May 12, 2019 – Mother’s Day

**What to Look For!**

Proverbs 31:10-31

Mother’s Day – As we honor our mother’s today -

* biological mothers, as well as Mother’s in the Faith - mothers who have adopted - foster mothers - we also remember that there are those who desperately desire to be a mom, but have struggled to conceive. Today is a great day for many - but it is also a difficult day - and we remember that the Scriptures teach us of some of the greatest women of the faith who struggled to conceive.

We pray for them - we pray for and honor all of our moms, grandmoms, and all the grand ladies of our church family - While we pray, we ask God for His will, and we trust our lives to His care.

The Bible says that children are a reward – sometimes Moms wonder – “for what?”

Children are a reward, but sometimes they can be a frustrating reward. Erma Bombeck said in one of her books that she was frustrated by her children from the moment they were born. She remembered HOW she got three kids, but she couldn’t recall WHY. She decided maybe they were a 4-H project that got out of hand.

In the book Disciplines of a Beautiful Woman, Anne Ortlund describes an experience with her eleven-year-old son. She had taken him to the pediatrician for a routine physical exam. Before seeing the doctor, however, the nurse weighed and measured the child and attempted to obtain a medical history.

“Tell me, Mrs. Ortlund,” said the nurse, “how is he sleeping?”

The little boy answered for himself, “I sleep very well.” The nurse wrote that down.

“How’s his appetite, Mrs. Ortlund?”

“I eat everything,” said the boy. She wrote that down.

Mrs. Ortlund, how are his bowels?”

The boy stated, “A, E, I, O, U.”

Let’s not forget the grandmothers!

WHERE HAVE ALL THE GRANDMAS GONE? Author Unknown

In the dim and distant past,

When life’s tempo wasn’t fast,

Grandma used to rock and knit,

Crochet, tat and baby-sit.

When the kids were in a jam,

They could always call on “Gram.”

In that day of gracious living,

Grandma was the gal for giving.

But today she’s in the gym,

Exercising to keep slim,

She’s off touring with the bunch,

Or taking clients out to lunch.

Going north to ski or curl,

All her days are in a whirl.

Nothing seems to stop or block her,

Now that Grandma’s off her rocker!!!

As a matter of fact – let’s not forget anyone today!

As a result of this message, I hope that mothers and grandmothers are blessed and honored – I hope that fathers and husbands will honor the wives and mothers in their lives so that those women will want to be a blessing to their families – a godly man will build up his wife and encourage her - not just today but always.

I hope that women will be inspired to live by Biblical characteristics for godly women – and I hope that young people will honor their mothers – young ladies will see what they should aspire to – and young men will see what kind of women they should be looking for –

Guys – she’s not just going to be your sex partner – she’s going to be the mother of your children -

**Big Idea: If you desire to be a godly woman, or if you are looking for a godly woman, the Bible tells us what to look for.**

Proverbs 31:10-31 - Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is more precious than rubies.

Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life.

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life…

She is energetic and strong, a hard worker.

She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night…

She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy.

She has no fear of winter for her household, for everyone has warm clothes…

She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future.

When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness.

She carefully watches everything in her household and suffers nothing from laziness.

Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her:

“There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!”

Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.

Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

There are many women in the Bible who fit this description and today I am going to mention 5 of them – but I’m not just going to give you an example of five women whom you can’t see … touch … smell … hear … I’m going to give you an example of a real, live, flesh and blood woman of God who displays all these qualities. I’m going to give you an example of someone who is an example to all of us.

I’m going to give an example for every woman in this church – and for every man looking for a great wife – I’m going to give you what to look for!

**T.S.:** What does the Bible tell us to look for in a godly woman? 5 characteristics - exemplified by 5 Biblical women, and at least one woman among us.

**> Submission to the Lord**

**Mary - Mother of Jesus**

She is not a god – she is not a goddess – she is not a co-redeemer – The Bible does not lead us to pray to her.

But, when we think of the characteristic of submission to the Lord, we have to think of Mary!

Teenage girl – looking forward to being married – loved God … walking one day an the angel comes … tells her the most incredible story …

“I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” – Luke 1:38

What character would she have to have to be chosen by God to nurture His Son during His formative years? We are told the greatest influence on a child’s life comes from the mother in their first seven years!

She didn’t hesitate like Moses –

She didn’t hesitate like Jeremiah –

She didn’t run like Jonah – These were great “**Men** of God!”

Mary submitted to the will of the Lord

Sharon -

Sharon gave her life to Jesus, began a real relationship with Him, and accepted His grace to forgive her sins when she was 10 years old – She has walked with Jesus since that time - she has never left her submission to the Lord –

Went to college away from her sisters – called to ministry –

Had opportunity to marry others – but she was called to ministry –

Had opportunity to marry a pastor – but following the leading of the Lord for her life, she didn’t feel he was the one for her - and today is no longer in ministry – DISCERNMENT

Willing to wait for God’s timing –

TOTALLY SUBMITTED TO THE WILL OF THE LORD!

Every woman can look to Mary and my wife as an example of being totally submitted to the willing of the Lord!

