

Mother's Day Message
May 13, 2007 CrossRoads Community Fellowship
Hebrews 6:13-20

I appreciate Rodolfo's sermon last week. I read it and the image of the commitment move and the story of Jacob and Esau have stayed with me. Thank you Rodolfo for a word for God we can all hang onto

For those of you who didn't hear that message, a commitment move refers to a climber in a position of having to make a move of total commitment in order to advance. It is when the climber has to remove his feet and one or both hands from the wall, making a leap or a long reach, totally committing, so he or she can reach the next hand hold on the rock or wall. Rodolfo helped us see it is a calculated move and means total trust in what you're tied to. It is not for the timid.

He helped us see through the story of Jacob and Esau that making a decision based on feeling or a momentary need can have life long consequences as was the case when Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew...because he was really hungry he made a decision and it changed his life. It was a commitment move but not the right one!. Rodolfo helped us apply these to our faith journeys and reminded us that we all face situations and decisions in life that are commitment moves of faith.

When we make a commitment move – and commitment moves are required in this faith - based on God's clear direction and in agreement with his word - though it may be a risk or a great challenge, though it may not necessarily be what we have desired - we do so because God is King of our lives and hearts and that's a support we can trust.

Hebrews 6:13 -20 assures us of who we are tied to

10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. **11** We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure... And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised... **17** Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. **18** God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. **19** We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, **20** where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

If we base our decisions on our feelings, desires, impulses, or if we allow our past to drive our decisions– we do so without the security of being firmly connected to God and we risk a move into disobedience, and sin.

As followers of Jesus our life decisions are faith based decisions and have life long - if not eternal – consequences – again, we can trust the one our hearts, lives and souls are tied to.

Commitment moves – the decisions that change life and eternity -

- The decision to Believe in Jesus as the Son of God and accept God’s gift of forgiveness –
- That decision makes you a child of God forever
- It means that God becomes King of your heart and life
- It means you become an obedient servant of God
- The many decisions to be obedient to God are commitment moves
- The decision of marriage and divorce is a commitment move
- The decision to make a baby

This last one is the one we are focused on today – Mother’s Day. There are some pretty big commitment moves in this life – but the commitment move of becoming a mother– is one of the truly big and life changing ones.

This message is simple, we have come today to honor women who have become mothers and the total commitment it demands.

There’s a story about a teacher who gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: "My full name has six letters. The first one is M. I pick up things. What am I?" When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that almost 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word Mother.

The cartoon character Dennis the Menace told his friend Joey, "I don't know what I'll do when my mom gets too old to tie my shoes." (North American Syndication, 4-9-91.)

We can not pretend that being a mother is the only thing a woman is capable of doing. Nor do I mean to say that all women should be mothers. Further, real life is not much like a Hallmark Mother’s Day card. Some mothers are not good mothers, and not all marriages, or families or children are perfect.

In May of 2004 Jenell Williams Paris wrote an article for Christianity Today called *When Mothering is Hard - Taking solace in Scripture's difficult and unsentimental image of motherhood.*

In it she wrote – “Mother's Day is hard for many women, myself included. Several of my friends long for marriage and children. Several are infertile or have lost new lives to miscarriage or stillbirth. One friend hardly speaks to her estranged mother, and several have mothers who have died. Another struggles with how her marital problems challenge her parenting. As for me, my triplet baby sons died last September. Each was lovely like every mother's son, but their lives and my mothering were cut short. Like my friends, I

face Mother's Day with ambivalence—glad for all the good mothering in the world, but sad about my losses.

Scripture's sorrowful mothers

A quick look at our culture shows that the idealized images of motherhood are inaccurate, and our Bibles reveals the same. Ruth was left childless and widowed at a young age. Rachel, Hannah, and Sarah were infertile. Eve and Mary lost sons under terrible circumstances. Two mothers of two kings, both named Ahaziah, encouraged their sons to be wicked and unjust. Prompted by her mother, the daughter of Herodias, asked for the head of John the Baptist to be presented to her on a platter. The Scripture tells stories like those in our churches and what we see in our world: women in diverse life circumstances, sometimes thriving, sometimes coping, and sometimes going under.

The fairy tale image of marriage and motherhood is just that, a fairy tale. Our world is one of motherhood deferred due to later childbearing, motherhood disrupted by divorce, and careers, motherhood lost by infant/child death and miscarriage, and motherhood unachieved due to infertility and undesired singleness. Of course, our culture also includes wonderful families with strong marriages and happy children. The point is that there is not a one-size-fits-all journey of womanhood.

