

A Mother's Love

¹⁶ Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him.

¹⁷ One of them said, "My lord, this woman and I live in the same house. I had a baby while she was there with me.

¹⁸ The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us.

¹⁹ "During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him.

²⁰ So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast.

²¹ The next morning, I got up to nurse my son--and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne."

²² The other woman said, "No! The living one is my son; the dead one is yours." But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one is yours; the living one is mine." And so they argued before the king.

²³ The king said, "This one says, 'My son is alive and your son is dead,' while that one says, 'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"

²⁴ Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword for the king.

²⁵ He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other."

²⁶ The woman whose son was alive was filled with compassion for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!"

²⁷ Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother."

²⁸ When all Israel heard the verdict the king had given, they held the king in awe, because they saw that he had wisdom from God to administer justice.

It doesn't seem often enough that we celebrate motherhood and give thanks to the moms who raised us and sacrificed so much to us. They cook, they turn a house into a home, they put a bandaid on a scraped knee or console us when we face disappointments. They are our greatest fan when we succeed. I've discovered too, that they instruct us about life.

- Mother's teach us about foresight: "Make sure you wear clean underwear in case you're in an accident."
- Mothers teach us about logic: "If you fall out of that tree and break your neck, don't come crying to me."

- Mothers teach us about prayer: “You better pray that comes out of the carpet.”
- Mothers teach us about time travel: “If you don’t straighten up, I’m going to knock you into the middle of next week.”
- Mothers teach us about contradiction: “Shut your mouth and eat your dinner.”
- Mothers teach us about contortionism: “Will you look at the dirt on the back of your neck.”
- Mothers teach us about the circle of life: “I brought you into this world, and I can take you out.”

The passage that was read this morning is meant to illustrate the new wisdom that Solomon possessed as he became king. Perhaps you remember how he acquired that wisdom. I Kings 3:4-9 says that Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings at Gibeon and the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask whatever you want and I will give it to you.” What he asked for was “A discerning heart to govern the people.” This was another way of saying, “I want wisdom.” So in this story today of the two prostitutes, we find Solomon’s wisdom at work. Let’s take a look at some of these lessons and how they relate to motherhood.

First, a good mother values her children. The two women in the story lived in the same house and gave birth just three days apart. They were alone and ostracized from the community and left to tend to their babies on their own. It was common in their time (given their profession and their lot in life) to simply discard their babies. How often we see that today. A child left in a dumpster or killed and thrown in a landfill. These two mothers from this most disreputable occupation did not do this. Instead, they loved and valued their children. A mother values her child for many reasons. First, children are image-bearers. That is, they are made in the image of God. (Gen. 1:26-27). This is not said about any other part of God’s creation. Humankind, however is created in the image of God. So each child born into this world is in the image of God.

Secondly, they have value because of their potential impact. We never know what a child will become? Did Albert Einstein’s mother know what his potential would be in contributing to science? Did Mozart’s mother know what her son would contribute to the world of music? Did Abraham Lincoln’s mother or Franklin D. Roosevelt’s mother know what these babies would become at the height of their potential?

The two women in today’s text valued their children for a variety of reasons. Tragically, one of the boys died when his mother accidentally rolled over on the child in her sleep. This tragedy happens even today. They tell parents not to fall asleep with their babies in bed with them. Likely, this mother had no crib and barely had a place for both of them to sleep together in one bed. When she realized what she had done, she got up and switched her dead child with the child of the other woman.

In the morning, we’re told that the second mother awoke to unbearable grief when she saw the dead baby lying at her breast. But like any mother, she knew her own child and this was not her

child. She knew her own son. So like often happens today when there is a dispute, the two women brought the child to a wise and impartial judge. The judge was the king, in this case. The mothers had no witnesses to collaborate their testimony as to what happen. It was the word of one woman against the other.

Remember, Solomon had been given discernment from God to govern his people and to distinguish right and wrong. This case of the dead baby would certainly put his newfound wisdom to a test. However, his plan for sorting out this dispute was brilliant. He ordered that the child be cut in two and each woman would receive a half. Of course, the REAL mother of the living child cried for mercy and asked that the child be given to the other woman. Instantly, the king knew that this was the real mother.

A good mother wants the very best for her baby. She would never do anything to cause her baby harm. The mother was willing to lose custody of her child to save his life.

Can we not see some important lessons for today's mothers? What loving parent would not want the best for their child? Let me ask you, are you willing to sacrifice your own time and convenience so that your child can hear about Jesus? Some parents are not so concerned. They are quick to involve their child in other activities, but often neglect Paul's advocacy to "Train up a child in the way they will go, and when they are older, they will not depart from it."

An acquaintance of mine had great aspirations for his child to play hockey. The kid started playing when he was in elementary school. The games were on Sundays and the child grew up learning hockey. He attended Sunday school only occasionally. When he was in high school, he quit hockey and began using alcohol and drugs.

Other people I've known have raised champion athletes who didn't know Jesus.

I would hope we care enough about our children to introduce them to our savior. I would hope that this would our main priority. Parents, if we are not enthusiastic about our own faith and if God is not present in our homes, then our children will not see our faith as important.

A mother's love may also allow her child to get into trouble to save his or her life. I read in the newspaper recently about a mother who came home and found her child using drugs. She called the police and her child was arrested. She said she would rather see her child in jail than in the morgue.

A mother's love might allow a child to be disciplined at school in order to keep the child out of trouble. A mother might ground a child to keep the child out of trouble and safe. A mother's love might keep that child away from certain friends and bad influences for the good of the child.

Nobody ever said parenting is easy. God has entrusted us with our children. It is a spiritual responsibility to raise a child. It is a spiritual responsibility to establish boundaries and say “NO” to the child and to discipline them. It is our task to set standards for them to live by.

Conclusion..

Like the woman who did anything to save her child, are you willing to save your child? Nobody said this parenting thing would be easy. It’s hard work, but it is God working through us as an instrument to raise our kids. It is a holy responsibility. God has given you the resources of his word to help you do the job. God has given you the wisdom to carry out this task.

Proverbs tells us that a child “will rise up and call her blessed.” But that is in the last chapter of Proverbs (chapter 31). Up until that time, there are some very hard lessons and hard advice on raising children. That child will only call her blessed when the child has come to respect the parent for making the hard choices of parenting. How many of us said in a fit of rage when we were children, “I won’t treat my children that way!” **AND NOW WE ARE DOING THE SAME THING OUR PARENTS DID!**

My prayer on this Mother’s Day is for God’s wisdom for families as they raise children. I would challenge grandparents to pray for their children – but never micromanage their parenting. Just pray for them and offer your support. Let’s pray.