

## Some Important Mother's Day Lessons.

Text: Luke 1:42, John 19:26-27

Suggested Hymns:

589, 588, 587, 840, 597

1) Duties of parents

2) Duties of children

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is Luke 1:41-42, ***"And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"***

And John 19:26-27, ***<sup>26</sup> When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. (NKJV)***

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Our thoughts today are those of home, and particularly of Mother. Those of us whose mother is still living are probably giving flowers or other gifts to give tangible evidence of our love and appreciation for her, and all she does for us.

Families all over the nation are gathering today to pay tribute to the queen of the home, the mother. Some of us are living only in memory — in memory of the mother we once had at our side, but who now is at the side of Christ.

Many of us are observing Mother's Day in the dual role of children and of parents. This very day ought to remind us of the responsibilities that Christian mothers and fathers have towards their children; and, at the same time, it should serve to remind children of the responsibilities they have towards their parents.

Today provides an opportunity to hear what the Word of God has to say to Christian mothers and fathers and to Christian children. May the Lord bless our meditation.

## **1. Some Important Mother's Day Lessons**

### **The Duties Of Parents**

#### The Privilege of Parenthood

When the shepherds came to Bethlehem shortly after the Saviour's birth, Luke tells us simply that *"they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe."*<sup>1</sup> Thus we are introduced to the Holy Family. Already before the Saviour's birth, Elizabeth indicated the high honour that was given to Mary when she said in our text, *"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"*

Certainly no one will doubt that Mary was highly favoured among women. To have the distinction of being the mother of the Lord was a privilege second to none. With rapturous joy Mary received the news that she was to be the mother of Jesus.

In a burst of holy joy she cried out, *"My soul magnifies the Lord,"*<sup>47</sup> *And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*<sup>48</sup> *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*<sup>2</sup>

Something of that joy ought to find its way into the Christian home as often as the Lord permits a child to be born into it. For children are still the greatest earthly blessing God can give to parents. They are the only surviving flowers of Paradise. They are the joy of the young, the pride of the middle-aged, and the security of the aged.

*"Children,"* says the Psalmist, *"are a heritage from the Lord ... Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them."*<sup>3</sup>

At one time a wealthy woman came to the home of a Roman mother named Cornelia to show her jewels. After she had finished, she asked Cornelia whether she might see her jewels. At that moment Cornelia's children came romping into the room. *"These,"* she said, *"are my jewels."*

In an age that frowns upon large families, at a time when too many couples by deliberate choice count children out of their family life, the joy and blessing of God's gift of children needs emphasis as never before.

The pagans of Greece and Rome used to put unwanted children to death; today, with motives just as selfish, husband and wife contrive to keep the blessing of children from their homes. And only too often in later years they openly express their grieving regret at having spurned the gift which God could have given their home to enrich their lives.

### The Responsibility of Parenthood

Children are not only a distinct blessing of God, but they are also a solemn responsibility. No sooner had the Babe Jesus been born than Mary and Joseph felt the responsibility of parenthood. As Herod fiendishly sought to destroy the young Child, they had to flee to Egypt and remain in hiding there, far from their homeland, to protect the life of the holy Child.

At the time Jesus was twelve years old, we find them again perturbed in spirit as they looked for Jesus for three days. What hectic hours these must have been! What joy and relief were theirs when at last they found the Child!

With motherly care Mary followed her Son through his earthly life. Although the Evangelists tell us little of her in relation to her Son, we can gather that Mary followed His footsteps during His earthly life. With a love which only a mother can have she followed Him out to the place of crucifixion to see the end. What pangs must have surged through her heart as she saw her suffering Son!

What a model mother! Mary was one who accepted and carried out the responsibilities of a Christian mother. And on this Mother's Day we may well pause to reflect in gratitude to God the mother's love we enjoyed.

Some of the greatest men who have ever lived have been frank to lay their success in life, next to God, at the feet of their mother. Abraham Lincoln is famous for his saying: *"All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my mother."* Thomas Edison was considered in school a dull scholar, but later on in life he confessed: *"My mother was so sure of me, I could not fail."* Eugene Field said, *"I carried the remembrance of my mother's gentle voice and soothing touch all through life."*

Without doubt a great many of us here could join our voices to these in praise of the faithfulness of our Christian mothers. No doubt many of you still pray the prayers at night which your mother taught you. It is not unusual for a pastor to hear some aged mother or father say: *“I always remember what my mother taught me as a child.”*

How many times has not the warning voice of your mother stood between you and temptation as an angel of God, keeping you from sin! How much the rules of conduct which she taught us guides our footsteps during life! We reflect, too, on the constancy of mother love. How it has stood by us in sickness and shame, guarding us, strengthening us, encouraging us, and helping us! Mother’s Day is a day for us to pause in God’s house to raise a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the blessing of our Christian mother.

