

On the Way to the Cross – A Mother's Love

As we continue to follow Jesus on His way to the cross, we find Him travelling to Jerusalem. He has just finished teaching on the Parable of the Vineyard, which ends with, *"So the last will be first, and the first will be last. For many are called but few are chosen."* His twelve disciples are with him, and while they were walking Jesus brings the disciples together and speaks to them privately. He says, *"We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be given to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. The priests and teachers of the law will say that the Son of Man must die. They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. Those people will laugh at Him and beat Him with whips, and then they will kill Him on a cross. But on the third day after His death, He will be raised to life again"* (**Matthew 20:18-19**)

Then Zebedee's wife comes to Jesus. Her sons are with her. The mother bows before the Lord and asks Him to do something for her. Jesus said, *"What do you want?"* She replies, *"Promise that one of my sons will sit at Your right side in your kingdom. And promise that the other son will sit at Your left side in your kingdom."* So Jesus says to the sons, *"You don't understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must have?"* The sons answer, *"Yes, we can!"* Jesus then says to them, *"Truly you will suffer the same things that I will suffer. But I cannot choose the person that will sit at My right side or My left side. My Father has decided who will have those places. He has prepared those places for those people. Those places belong to them."* When the other ten disciples heard this, they became angry with the two brothers. Remember, it hasn't been that long since they heard the Lord say, *"The first will be last, and the Last will be first!"*

Noticing that His disciples are getting agitated with each other, Jesus brings them together again and says, *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."* Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. (**Matthew 20:25-29**).

Let's go back to when the mother of James and John comes to Jesus and says, *"Promise that one of my sons will sit at Your right side in your kingdom. And promise that the other son will sit at Your left side in your kingdom."* Mothers are so precious. They want what is best for their boys. They want others to love their children and see them in the same way they do. This sometimes causes them to say things they shouldn't and do things that are ill advised. But they want good things so very much for their children that they cannot contain themselves. Notice in the following verses that Jesus does not deal harshly with this mother. In fact, He recognises that the question may even arise from within the hearts of her two sons. The mother knew exactly what her sons desired.

Today is Mother's Day, but does anyone know when this tradition started? 'Mother's Day' was first announced in 1870 in the United States. In fact, the original idea behind Mother's Day was a call for pacifism and disarmament. At the time it was a common to have meetings of groups of mothers, and in such meetings mothers were supposed to reveal whose sons had fought or died on opposite sides of the American Civil War. Later, in 1914, the U.S. president Woodrow Wilson signed the proclamation that designated the second Sunday in May as the Mother's Day.

But the American's weren't the first to celebrate mothers! The earliest known celebrations took place in ancient Greece, where participants honoured Rhea, their universal mother and heavenly queen. Next to adopt the tradition were the Romans, who

organised three-day celebrations for the mother goddess Cybele each year. Then came the British Isles and Celtic Europe. People here honoured the goddess Brigid on a spring day that coincided with the first seasonal milking of the ewes. Eventually, when Christianity emerged, Mothering Sunday was celebrated in the UK on the fourth Sunday in Lent. And it's remained this way since at least the 16th century.

From this information we can see that Mother's Day has a very diverse history. I personally think it's a day that we should honour our mothers. A mother is the Bible's most honoured woman, and great emphasis is put on the influence of mothers. The word "mother" or "mothers" appears in the Bible almost 300 times. Much importance is attached to the mothers of kings. Often the queen-mother is more honoured than the queen-wife. A mother's influence is also revealed in Ezekiel 16:44 where we read the phrase, *"As is the mother, so is her daughter."* I have seen this spiritual truth displayed clearly in Mary and Loraine, and Loraine and Xana! But it's noticeable also in mothers and sons, and not only mothers and daughters!

In **2 Timothy 1:5** Paul declares, *"I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."* Wow! Mothers have generation influence! And this is clearly visible to those around them. Ladies (and girls), don't buy into the feminist message of today. Don't think that you must be masculine, militant, rough, harsh, and even mean to be influential in life. If you do, you are missing out on the best part of being a woman. Don't fail to understand that a godly women can and influence the world through her home. I'm not saying that a women shouldn't work or have their own career. But her greatest influence comes about through what she does at home.

In a time of liberal opinions concerning the sacred union of husband and wife, a mother's God-given role must be fully understood and appreciated. Yes, you need to make sure that you balance what is being said in the media with God's primary role for woman. There is absolutely nothing that compares with the profound influence of a mother. The influences of politics, education, and peers pale into insignificance compared to the influence of a mother. Of all the roles assigned to women, no role is more important than the role of a mother. Nothing is more important to our families and our nation than motherhood.

There are some telling portraits of motherhood in scripture:

- There is the picture of Jochobed who cared so much for her son Moses that she broke the law to keep him safe and teach him the faith of his people.
- There is the picture of the mother who appeared before King Solomon who loved her child so much that she was willing to give him up forever rather than see any harm come to him.
- There was the mother of James and John who loved her boys so much that she wanted them to sit by the Lord's side, one on the right and one on the left, in the heavenly kingdom.

The list could go on and on. What about Timothy's mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (as mentioned earlier)? It was Timothy's mother and grandmother that influenced his life for God. Timothy got his faith from his mum and she got her faith from her mum. There is no mention of a father or a grandfather in Timothy's home. His father was probably a Gentile. It is here, in home of "mixed religion" that we see the influence of a godly mother. As Paul looked at Timothy, he saw a young man strong in doctrine, strong in faith and he was ready to be a leader for the cause of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

Why? Because of the godly influence of his mother Eunice, and her mother Lois. The greatest thing that Timothy's mother

had going for her was that her mother was a believer. Faith is certainly not inherited, but it is surely passed from one generation to another through the godly influence of the parents. The family's faith created an environment for Timothy to become a great man of God.

We must never diminish the roles God has assigned for each of us in life. Wives and mothers, you must understand that you are the most influential people in the entire world. That is the role God has assigned you in life. Today is Mother's Day and the highest calling on earth is that of a Mother. Don't let the modern mindset rob you of your calling as a woman and mother. If you desire honour and respect, that is the best place to find it.

Notice, in the story about the mother of James and John, Jesus never rebuked her for having such a selfish view. He respected her as a mother and honoured her by not responding harshly. In that society, mothers were held in great esteem. So let's do the same!