

The God-Fearing Mother.

Text: Acts 16:14-15

1) Who is a God-fearing mother?

Suggested Hymns:

2) What do her children owe her?

587, 588, 171 R&S, 343, 592

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 Acts 16:14-15, *“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ So she persuaded us.* (NKJV)

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

Dear friends in Christ,

Once more our nation acknowledges mothers. It has been said that the greatest word in human language is God, the deepest word is soul, the longest word is eternity, the swiftest word is time, the darkest word is sin, the tenderest word is love, the sweetest word is home, and the dearest word is mother. The sacredness and the beauty of motherhood have been immortalised in time past by undying tributes that have been made in art and literature.

No other word expressive of human relationships strikes such a ready response in the hearts of people as the word “mother.” Even the seasoned criminal with a heart of stone very often softens and becomes sentimental when reminded of his mother.

One can understand the spirit of this day with its flowers, gifts, and radiant messages, and its happy reunions in honour of mothers.

Thank God, there are countless sons and daughters throughout the length and breadth of the land who love their mothers as only God-fearing children can, and who wish thank their mothers for all that they have done for them.

Yet, ought not every day, be “Mother’s Day” in the lives of all Christian-minded men and women? Most undeserving sons or daughters are those who think of their mothers only on Mother’s Day. And also, most ungrateful children are those who honour their mothers with tributes of flowers or other gifts on this day, but by their misconduct, disgrace or dishonour her on other days of the year!

Christian mothers would more gladly be honoured by dutiful love and respect in their homes every day than to be placed on a lofty pedestal of praise and adoration once a year.

And what pious and devout mother does not accept the homage paid to her on “her” day in a spirit of deep humility, knowing that much of the praise and honour bestowed upon her more rightly belongs to God!

She is reluctant to lend her ears to flattery, but much more inclined to look upon her important position in the home and the country as a God-given opportunity to fulfil those great duties which the Lord Himself has placed upon her. It is of such a mother that we wish to speak.

God’s inspired Book gives many examples of Christian motherhood. Hannah, the mother of Samuel, was a consecrated mother. She prayed for her son before he was born and gave him his name *“because I have asked him of the Lord.”*¹ Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a God-fearing mother. She worshiped Jesus on the Cross. Lydia, the mother named in our text, was a God-fearing mother. Let us consider *The God-Fearing Mother*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. Who Is A God-Fearing Mother?

The God-fearing mother worships God. Our text says, *“Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.* This is a simple account of Lydia, yet it is abundant with facts which show that she was a God-fearing mother.

She worshiped God. That is most significant when we consider that she was a business woman. Undoubtedly the demands of business upon her time were just as exacting in those days as they are in our day. Competition was ruthless,

and the hours spent in her place of business also must have been long and arduous.

The day of worship could easily have become an opportunity for outdoor relaxation and rest under such circumstances. Yet this mother was not too busy to find time to worship God in His temple and to reverence Him in her home.

Our text says the Lord opened her heart *to heed the things spoken by Paul*. Those words shed even more light on the God-fearing character of Lydia. By the power of God's Holy Spirit she heard the message of the great missionary Paul. It was the message of the everlasting Gospel. Paul preached Christ crucified and Christ risen from the dead. The message of Calvary's Cross and the open Tomb as man's only hope of eternal salvation was to her the pearl of great price.

We are told that she heeded the things spoken by St. Paul. The path of faith in the risen Christ also led this God-fearing mother to be baptised in the name of the Triune God. She became a member of God's household. And what she believed she undoubtedly practiced in everyday life at home and in her business.

But this God-fearing mother, Lydia, also led her children to Christ. She and her household were baptised. The faith which she embraced she taught her children. Is there a nobler ideal for any mother in this world, than to train her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Children never forget the prayers that their mother taught them; the story of Christ and His love, as she tells it, is always remembered.

Two boys who were attending Harvard University went to hear Bob Ingersoll deliver his lectures against Christianity. Walking away from the lecture hall, one of them said to the other: "*Fred, didn't old Ingersoll mop Christianity off the earth tonight?*" Fred replied: "*I'm not so sure that he did. I am inclined to think my good old Christian mother is left yet, and the way she told me the story of Jesus, the Saviour of sinners — I would give neither my old Christian mother nor that story which she told me, for all the Bob Ingersolls that could be crowded on the earth.*"

The God-fearing mother who imparts the fundamentals of Christianity to her children also commits them to the Saviour's care away from home. The son or daughter at college many miles from home seldom become problem children

when Mother at home intercedes with God on their behalf. “A good mother,” a learned college president once said, “is worth a hundred school principals.”

