

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY to all the mothers out there. Hope you have a SUPER DAY!!!

We had a brunch after church this morning. Thanks to all who helped with that. May God bless you all this week!

Pastor Don

"Paul Gets New Partners" Acts 15:36- 16:5

May 12, 2013 (Mother's Day)

As the cat began screaming, mother said "Johnny, stop pulling the cat's tail." To which Johnny replied, "I'm not pulling the cat's tail, I'm just holding it; he's doing the pulling."

One day a mom and her 4-year-old daughter were out taking a walk. The little girl reached down and picked up something from the ground. As she started to put it in her mouth the mother took it away from her and said don't put that in your mouth. To which the little girl asked why not mommy? Because it's been lying outside, you don't know where it's been, it's dirty and probably has germs the mother replied. Oh, said the little girl. Then she thought for a few minutes and asked mommy how do you know all this stuff? The mother quickly replied, "All moms know this stuff. It's on the Mommy Test. You have to know it, or they don't let you be a Mommy." After walking along in silence for 2 or 3 minutes, pondering this new information, the little girl exclaimed "Oh...I get it! And if you don't pass the test you have to be the daddy?" "Exactly." The mother replied.

Moms are special people. Someone once said the only place you are sure to find love is at the bottom of a letter from your mother. Two young soldiers were in the trenches of WWI. As the shells came in, one landed right behind them, it just laid there in the mud, and did not explode. They looked at each other and said our moms have been praying for us. A godly mother is one of the greatest gifts God can give us. They pray for us & teach us to pray. They teach us things we need to know in life; like anticipation- "Just wait 'til your father gets home." Mothers teach us about our family history. Hey, you weren't born in a barn! Shut the door! They teach us about genetics; you are just like your father. They teach us about logic; if you fall off that swing and break your neck, you can't go to the store with me. They teach us about medicine; if you don't stop crossing your eyes, they will freeze that way. Mothers teach us the value of things; like friends and homes.

Motherhood is the most important job any woman will ever have. Moms teach us everything we need to know to be an honest, loyal, hard working, trust worthy, depend- able person. They teach us good manners, good behavior, good language skills, and good grooming habits. They feed us, and then teach us to feed ourselves. They wash us and our

clothes and are homes. Then they teach us how do to those things. A mothers life is one of constant giving; giving of things, love, and discipline. Mothers work at home, at church, at work and at school. A mother's work is never done. And just about the time she thinks it might be done, she becomes a grand mother! Truly, the hand that rocks the cradle does rule the world.

Mother's Day is the third most celebrated holiday in the world. Only Christmas and Easter are more popular. And like them, Mother's day was also started in church. On May 10, 1908 Anna May Jarvis got her pastor to set up a day to honor mothers. The first Mother's day service was held that day in Andrews Methodist Church in Grafton West

Virginia. She had a 4 fold purpose for Mother's Day; to honor mothers, to make us better children; to brighten the lives of mothers and to bring families together. In 1914 President Woodrow Wilson declared the 2nd Sunday in May as mother's day. Anna may Jarvis

worked hard to honor not just her mom, but all moms. Ironically, she never got married. She never had any children; the mother of mother's day never got to celebrate her holiday as a mom.

Mothers are special people, with special opportunities to influence others for Christ. We don't have to be parents to help children find Christ. All Christians have opportunities to influence others for Christ. Do we take advantage of them? Do we try to influence young people for Christ? (Pray)

Paul and Barnabas had been through a lot together. Barnabas defended Paul in Jerusalem. It was Barnabas who brought Paul to Antioch and the two of them ministered for a year there building the church. Then they were sent out on a missionary journey and they took John Mark with them. Col 4:10 tells us that John Mark is Barnabas' cousin. This is the Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark. It was to his home that Peter went when he was freed from prison by an angel. It is this John Mark who is the bone of contention between Paul and Barnabas. He left them in Pamphylia on their 1st missionary journey. We are not told why John Mark left. Paul did not want to take him again & risk a repeat performance. Barnabas insisted on taking him and giving him a 2nd chance. Do we believe in giving others a second chance? God's grace gives each of us a 2nd chance.

Luke tells us that this contention between them became so sharp that they parted ways. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus and Paul took Silas and went to Syria & Cilicia. There are times when Christians will not agree on certain things. Paul and Barnabas did not let their quarrel affect the church, they did not bring it before them, they settled it on their own and parted as friends. Eventually Paul made up with Mark as well. In 2Tim4:11 Paul writes "Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry."

Romans 8:28 tells us that all things work together for good. God allowed Paul and Barnabas to break up their team, but now He had 2 missionary teams going out instead of just 1. God is always working, even through conflicts and problems. Sometimes God uses conflicts and disagreements to strengthen us; our walk, our faith our commitment to Him. Do we seek God's will for the solution to our conflicts and disagreements, or do we have to have our own way? Do we follow His leading, or our own desires?

In chapter 16, we are introduced to Timothy, a young Christian man of mixed parentage and great faith. 2Tim 1:5 "when 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." Luke tells us in verse 2 that it was. "He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium." "Well spoken of" means well witnessed. Timothy did not have to tell people he was a Christian, they could see Christ alive in his life. Can others see Christ alive in our lives?

Being the son of Jew and a Greek gave Timothy access to both cultures. This dual citizenship would have been a good asset in his ministry. But it was not without its problems as well. To the Jews, Timothy was a half breed, like the despised Samaritans.