**> Faithful to Family**

**Ruth**

Story of Ruth … She submitted to Naomi as the matriarch – the one God had put in charge of the family –

She did everything Naomi told her to do –

- worked in the fields

- worked in Boaz’s field

- went to Boaz at night –

She did what she was told, not because it was the enjoyable thing to do, but because it was the right thing to do to be committed to her family!

SHARON

One thing I know beyond any doubt – Sharon is committed to me and to our family! There are many times that I have fallen short of being the best husband in the world – She has always loved me and shown me grace for my shortcomings. She has been committed to me. She has never used my mistakes as a reason to tear me down, give up on me, or give up on our marriage. She has brought me back to the Lord when at times I felt so far from Him!

When we got married –HER VOWS…Ruth 1:16-17 - Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

Shortly after our marriage we left the U.S. – to the Philippines – at the time we thought we could be going into great danger – ultimately, we were stopped on every attempt – but she was willing!

She is also committed to our children - and now our grandchildren - not grandchildren of blood, some not even legally, but they are grandchildren of love. There may be Moms and Grandmas just as committed as her - but none more committed than her. There is no question about her priorities.

We all know this - Jesus is Number 1 – not me, or the kids, or the grandkids –

That’s what I was looking for – she has lived it out! Every day! This is what makes marriage great! Spouse number one doesn’t work - …

If you strive to please a person first, you will fail! When you strive to please Jesus first – He accepts you when you fail - and gives you strength to have love and grace for the others around you in your life and family even more.

Our kids know who is first in her life … They know their place – they accept it because they’ve never known anything else!

She is the greatest pastor’s wife in the world because she has always had her family and the church in the proper places … I never have to tell her to do any of this because her priorities are right and her heart is right!

Homeschooled for 9 years … went to work after 20 years … college …

She could have forsaken those priorities through the years for more money and more things – but money and stuff have never been her priorities! Family and the faith poured into our kids …that’s what has mattered to her!

I’m thankful to God and to Sharon that our kids serving the Lord today! She has followed God’s leading in our ministry no matter what sacrifices have been called for –

I surrendered my children to the experts - God and my wife! They never had a better teacher and will never have a better atmosphere than what Sharon established in our home.

Sharon has always been completely faithful to our family!

**> Surrender to God’s leading**

**Hannah**

1st Samuel 1:10-11 - Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. And she made this vow: “O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime…

She wanted the child so bad, but was willing to give him up to the Lord … Samuel …

SHARON

Sitting out in front of the old building … I explained where I might be going … painted it as bad as I could … her response …

There are Pastor’s wives who are just in it because their husband is. They could take it or leave it. They have no part in the ministry. They just occupy a pew (sometimes) and don’t even get as involved as the average church-goer. I have seen this cause division …

As Hannah was willing to give up her son, Sharon has never desired anything this world has to offer more than being in the ministry with me.

A while back I spoke at a meeting in our community … Kris Kidwell: I had a perfect seat where I could see both you and your wife, as you were preaching, and it was awesome just watching her face, and seeing the support she had for you in her eyes. I even pointed it out to Ryan as you were speaking. I just thought it was cool!

SURRENDERED TO GOD’S CALL!

**> Unending commitment to the Lord**

**Anna**

Luke 2:36-38 - Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

Willing to be the bride of the Lord … after her husband died …

Ephesians 1:13-14 - … when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

NIV - …Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal…

Confession to make – I am not Sharon’s first husband – this is not her first marriage!

She was married to Jesus before she was married to me! She is sealed in Him! Just as she wears a ring on her third left finger to symbolize to everyone that she is married to me, the Holy Spirit shines from her, and has marked her to show that she is married to Jesus Christ - and everyone who knows her sees that!

This could help so many unmarried women … be marred to Jesus first - be content in Him - let Him bring into your life what He wants to bring into your life - rather than trying to make it happen yourself.

**> Sacrifice - without thinking it a sacrifice**

**Lydia**

Acts 16:13-15 - On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there. One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. She was baptized along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. “If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we agreed.

A gathering of believers with no place to meet … opening her home to others … one of the greatest churches of the New Testament was started because a woman was willing to sacrifice of her own personal comfort –

SHARON

Sharon has been invaluable in my ministry –

I started 2 churches – hard to believe I did the first one without her!

The church in Indianapolis didn’t just start because the District Office looked at a map … we prayed together – we sought God together – she wanted to do it as much as me –

We went door to door … Anna … had meetings in our home …

After ten years there I was asked to take a position of statewide leadership – she didn’t want to do it … giving birth to that church was like giving birth to a child …

But … 9 months before we came here … God started stirring …

We were praying … we were willing … our home again has been a gathering place - the women know more than the men what it’s like to get your home ready for anyone to come …

The men just say, “Here we are!”

Sharon will never consider the things of this world as more important than the ministry!

**Concl:** I know my wife is not the only woman here today with these characteristics. I’m grateful that in this church family we have several ladies who are great examples to others - to our younger women - to our younger men -

Ladies - find someone younger - find someone older …

These are the characteristics you want to strive for in your life –

Guys – you want to be a blessing to your wife so that these traits will naturally flow out of her

Younger people – this is what you are to aspire to –

> Submission to the Lord

> Faithful to family

> Surrender to God’s leading

> Unending commitment to the Lord

> Sacrifice - without thinking it a sacrifice

**Invitation -**

**Blessing -**