

“GODLY MOTHERHOOD”
Proverbs 31:10-31
Holiday Island Presbyterian Church
May 12, 2019

¹⁰ **[a] A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. ¹¹ Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. ¹² She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. ¹³ She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. ¹⁴ She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. ¹⁵ She gets up while it is still night; she provides food for her family and portions for her female servants. ¹⁶ She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷ She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. ¹⁸ She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. ¹⁹ In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. ²⁰ She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. ²¹ When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet. ²² She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. ²³ Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. ²⁴ She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. ²⁵ She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. ²⁶ She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. ²⁷ She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. ²⁸ Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: ²⁹ “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.” ³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. ³¹ Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.**

INTRODUCTION:

This is the day we set aside to honor mothers.

So let me begin by saying “Thank you” to all of you

**who were/are mothers
and especially to those who served as mothers.**

**Yours was not an easy job
and you deserve all honor and praise
for the tasks you have performed.**

May God richly bless you!

CATEGORIES OF MOTHERS:

**Call me Pastor Obvious,
but every person in this room had a mother of some sort.**

**Some of you were blessed with a good and loving mother;
a mother who loved you regardless of your actions.**

**A woman who unselfishly gave of herself,
who picked up when you fell, dusted you off,
reassured you, and sent you off again.**

Others had a different experience.

**Some mothers – for one reason or another –
chose not to raise their children.**

**Some mothers just were not very good at the task.
Often subject to mood swings,
perhaps too harsh,
maybe distracted by their own life.**

My own mother was often depressed and very neurotic.

**Subject to wild mood swings,
very devoted to my sister,
and supremely unforgiving.**

Some are “mothers” in a sense other than a biological one.

**These women served as mother figures
for those whose mother was not present or available.**

**There are mothers among us
who are still raising their husbands;
a job that may never end.**

**In order to talk about mothers in a biblical sense,
it is necessary to categorize mothers into 4 different categories.
These are the four major categories of mothers.**

- Godly ones**
- Good ones**
- Not so good ones**
- Absent ones.**

GODLY MOTHERS:

Let's start with "Godly mothers."

**The chances are good,
if your mother was a good mother
then you are more likely to be a good parent.**

**A good mother teaches as much by example
as can be taught by lecturing.**

**The scripture this morning
give us the "gold standard" for being a mother.**

**I once had a woman tell me she wanted me to do her funeral
but if I used this Proverb,
she would rise from her coffin and get me
before I concluded the service!**

Let's face it,
other than my wife,
there are no perfect women . . .
. . . except those in this room, of course.

The woman described in this Proverb sets a very high standard
and most women – no matter how hard they try –
ever fully attain this lofty goal.

However, it gives us a standard, a goal, an example
toward which women can aspire.
It reminds us what a precious gift mothers truly are.

And because God's love for us is limitless
and is not based upon our works,
if we fall short of that ideal, we are forgiven.

So, remember: This is a goal to work towards
and not a standard by which to judge.

If you were raised by a good mother,
then you are truly blessed.

ABSENT MOTHERS:

Unfortunately, there are "absent" mothers.
Mothers, who for one reason or another,
have simply not been present for her children.

Perhaps a mother was separated from her children by death.
Or for reason known only to herself,
she chose to abandon the role of motherhood.

We are not told who the mother of Moses was.
All we know about her is she hid his birth for three months,
then hid him alongside a river

to protect him from being killed by the Pharaoh.

**When the Pharaoh's daughter found him,
she adopted her as her own
and pressed Moses' mother into nursing him
until he was old enough to be formally adopted.**

Sometimes, circumstances may separate mother and child.

**There are mothers who are forced to work to support her family;
either single mothers or mothers who must work
in order to provide for her family.**

**I do not include them in this category –
unless the mother is so consumed with her work
she neglects her children.**

**By the grace of God,
God has provided for those who grew up without a mother.
Or, at least, without a biological mother.**

**For these "motherless" children,
there is a special category of mothers
who were never biological mothers
but still managed to pour themselves
into the lives of children.**

**They come in all sorts of descriptions:
nurses, teachers, next-door neighbors.**

**They are there for children,
when discouraged, she offers words of comfort and inspiration.
When disobedient, she is there to gently correct.**

When faced with problems, she is there to counsel.

**This world would be a bleak and desolate place
without the presence of these surrogate mothers.**

Bless you if you have served as a surrogate mother.

NOT-SO-GOOD MOTHERS:

Then there is the category of “not-so-good” mothers.

**Being born of a woman
does not make that woman a good mother
any more than watching “A River Runs Through It”
makes you a good at fly fishing.**

**I grew up with a not-so-good mother.
She was neurotic to the point
she was sort of a Jekyll and Hyde mother.**

**One moment, she could be loving and giving,
the next moment she would be judgmental and far too harsh.**

**Most of the time, she was a good mother,
but too often she became frazzled, angry and impatient.**

However, she managed to teach me a few things about life:

My Mother taught me LOGIC:

**"If you fall off that swing and break your neck, you can't
go to the movie this Saturday!**

My Mother taught me HUMOR:

"When that lawn mower cuts off your toes, don't come running to me."

