

A Model Mother for us All

Luke 1:26 - 47

Big Idea: God expects us to honor our mothers.

Intro: We live in a society today that puts down the Biblical view of the family and Christian motherhood like never before.

Illus: Tony Campolo says that his wife is a brilliant woman. She has a PHD and is capable of pursuing a very profitable career. But she elected to stay home with her children when they were young. Her decision didn't bother her at all except when other women would ask, "What do you do?" She would answer, "I'm a homemaker. I stay home and take care of my children and my husband." They would usually respond with "Oh" and then ignore her.

So Mrs. Campolo came up with this response when she was asked what she did: "I'm socializing two Homo-sapiens in Judeo-Christian values so they'll appropriate the eschatological values of utopia. What do you do?" They would often blurt out "I'm a doctor" or "I'm a lawyer" and then wander off with a dazed look in their eyes.

With the value of motherhood being demeaned by the culture I'd like to lift up God's perspective of it from the Bible. We'll look at someone in the Bible who is a good model for us all.

Luke 1: 26b – 40 "...God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.

And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's now in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her. A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

1. Mary had some difficulties that she experienced.

Mary had to deal with a negative reputation.

You and I know that the child Mary bore was conceived of God. We understand that. But almost no one else did. Only Joseph, after the angel had revealed it to him, accepted that story.

The rest of the community would not accept it, and in this little town of Nazareth, tongues must have been wagging, and gossip rampant. "There's Mary. She's pregnant and she's not married."

Years later on, in John 8, when Jesus was being confronted by religious leaders, they pointed at Him and said, "We are not illegitimate children," indicating that even as Jesus grew into adulthood He was perceived as an illegitimate child. So Mary had to deal with a negative reputation.

Some mothers have that in their past today. And their children may throw it up to them. "Well, you were pregnant before you were married, so who are you to lecture us on morality?" Or, "You've been married and divorced 3 times, so who are you to talk to us about the sanctity of marriage?" Or, "You were a real party animal when you were young, so who are you to tell us what time to come home?"

That's difficult to deal with. But it's not impossible. In fact, it presents an opportunity for teaching our children that as Christians we're saved by God's grace, and He has forgiven us of our past sins. We're not going to repeat them and that's why we're teaching our children not to repeat them either.

Mary had poverty to deal with.

Everything in the Bible indicates that Mary and Joseph were poor. Jesus, the Son of God, was born in a barn, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and laid in a manger – a very meager beginning. And all through His life we're reminded of the poverty that is there.

Luke 9:58 Jesus told him, "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to sleep."

Maybe, as a parent today, you're feeling financial pressures, you're not able to give your child everything other children get. Maybe you feel it's not fair that you can't buy expensive sneakers and designer clothes for your child. You're tempted to run up your credit card to make sure your child gets everything everybody else's child gets.

Let me encourage you to resist that temptation and use the opportunity to teach important lessons. Children need to learn that the most valuable things in life money can't buy - the things you spend lots of money on only last for a while, and then are gone.

ILL. Jean Baron writes in Readers Digest about the old mobile home where she lived with her teen-age son. She said, "The home was structurally unsound, and the plumbing always leaked." She was ashamed when her son brought friends home because of their meager surroundings.

One day she learned that her son's best friend, who had all the material things anyone could want, had run away from home. She said, "I was puzzled, so I asked my son why." He explained, "Well, mom, at their house they had a lot of environment but not very much love. Here, we have lots of love, but not very much environment!"

hated her child.

When He was born, King Herod tried to kill Him. Mary and Joseph had to flee into Egypt where they lived as strangers just in order to protect Him from the forces of evil.

APPL. I think it is time for us to take some steps to protect our children from the Evil One, too. That may mean turning off the TV and monitoring their usage of the internet. That may mean checking what your children are being taught at school and countering any bad influences by making sure they get plenty of Christian training and influence.

Most certainly we need to discipline and train our children to respect adults and to respect authority. I know that's counter-culture, but parents need to realize that these are dangerous times for kids. We need to make sure that we're doing everything we can to protect them.

Mary had to raise her children alone

We know that Joseph was with her at least until Jesus was 12 when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem.

But after that we never hear of Joseph again.

There are a lot of single parents today. And I want to say to you single moms, and dads too, "You are the unsung heroes of the church." I mean that from the depths of my heart. If you are a victim of divorce, or if you have lost a mate and are left with children you must raise alone, you are the unsung heroes of the church.

You work all week and come home exhausted. But you get your kids up on Sunday morning, wash their faces, put them in their best clothes, and bring them to church because you want more than anything else for them to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. My hat is off to you. You are the unsung heroes of the church.

Finally, Mary had to deal with a child that was rejected

I think that was one of the hardest things that we do as parents.

A parent says, "I can remember when my son came home crying because no one would eat lunch with him in the lunchroom. I wanted to go to school and beat those kids to within an inch of their lives. And every time I saw one of my children rejected or left out, I hurt more than they did." So you can imagine how Mary must have hurt as she saw Jesus being rejected.

Jerry Clower, a comedian whose size would make you think he is a professional football player, says that his son was the field goal kicker for his high school football team. One day his son had a chance to kick the goal that would give his team the lead and maybe even win the game, but the kick went wide of the goal.

A man about 4 rows from where Jerry Clower was sitting jumped up and began heckling loudly. "Who is that kicker anyway? He couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a football." And he went on and on, ridiculing Jerry's son.

Clower said, "I took all of it I could, and then I made my way through the crowd, sat down next to that guy, looked him right in the eye, and said, 'You need to thank Jesus that you're still alive.'" The guy said,

“What do you mean?” Clower answered, “That’s my son you’re ridiculing, and the only reason you’re not dead right now is because I’m a Christian and Jesus won’t let me kill you.”

