

MARY, MOTHER OF JAMES (59-3): "HOW TO LOVE OUR MOMS"

Chuck Swindoll in his classic book, *You and Your Child*¹ writes these words,

"She cooks, she cleans, she comforts, she corrects. She has six pairs of hands and eyes in the back of her head. Mother.

For some, this word conjures up images of June Cleaver, complete with lace apron and pearls -- singing lullabies, baking brownies, kissing away a child's hot tears. Others envision the Erma Bombeck model, who drives a wood-paneled station wagon and whose hobby is dust. Whatever the type, no one has more influence than a mother. For better or worse, she will forever impact the life of her child.

Tough and tender, wise and warm, a mother must be all things to all her family ... at all times. That's quite a job description, and anyone who is a mother or has watched one in action knows there's no career more demanding or more endangered in today's society.

One thing is for certain on this Mother's Day - either you have a mother or you are a mother.

So this morning I am sharing what can potentially touch more of you than nearly any other topic I could share.

First, If you have a mother (and we all do) you can show your love for her whether she is present, alive or has passed away from either your life or this world.

How? I'll show you from God's Word !

Second, if you are a mom (new, not so new or grand) you can learn about how to be an ever better mother (or grandmother) whether your children are here or there or no longer even in your life or on this world!

¹ p. 71.

This morning may I introduce you (or reintroduce you) to MARY, the mother of James and Jesus!

Who is presented as the most honored woman in the Bible? Say it with me - MARY

Who was chosen out of all the women in the whole world to raise God's Son? MARY

Who is the greatest living, breathing example of Proverbs 31 in ordinary everyday life? MARY

Without exception who is probably the most beloved and best known woman in the world? MARY

(and that is probably the most times her name has ever been said aloud in most protestant churches!)

And Mary is a mother.

Mentioned only 20x in the Bible her life is such a portrait of godliness, humility and yieldedness.

Mary was the mother of James, and Jesus.

Mary stands in Scriptures as an example to all of us of devotion and faithfulness.

Her strengths and struggles are all laid out in the Bible.

We can benefit greatly from looking at them today and many times in the future.

But especially on this day we honor our mothers.

Let's meet this incredible woman. Of all the writers of Scripture it is Luke who highlights Mary. Twelve of the 20 verses that name her are in Luke and one is in Acts so 65% of all that we have comes to us through Luke. So we need to turn to Luke 1. We will find out the qualities God admires in a woman. He picked her out of all the world for this special assignment!

- I. MARY WAS SOUGHT OUT BY GOD. (Luke 1:26-28) She joined so many others Adam and Eve in the Garden, Noah in the Pre-Flood world, Abram in Ur, Saul on the road to Damascus . . . God is in the people seeking business.
- II. MARY WAS HUMBLE (Luke 1:29 Who me?) No airs, no pride, just a humble troubled heart that anyone would even say such a thing. She knew her own heart, certainly God would to!
- III. MARY PARTOOK OF GOD'S GRACE. She was Saved by God. (Luke 1:30 lit. 'discovered grace of God ') Mary joined the countless multitude who are heirs of life eternal by God's grace. Marvelous grace of our loving Lord grace that exceeds our sin and our shame, yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured there where the blood of the Lamb was shed. Her study of the Word led her to the open arms of "God my Savior".

- IV. MARY HAD AN INCREDIBLE MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY (Luke 1:31-33) To produce within her body tiny hands that would some day touch lepers with a healing touch, to form a mouth within her womb that would speak the very Word of God, to feel the kick of feet that would walk the roads of Israel and spread the Gospel. What an incredible ministry opportunity.
- But wait, not to lessen her calling, but isn't that the opportunity all moms have?
 - To teach those tiny little ones that the greatest joy in all the world is to be touched by Jesus and be healed from the dreaded leprosy of sin? And to use their mouth share the power of the gospel with any who will listen. Can't we all do that and share in Mary's great opportunity?
 - And as a mother we can start their feet toward serving the Lord in many ways? Yes, what an opportunity we share. That is why Paul said in I Timothy 2 that women equal (are saved from second rate ministry) the men in church teaching and leading ministry - mothers bear and raise the teachers and leaders!

So there is a mom to model. If you never knew yours, or if your mom was not the best or even if she was, we can all learn from the mother God picked to raise His Son! Now we have another truth to consider, How can we really love our mothers? Just a few action items to do on the way home today:

LET THEM MAKE MISTAKES (Mary at the wedding in Cana; John 2:1-4) Moms aren't perfect, just about though. They fail like we all do. But God is only concerned about two things: your response to His Word and how you finish up. Mary responded wonderfully to God's Word in Luke 1:38. Mary stayed with the Lord to the end Acts 1:14, and church history confirm that..

LET THEM WORK THROUGH THEIR GRIEF (Mary sword pierce soul; Luke 2:34-35) Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." (NIV)

- Part of life is pain. Part of motherhood is being so knit to your children their lives pierce your like a sword.
- Things never turn out like we think at first they will. Sometimes they get better, sometimes they worsen. We need to live in the refreshing and liberating reality of God's Word.
- Let's start with the facts. There was no perfect family mentioned in the Bible. Not Mary and Joseph's. No, their boys wanted Jesus done in. Yes, when the heat was on and the leaders were plotting against His life, those brothers sent Him into the fire! John 7:1-5 After this, Jesus went around in Galilee, purposely staying away from Judea because the Jews there were waiting to take his life. 2 But when the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near, 3 Jesus' brothers said to him, "You ought to leave

here and go to Judea, so that your disciples may see the miracles you do.
4 No one who wants to become a public figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." 5 For even his own brothers did not believe in him. (NIV). Certainly an imperfect family. We know James and Jude changed, but we are not sure about the others.

- Let's stop expectations of perfection. If all your children follow the Lord you are blessed. If all do not, God understands. He has seen it in the lives of all His children from Eden onward.
- Need I mention the families of Adam, Abraham, Eli, Samuel, David and so on? The only perfect parents in the Bible, had no children that we know of, like Paul and the apostles.

LET THEM LIVE ON IN OUR WORDS (Mary Luke 1; tell about them) That is what God does! Look at the Bible. The wonders of Mary, the devotion of Hannah, the care of Jacobed Moses' mom, all remain. Every time I hear about Monica mother of Augustine, or Susanna Wesley mother of John and Charles, and you who faithfully love your children, pray for them and teach them about the Lord . . . the influence of a distant life is touching mine today.

LET THEM KNOW HOW THEY TOUCHED OUR LIVES Proverbs 31:28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: (NIV) Hannah was in Mary's family tradition and so she spoke of her, keeping her life at work. The Bible says in Hebrews that one who lives a life for God lives on by their life testifying about God's grace. Today before you get to the car if your mom is with you think of a way she has touched your life. Maybe it is her loving smile, her gentle voice, maybe it is the soft yet strong touch of her hands. Can you let her know how her prayers or phone calls or letters have touched you? How about her cooking great meals, sewing those buttons, cleaning your room or always having a loving shoulder to cry on? Surely this is only the start. Not just today should you call and tell her, do it all throughout the year. Rise up and call her blessed!