Here I stand today – a man – and I am incapable of understanding what it is to be a mother. They say the closest thing I can experience to giving birth is passing a kidney stone. Try passing a 7 pounder fellas. But birthing, though it transforms a woman into a mother – is not motherhood.

Mother's day is about motherhood and motherhood is a **good** thing. It is an important, though not the only part of God's design and divine intent for women. To the best of our knowledge we have to say that every soul that has ever lived or is currently living on this planet has had a mother. Test-tubes and science have not taken over the task God has uniquely given to women.

This holiday was created to honor Mothers and motherhood. This message is not going to make it an idealized fairy tale for this is not what God has promised. Life is not that way and I would be harming more than one heart here this morning. - nor will this message make idols out of mothers or mothering. This message is to honor the total commitment women have made in becoming mothers and the immeasurable value faithful Mothers are to God, to each of us, and to our children...to recognize that this is a God given task given uniquely to women...and Thank God for our Mothers

LEGACY OF FAITH: The Bible tells us that Mary was blessed for her faith and commitment in becoming the mother of Jesus. Women are still passing on the legacy of faith and faithfulness.

In an un-named article I found I read – “In the end, there is nothing more radical than to teach people that they are loved by God, and that this is a matter of sheer unmerited grace; for this is a source of a deep self-confidence that will never fail.”

The Bible is not just a text of teachings is God’s self-revelation to all people everywhere. In it we see how God is love and love is at the heart of faith. We have heard that God so loved the world he gave his only son so whoever would believe in him would not die but have eternal life (John 3:16). As Wisdom God suckles the newly born, teaches toddlers to walk, bends down to feed them, and carries them about, bearing them from birth even to old age with its gray hairs (Is 46:3-4). As a mother comforts her child, so too God comforts those who lament (Is 66:13). But unlike some human mothers, God ... will never forget the children of her womb (Hos 11:3-4; Is 49:15). By the power of the mighty Spirit God gives birth anew to those who receive the word, those who become God’s children, born not out of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but born of God (Jn 1:13).

There is more to mothering than being a mother. Today we celebrate and honor mothers who have decided that because they know the great, enduring love of God - there is no greater love than to lay down their lives for their children and that is exactly what motherhood requires...as your mother when she ever stopped being your mom - we are thankful for mothers who have made the total commitment to this love and have passed of a legacy of faith...for generations...because of it.

(Grandmother Macy Zimmerman – passed it to my father – who passed it to me)

LEGACY OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: It is interesting to note how we must all learn how to love. God’s word reveals that brokenness among people is one of the consequences of sin. Growing and maintaining healthy relationships is not an innate capacity. Our Mom’s show us how to love.

I wonder if loving with such total commitment as a mother loves their child becomes so deeply rooted as the baby grows within and is given life through the pain of birth. I have wondered if that’s why women who are mothers seem so naturally able to see through pain in relationships, struggles, obstacles, and endure often far longer than most men when it comes to loving and patience. An extensive poll was taken asking men and women who was the most influential person in life...80% answered my mother. Mothering, as God has designed it, produces people who have experienced good, healthy relationships and are capable of having the same later in life.

It has been said that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more and nothing we can do to make God love us less. As a mother the same question of her children. She may be mad, sad, glad, or afraid – but the love of a mother for her child knows no time when it ends. What we have seen in part in a mother's love, we see fully in the love of God. And it’s that love which supports and inspires us as we struggle to make God's love and God's justice real not only for ourselves and for our families, but for all the peoples of the world.

So let's be gentle with each other this Mother's Day. Let's celebrate with the women who have happy families. Let's remember the women, men, girls, and boys who are hurt by their mothers. Let's remember the mothers who have lost their children. Let's remember the women who long to be wives and mothers, but aren't. Let's remember that God's design for women who are mothers is good, it provides a model for healthy relationships, and leaves a legacy faith. Let's remember and celebrate the move of total commitment Mothering requires.

Let's come together and worship not mothers but God who made all mothers and created motherhood. And finally, let's be sure to remember that the core of this message is love. God loves each of us with an immeasurable, enduring, and eternal love. And we are all called to love God and others – just as God and many of our mothers have loved us.