My Mother taught me GENETICS:

"You are just like your father!"

My Mother taught me ANTICIPATION:

"Just wait until your father gets home."

My Mother taught me about RECEIVING:

"You are going to get it when I get you home."

My Mother taught me RELIGION:

"You better pray that will come out of the carpet."

My Mother taught me about STAMINA:

"You'll sit there until all that spinach is finished."

My Mother taught me THE CIRCLE OF LIFE:

"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."

Over time,

I began to understand her and eventually accept her.

With God's help, I have forgiven her.

Not every woman in this world grew up with a good model of what a mother could be.

And they are living with ghosts that haunt them and cause them to act and react badly.

Sometimes, in order to escape the demons of their past

- or even their present –

these women turn to sinful pursuits:

- drugs and alcohol

- infidelity

- unrestrained anger and revenge

- escaping through their work

For those who either have – or had – a mother like this,

the unconditional love of God is your gift.

**No matter what you have been told,
no matter how you have been treated,
God loves you and will comfort you
and lead you to a place of peaceful forgiveness.**

**If your mother was “not-so-good,”
do your best to forgive her and move on.**

GOOD MOTHERS:

**Ah, then there are the good mothers!
God bless them every one!**

These are the women who have done - and are doing their best.

Dr. James Dobson says this:

"There are few assignments in human experience that require the array of skills and wisdom needed by a Mom in fulfilling her everyday duties. She must be a resident psychologist, physician, theologian, educator, nurse, chef, taxi driver, fire marshal, and occasional police officer. And if she succeeds in each of these responsibilities, she gets to do it all again tomorrow."

**The burden of motherhood is an awesome responsibility.
And it comes without much reward.**

**I can only imagine what Eve must have thought and felt
when she discovered that Cain had killed his brother.**

**Eve must have blamed herself for Cain's actions.
She must have spent many an hour**

wondering where she failed.

There are mothers who take their calling so seriously
that they become “helicopter moms.”
They “hover over their children like helicopters.

Well, perhaps they are over-protective;
but that is better than not caring at all.

A good mother wants the very best for her children.
Just like God, she sees the potential in her child -
she has big dreams of what her child could be.

Her goal is to raise her children
in a way that they thrive, not just survive.

And if they seem to “hover” a bit . . .
well, bless them for it.

The love a mother shows her children on earth
is but a pale reflection of the love God has for each of us.

With unfailing tenderness,
God comforts the weary, wounded spirits of God’s children.

Just as a mother is quick to soothe and sympathize,
God is there to enfold us in loving arms
and remind us how deeply we are loved.

It is unfortunate that the parable of the Prodigal son,
tells us of the father who waits patiently for the son to return.
I wish we knew what the mother was doing.
My best guess is that she was praying fervently
for the eventual return of her son.

CONCLUSION:

**And so it is, on this Mother's Day
that we pause and give thanks to all those women
who served as our mothers.**

And those who served as mothers to our children.

**And we also give thanks to God,
who with a strange, inarticulate comfort
calms the troubled soul like a devoted mother.**

**Like a loving mother,
God asks no questions, but accepts us as we are.**

**We are invited to approach God
with our nagging doubts, our worldly loss,
our broken hearts,
our deep gashes of disappointment.**

**We can confess our sins and shortcomings,
our fears and anxieties to this loving God
knowing that we will be understood and forgiven.**

**What troubles us may remain,
yet, in carrying all to the mother-heart of God,
we are comforted.**

**In the presence of God,
we are calmed and consoled as a child folded
in the arms of a loving mother
and soothed in the silence of love.**

**On this day,
let us also honor God who made all mothers,
and who waits to do far more for us
than the best and holiest mother is capable of doing!**

PRAYER:

Loving, Creating and Sustaining, God, we thank you for the women in our lives who have served as our mothers. Bless them. We thank you for the women who love and care for our children. Bless them.

May each woman here know that they are wildly loved by You, just as they are. Not because of what they accomplished- or didn't. May you know that you are adored by God, just because.

May you be empowered to love your children – and those under your care – in the same way.

May you be equipped to tackle every challenge, every situation, and every day with courage.

May excitement fill your heart as you start each day. May God bless you with pleasant surprises during each day.

And when you lay your head down at night, may your blessings be many, may your cup overflow with thanksgiving.

And then, may your sleep be restful and your dreams refreshing and sweet.

Most of all, Loving and Supporting God, we thank You for Your unconditional love for each of us. This we pray in the Name of Jesus, who showed us Your love. Amen