It’s pretty tough, isn’t it, to see your children abused? Simeon told her, “A sword will pierce your soul.” Mary must have felt that when they hurled these accusations at Him: “He’s demon possessed. He’s guilty of blasphemy. He’s crazy. He’s a drunkard.” And can you imagine the pain she felt as she watched Jesus crucified on Calvary’s Hill?

2. Mary had some resources that helped her.

Well, Mary also had some resources that helped her in being a model mother. Here are some of them:

She was doing God’s will.

Luke 1:38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”

There is something reassuring in knowing that you’re acting in harmony with the will of God. Everything else may be falling apart, but if you know that you’re doing what God wants you to do, there’s something very reassuring about that.

James Keller said, “Every mother has the breath-taking privilege of sharing with God in the creation of a new life. She helps bring into existence a soul that will last for all eternity.”

Mothers, realize that your greatest responsibility as a mother is to raise your child to know Jesus Christ, and to accept Him as Lord and Savior so he or she can live for all eternity with Him. If you succeed there, you’re successful.

And you’re responsible - not the babysitter, not the nanny, not the schoolteacher - you are responsible for the soul of your child. There is something very special about knowing you’re in harmony with God’s will.

Mary had a supportive husband for at least 12 years.

One of the finest things we can do, men, is to support our wives. Let them know we love them and are behind them and will support them in virtually every decision they make.

Willard Harley in his book, “His Needs, Her Needs” points out that both husbands and wives have needs in their relationship. He says that her needs are these: she needs affection, someone who will treat her with great tenderness. Also, she needs conversation, the sharing of the heart.

Then, she needs honesty and openness - don’t keep secrets from her. She also needs security, both physical and financial. Finally, she needs relational commitment. She needs to know that she is the absolute priority in the relationship.

Jack Benny was rather shy when he was young. One day at work he saw a young lady that greatly attracted his attention. But he was too shy to speak to her. So he went to the florist and ordered one red rose to be sent to her without any card enclosed. And every day he repeated that order.

Well, after 4 days of receiving one red rose each day, the young lady went to the florist and asked who was sending them. The florist told her that it was some guy who worked where she did by the name of Jack Benny. “Yeah,” she said, “I think I know who he is.”

So she searched Jack out and asked him why he was sending her those roses. He told her that he wanted to ask her out, and she accepted his invitation. And other dates followed that first one. But still, every day, she continued to receive one red rose.

Then Jack and Mary got engaged, and Mary figured that the red roses would stop. But still they came. Finally, they were married, and even on the honeymoon she continued to receive one red rose each day. But once the honeymoon was over, she figured that the roses would stop.

But month after month, then year after year, all their married life, every day without fail she received a red rose. Finally, Jack Benny died. But the very next day, here came another red rose. Thinking that maybe the florist somehow hadn't heard, she called to tell him of Jack's death and that he could now stop sending the roses.

He answered, "But you don't understand. Before he died, Jack made all the arrangements. You'll receive one red rose every day for the rest of your life."

Men, if you start showing your wife some attention, she may not know how to react. But spend the time and effort, and it will mean far more than you'll ever imagine.

Mary had a close, understanding friend.

She went to see Elizabeth, a relative, years older than Mary. But they had similar experiences because Elizabeth was also expecting a child, and her child was also a miraculous birth because she was past the age of childbearing. So Elizabeth served as an encourager to Mary during a difficult time.

APPL. I'm convinced, with marriages breaking apart, that there is a tremendous need for the extended family. We're seeing more and more the value of the roles that aunts and uncles and grandparents are playing in raising children. And that extended family could also include the church.

We're brothers and sisters, and in Jesus we're all a part of the same family. So look around, there may be somebody here who really needs a word of encouragement.

Maybe there is an older woman here who could put her arm around a younger woman and say, "I know things are tough for you, and I want you to know I'm here for you. Is there anything I can do that would be of help?" Paul told Timothy that the older women in the church should teach/mentor the younger women.

Or maybe you can call someone up and say, "Hey, why don't I baby sit for you this week, so you and your husband can have an evening out?" Wouldn't it be great if we could begin to be the extended family?

Maybe that's the reason the writer of Hebrews said, "Don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together." We really need each other. The church needs to be that kind of fellowship as we become an extended family for each other.

Mary had a Savior

Luke 1:46, 47 "Then Mary said, "My soul praises the Lord; my heart rejoices in God my Savior"

Mary was not sinless, only Jesus was, because God was His Father

Well, Mary was rewarded. She was there when Jesus died on the cross for her sins and ours and she was there when He was raised from the dead. She was among the 120 when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost. She saw her other children accept Jesus as Messiah.

Mother's Day may be a tough day for some of you. I've not always been sensitive to that because I've generally thought of it as a happy day. But I do realize for some that is not necessarily so. If your mother is dead, it may be a sad day for you. You have memories of her, and you long once again for her words and her presence.

If you're childless, then you may feel empty today.

If you had a poor relationship with your mother, spending your time arguing and fighting with each other, you may feel guilty today.

Or if you have rebellious children who have rejected your prayers and teaching, you may feel like a failure today, or that you have disappointed God.

The good news is that the Bible talks not just about imperfect earthly families and how we can help them. But the Bible also talks about the eternal family. One day we will be with God who is our heavenly Father. One day we will be with Jesus. One day we will be a part of the great family of God in the place that God has prepared for us through Jesus Christ. And there we'll live with Him for all eternity.

In the meantime, we need to do everything we can to make our families the best they can be to the glory of God. That starts by making sure Jesus is our Savior along with everyone else in the family.