It is a time for mothers and fathers of today to realise again their responsibilities towards their children. Of all the beings which God created none is dependent for a longer period of time upon parental care than a child. The reason for that is obvious. The child is a being created for immortality. How important therefore becomes the responsibility of parents towards their children!

God very clearly outlines the duties of parents. The first is that of providing for the physical well-being of the children. Now we almost take that as self-evident, but there are children who are ill-clad, ill-fed, and ill-kept because parents think more of themselves, their luxuries, and their amusements than they do of their own flesh and blood!

Paul says in 1 Timothy 5:8 *that if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

Moreover, parental care only begins with the physical. Of greater importance in the eyes of God is the spiritual guidance which children receive. Jesus says in Mark 10:14, *“Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God.”*

Parents have the high and holy calling of God to *“bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”*<sup>4</sup> God thought so much of this phase of parental responsibility that when He gave the Ten commandments He added, *“these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.”*<sup>7</sup> *“You shall*

*teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*”<sup>5</sup>

Parents in the home are to be the first to tell their children the meaning of Christmas. They are to be the ones to tell them of the love of Jesus. They are the ones who are to fill their young hearts with a love for Christ, His Word, and His will. Seventy-five per cent of character is formed in childhood, child psychologists tell us.

The importance of early child training is evidenced also by the fact that the problems of adult life can often be traced to mishandling in childhood. On the other hand, sound Christian character is moulded during the years in which the child is under the influence of his parents.

A consistent program of child training takes time. But, sadly, too many parents fail as parents because they do not take the required time. One man finally came to his senses. He was talking at Christmas time with a business associate. His fellow asked him what he was giving his boy for Christmas.

He replied, *“I’m going to give him an hour a day.”* The other looked astonished. The man explained that he had neglected his responsibility to guide the spiritual development of his child and said that from now on, no matter how pressing his business became, he would give his child at least one hour of his time each day.

Not only by a conscious program of Christian training but also by example parents are to influence the life of their children. But, sadly, how remiss many are in this regard! How in all the world can a child think it is important to go to church if his parents do not attend with him? How can he learn to pray except he see his parents pray with him? How can he learn to love God’s will except he see his parents live that will out in their lives?

Parents will do well to carry about with them in their daily habits the words of Christ, as written in Matthew 18:6, <sup>6</sup> *“But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”* Certainly Mother’s Day gives all parents time to pause to pray that the Lord may give them wisdom to carry out their important calling.

## 2. Some Important Mother's Day Lessons The Duties Of Children

Many of us face Mother's Day this year also in the role of children. As children God has something to say to us also. If we look again at the blessed family of Jesus, we can learn from Christ Himself the duties of children in the home.

After the incident in Jerusalem we are told that Jesus returned to Nazareth with His parents and was subject unto them.<sup>6</sup> That means that He was obedient to them. In this respect Jesus is a model for all children.

Children ought to acknowledge their parents as God's representatives in their home and in love to God give them obedience. St. Paul writes: ***"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."***<sup>7</sup> And God says, <sup>2</sup> ***"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:*** <sup>3</sup> ***"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."***<sup>8</sup> He points out the blessing that will attend the obedient child. Disobedience only breeds shame and remorse in the end. How much ruin attends disobedience, but how much happiness attends the life of the obedient child!

Not only are children to obey their parents, but they are also to honour them. They are to hold them in high regard. When Solomon became king, he had a throne for his mother placed next to his. In such high regard let children always hold their parents.

Then, too, children need to be reminded that according to God's will they are to serve their parents. We read in 1 Timothy 5:4, <sup>4</sup> ***But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.***

All of us as children have a debt of love towards our parents which we can never repay. But yet we can bring joy to them by serving them. While they are yet with us is the time for us to serve them. Let children assist in the routine work about the house and so lighten the burden of mother.

Especially when parents are old, children are to remember to care for them. We read in Proverbs 23:22, <sup>22</sup> ***Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.***

Human existence is built in a circle. When parents reach the height of their powers, God gives them children to care for, and also their aged parents to provide for. And in this Jesus Himself is our best example.

One of His last words from the Cross is recorded in our text, *When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!”*<sup>27</sup> *Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.*<sup>9</sup> By entrusting Mary to John, Jesus provided for his aging mother, giving her into the care of the disciple whom He loved.

May God give us children who have that spirit of love toward their parents! *“Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well shall fare.”* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 2:16

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:46-48

<sup>3</sup> Psa 127:3, 5

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 6:4

<sup>5</sup> Deut. 6:6-7

<sup>6</sup> Luke 2:51

<sup>7</sup> Eph. 6:1

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 6:2-3

<sup>9</sup> John 19:26-27