This is why Paul circumcised him. Circumcision was a mark of the Jews. Boy babies were circumcised on the 8th day of their lives. Because the Jews knew Timothy's father was Greek, he would have had limited effectiveness. Jews would have felt Timothy had renounced his Jewish heritage and chosen to live life as a Gentile. By being circumcised, he showed them that he was truly a Jew and was able to minister to them more fully.

Timothy's circumcision had nothing to do with faith. Salvation was not the issue here. Paul tells us in 1 Cor 7:19 " . Galatians 5:6 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.

Timothy agreed to be circumcised not to be saved but because he was saved.

Timothy wanted to do God's will and his being circumcised made doing God's will easier for him. He was now able to reach all people equally. Timothy was not required to be circumcised. The Jerusalem council made that clear in chapter 15. He voluntarily was circumcised to overcome any barriers to his witness. Sometimes we must go beyond the call of duty in order to carry out the mission God has given us. These men worked hard carrying out their God given mission and the church grew and was strengthened daily.

Are we carrying out our God given mission? We are all to go and make disciples; are we doing that? Parents are especially called to make disciples. Proverbs 22:6 says "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

This command to parents is also a promise for parents from God; if we train our children correctly, they will also follow Christ. Jesus told us in John 14:15 that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments. Are we keeping them? Are we training up our children in the way that they should

go? Are we training them to be like Jesus, or are we teaching them to be like us?

Children indeed are a precious gift to us from God. How we raise them is our gift back to God. Timothy's mother Eunice was a good Jewish believer who raised her son in the way of God. She taught him the scriptures. 2Tim 3:15 "and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Training up a child in the way they should go means teaching them the scriptures. Are we teaching the bible to our children? Can they see it at work in us? Remember that our lives are the only bible some people will ever read. Are we a good reflection of Jesus for our children to see? Are we teaching them about Him?

A child with a Christian mother has a great asset. The greatest gift mothers can give their children is to share their faith and try to develop great faith in their children. When asked, "What was the greatest book he ever read," Abraham Lincoln replied "my mother". Abe Lincoln also said no one is poor who had a Godly mother. Godly mothers don't just teach their children the bible. They teach them how to apply it to their lives and how to pray for guidance and direction. Parents not only teach their children how to pray, they pray for their children. Prayer is how we talk to God. It is the Christians most under used tool. It is very important for parents to pray for their children and to teach their children to pray. Parents not only need to pray that their children, that they grow up to be loving, caring, serving, and knowledgeable Christians, but for themselves, that God will give them the strength, wisdom, and energy to be good parents. Eunice dedicated her son to God. Good Christian parents dedicate their children to God. This makes the parents responsible to the whole congregation to be the best Christian parents they can be. Eunice did a good job raising her son. Are we doing a good job of raising our children in the love, knowledge and admonition of the Lord? Eunice had help raising Timothy. Her mother Lois also was great influence in Timothy's Christian life. We do not need to be a physical parent in order to help children grow up knowing Jesus. All Christians have an influence in the lives of others. Never underestimate the power of a godly influence on someone else. We may never know in this life how much we have helped or hindered someone else. Paul had a great influence on Timothy. Paul considered Timothy his spiritual son. Do we have those that we consider to be our spiritual children? Do we pray for them?

Do we teach them properly? Do we help them with their spiritual walk?

In addition to scripture and praying, parents need to teach their children how to worship. They need to worship with their children. Are we teaching our children to worship God? To revere Him, to trust Him, to pray to Him, to study His word? It is our responsibility as Christians to do these things, and to teach our children to do them as well.

Susanna Wesley taught her children well. She had a hard life but lived it fully for God. She had 19 children, 9 of them died as infants. Only 8 were still alive to bury her. She fought poverty all her life. She survived her house burning down, her barn falling down, failing health and being a strong willed woman in a man dominated era. Born in 1669, the 25th child to a preacher and his wife, Susanna was very familiar with a preacher's household and a large family; it is therefore not surprising that she married a preacher & had a large family herself. She raised 3 preachers Samuel Wesley Jr., John and Charles.

In her book "Susanna Wesley Biography", Susan Pellowe writes these words; "Although she never preached a sermon or published a book or founded a church, Susanna Wesley is known as the Mother of Methodism. Why? Because two of her sons, John Wesley and Charles Wesley, as children consciously or unconsciously will, applied the example and teachings and circumstances of their home life. Their early purpose was to help people reshape their own lives for the better and almost before John and Charles knew it, they were shaping a movement that would reform not only individuals, but the church and the society of England. Because they behaved purposefully and methodically in the Holy Club they organized at Oxford, other less disciplined students who had not had Susanna for a mother derisively called them "method-ists". The Wesley brothers accepted the term as a badge of honor for their growing movement."

Susanna taught all her children well. She spent quality, individual time with each child. Each day of the week, she would spend 1 solid hour with a different child. "During this hour she would inquire after the state of their soul on its journey as well as their progress, fears, expectations, and goals in other endeavors. Thus began lifelong habits of regular self examination."

Susanna taught her children to read and study the bible, to pray and to work hard, and to examine themselves; their motives and attitudes. She set them a good example to follow. Are we setting a good example for our children to follow? Are we teaching them the right stuff? Can they see us doing what we are teaching them? Are we good examples for our children?

As Christians, God wants us to use all the blessing and assets He gives us for his glory. One of the things He gives us is His love. Christians need to share God's love with everybody. Especially their own families. Parents need to teach their children that Jesus loves them; died for them; and has a purpose for them. Is that what we are teaching our children? Are we raising them in the ways of the Lord, like Eunice and Lois did? Like Susanna Wesley did? Are we reaching out to young believers like Paul did to Timothy? Are we training our children in the way they should go? Amen, let's pray.

