to him that is his will. John 3:16 says that he isn't willing that any should perish but that all should come to receive eternal life. Don't give up praying for wayward children! Those prayers will be before the throne of God even after we die. The effects of our prayers will continue to be working in the lives of our loved ones until they are answered.

I love the story of Augustine, a man considered to be the most important figure in the ancient Western church. St. Augustine was born in North Africa. His mother was a Christian, and his father was a pagan until late in life. Augustine drifted through several philosophical systems before converting to Christianity at the age of 31. He was attracted to several schools of thought and was fascinated with philosophical questions and methods that remained with him all through his life. Although he was tempted towards the direction of Christianity when he arrived in Milan in 383, he turned to Neoplatonism. During this time, Augustine fathered a child by a mistress. This period of exploration of youthful excesses were later recorded in his widely read work called "The Confessions."

Monica, Augustine's mother was an early Christian saint and is remembered and honored in most Christian denominations because of her outstanding Christian character and her virtues. Her husband's adulterous habits brought suffering to her and her wayward son was a burden that she prayed much about. She drove her son away when he turned to Neoplatonism, but she had a vision that caused her to reconcile with him. She visited a bishop who consoled her with these words, "the child of those tears will never perish." She followed her wayward son to Rome where he had gone secretly; when she arrived he had already gone to Milan so she followed him there. Here she found Ambrose and through him she ultimately had the joy of seeing Augustine convert to Christianity after 17 years of resistance. Mother and son spent 6 months of true peace and Augustine was baptized in the church of St. John the Baptist at Milan. Monica died shortly after.

He is credited with these quotes:

"Habit, if not resisted, soon becomes necessity."

"The confession of evil works is the beginning of good works."

"Complete abstinence is easier than perfect moderation."

Proverbs 31:10-31 is one of my favorite portions of Scripture concerning a godly wife and mother.

If you read this chapter you will discover the priorities and values that this woman had that was a blessing to her family and much more than just those closest to her.

**It starts out by asking this question: “Who can find a virtuous woman? For the price is far above rubies.**

- 1. Her husband has complete trust in her that she won’t cause him harm. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.**
- 2. She is industrious and is skillful at making clothes. She willingly works with her hands.**
- 3. She is like the merchants ships that brings food from afar.**
- 4. She rises early to prepare food for her household and a portion for her servants.**
- 5. She knows how to buy a field with her hands she plants a vineyard.**
- 6. She works hard and is not lazy.**
- 7. She knows when to buy and when to sell and she is busy until late in the evening hours.**
- 8. She knows how to spin yarn to make cloth and takes pride in her work.**
- 9. She reaches out to help the poor and needy.**
- 10. She prepares for the winter months ahead and doesn’t need to worry because she has sewn excellent quality warm clothing for her household.**
- 11. She makes herself covers of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. Everything that she wears is beautiful.**
- 12. Her husband is a well -known and respected leader in the city.**
- 13. She makes fine linen, and sells it; she delivers clothing unto the merchants.**
- 14. She is strong and graceful, as well as cheerful about the future.**
- 15. She uses words of wisdom and her tongue speaks words of kindness. Her words are sensible and her advice is thoughtful.**
- 16. She looks over her household with diligence and she doesn’t indulge in idleness.**
- 17. Her children arise and call her blessed and give her praise; her husband also is very proud of her. He praises her. Her husband considers her the best among other women.**
- 18. Many daughters have done virtuously, but she excels them all.**
- 19. Charm can be deceiving and beauty fades away, but a woman who honors the LORD, she shall be praised.**
- 20. Show her respect and praise her in public for what she has done.**

**This is a thought provoking tribute to a woman who loves her family, is compassionate to those who have less and are needy, and to women who love the Lord and seek to please him. Faith without works is dead. We show faith by our works for faith motivates us to imitate Jesus Christ. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Let us love one another and be determined to build our house on a firm foundation! A wise woman builds her house; a foolish one tears it down with her hands.**