The God-fearing mother endeavours to make the home her greatest sphere of influence. She is the pillar and pulse of the home. We may boast of our great advances in the social and economic liberation of woman. We may place woman on the same industrial level with man, and give her the same cultural and political privileges which man enjoys.

But let us remember that all these advantages will avail us nothing as a people or a nation unless there is every encouragement of wholesome home life. We need more Christian homes in our country today. Judges and other law-enforcement authorities tell us that the biggest business in Australia today still is the crime business.

From where do these criminals come? They come out of our homes. As a rule they come out of homes where the spirit of a God-fearing mother was absent, where Christ was not the Head of the house, the silent Listener at all the conversations, and the unseen Guest at the table, homes which are devoid of every wholesome influence and Christian love and discipline.

There still are too many homes in our country in which mothers cannot be bothered with the Christian training of their children. Very often such mothers are not at home during the greater part of the evening or the day. The care of their children is delegated to the near-by daycare centre or neighbourhood recreation centre while they seek lucrative employment or follow their social interests in the community.

Or worse still, the children are turned out on the street and left to associate with evil companions. Many a criminal has blamed the beginning of his crime-life onto his own godless, selfish mother, who never made the home an attraction for children, never taught them to pray, never loved them enough to make them feel that they were wanted, and treated them as if they were always in the way.

Yes, we need more God-fearing mothers like Lydia, the seller of purple of Thyatira in Asia Minor. We need more homes like hers. We need them. The Church needs them. The country needs them.

Just what the atmosphere of her home must have been is also reflected in the words of the text, ¹⁵ *And when she and her household were baptized, she begged*

us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.”

These words give us a glimpse into Lydia’s home. She invites the Apostle Paul and his co-workers to stay with her and her family. It would be a privilege to have these messengers of God as guests in her family circle. There they would find the spirit of Christ, whom she and her household accepted as their Saviour.

May the Lord give us more Christian homes which are given to hospitality, homes of which our children and even the strangers in our midst are proud, because they bear evidence of the influence of a consecrated, God-fearing mother.

2. What Do Her Children Owe Her?

What do children owe their God-fearing mother? Our answer is, dutiful, respectful² love. We can rightfully assume that the children of Lydia’s household loved their mother for leading them to Christ and that they never forgot their mother for having led them to the true path of eternal salvation which ends in everlasting life.

Church history is full of stories of children who were deeply grateful for having been blessed with a pious mother who never ceased praying for their spiritual welfare.

One of the US presidents,³ turned to his aged mother on his Inaugural Day and in the presence of thousands of his countrymen embraced her with the words: *“Mother, I feel deeply thankful to you for all this.”*

Children should also regard their God-fearing mother as well as their father as God’s representatives on earth. This means that the parental authority of the Christian mother must never be questioned. God has placed her over her children for a purpose.

Scripture says in Ephesians 6:1, ***¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*** In our modern day these words of the Apostle may sound old-fashioned and out of date because they are so ancient. Sophisticated youth so often refuses to admit that mothers know more than they.

“You are well educated,” a initiation speaker told a group of young girl graduates, *“but certainly, you expect to know more twenty years from now than*

you know today.” The graduates seemed pleased with the speaker’s remarks. But then he added: *“If this is so, it is well for you to remember that your mothers already are twenty years ahead of you. Therefore, when you return home, follow your mother’s advice and don’t be too educated to obey her.”*

Family love and respect for our mothers should lead children to lend a helping hand in the home, and to help make the burden of family trials and affliction lighter and more bearable for her.

How often the cross-currents of family interests ignore the God-fearing mother and lead her to tears, when a little less selfishness and more regard for Mother’s happiness would avert those tears and sad moments! In such moments children might do well to remember their mothers’ sacrifices for them throughout all the years of their youthful life.

Therefore, young man, young woman, honour your father, honour your God-fearing mother! Serve your mother, obey your mother, and hold her in love and esteem!

Remember the Saviour who set the noblest example of filial love and respect with the words to His beloved disciple, **“Behold, your mother,”**⁴ care for her, and provide for her in her declining years of life.

To honour your mother in old age is the final debt of gratitude which children owe their God-fearing mother.

Let us close with the words of the hymnist,⁵

To thy father and thy mother
Honour, love, and reverence pay:
This command of God the Father
Christian children must obey.

Help me, Lord, in this sweet duty;
Guide me in Thy steps divine;
Show me all the joy and beauty
Of obedience such as Thine. Amen.

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

¹ 1 Sam. 1:20

² Filial

³ James A. Garfield

⁴ John 19:27

⁵ Hymn 171, Rejoice and Sing