

# Mama Mía!

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Good morning to all and especially to all mothers.

I prepared this message with mother's day in mind of course, but it is directed to each and every one of you. Firstly, because we all come from a mother, some of us still have them. And secondly, because many of the concepts have to do with love, which applies to all, and with parenthood which applies more to mothers and fathers.

But I will definitely honor mothers very specially and for me, that includes all ladies because you are all designed to give life and to give life abundantly, joyfully and selflessly, not only to kids, but to your ideas, to your dreams, to your creations, to everyone that is fortunate enough to be around you and last but not least, to yourselves, you are constantly giving birth to a better you, it's part of your nature.

Ladies, you irradiate life.

Furthermore, you are designed to make sure that life grows physically, mentally and spiritually healthy, to make sure it prospers, to make sure it transcends, etc. and again, I'm not only talking about your children but your ideas, your dreams, your creations, your relationships, the people around you and yourselves.

It is very likely that the simple fact of you being here today is related to one of your mother's creations, if not completely her creation. Even if she's been gone for decades you still carry her instructions, her suggestions and her advice, maybe you even hear them with her voice inside your head as she probably repeated them hundreds if not thousands of times. Teenagers, I'm afraid you are still going to hear each of them a few hundred times or, if you are a slow learner, thousands of times. My advice is: try to learn fast! And husbands, don't laugh because we count as teenagers, if that...

Anyway, my story today is about God in the act of creating mothers:

On the day God created mothers He had already worked long overtime. And an angel said to Him, "Lord, you sure are spending a lot of time on this one."

The Lord turned & said, "Have you read the specs on this model? She is supposed to be completely washable, but not plastic. She is to have 180 moving parts, all of them replaceable.

She is to have a kiss that will heal everything from a broken leg to a broken heart. She is to have a lap that will disappear whenever she stands up. She is to be able to function on black coffee & leftovers. And she is supposed to have six pairs of hands."

"Six pairs of hands," said the angel, "that's impossible." "It's not the six pairs of hands that bother Me." said the Lord, "It's the three pairs of eyes. She is supposed to have one pair that sees through closed doors so that whenever she says, 'What are you kids doing in there?' she already knows what they're doing in there."

"She has another pair in the back of her head to see all the things she is not supposed to see but must see. And then she has one pair right in front that can look at a child that just goofed & communicate love & understanding without saying a word."

"That's too much." said the angel, "You can't put that much in one model. Why don't you rest for a while & resume your creating tomorrow?"

"No, I can't," said the Lord. "I'm close to creating someone very much like myself. I've already come up with a model who can heal herself when she is sick - who can feed a family of six with one pound of hamburger - & who can persuade a nine year old to take a shower."

Then the angel looked at the model of motherhood a little more closely & said, "She's too soft." "Oh, but she is tough," said the Lord. "You'd be surprised at how much this mother can do."

"Can she think?" asked the angel. "Not only can she think," said the Lord, "but she can reason & compromise & persuade."

Then the angel reached over & touched her cheek. "This one has a leak," he said. "I told you that you couldn't put that much in one model." "That's not a leak," said the Lord. "That's a tear."

"What's a tear for?" asked the angel. "Well it's for joy, for sadness, for sorrow, for disappointment, for pride." "You're a genius," said the angel. And the Lord said, "Oh, but I didn't put it there."

A magnificent design was needed because motherhood is an enormous task.

Mothers are teachers, nurses, doctors, psychologists, counselors, chauffeurs, coaches, etc. Mothers are developers of personalities, molders of vocabularies, & shapers of attitudes. Mothers are all of these things & much, much more. Mothers are soft voices saying, "I love you." And mothers are a link to God, a child's first impression of God's love and. Mothers have a big impact in the life of their kids.

In 2 Chronicles many kings are mentioned and their reigns explained. I will read a few consecutive beginnings that will clearly show you the importance of you dear ladies, as wives and more specifically as mothers

**21: 5-6**

**“Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned **eight** years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a **wife**; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.”**

**22: 2-3**

**“Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned **one** year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athalia the granddaughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his **mother** advised him to do wickedly.”**

**24: 1-2**

**“Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned **forty** years in Jerusalem. His **mother's** name was Zibiah of Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.”**

**25: 1-2**

**“Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned **twenty-nine** years in Jerusalem. His **mother's** name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a loyal heart.”**

**26: 3-4**

**“Uzziah was **sixteen** years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His **mother's** name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.”**

**27:1-2**

**“Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned **sixteen** years in Jerusalem. His **mother's** name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. And**

**he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the Lord). But still the people acted corruptly.”**

A slight distraction, not entering to the temple of the Lord, a mom was not doing her job, we don't know if on purpose or by chance or by impediment, but we do know what it led to...last but not least

**28: 1-3**

**“Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done. For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the valley of the son of Himmon, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel.”**

Such is our enemy and such is your importance in our lives, dear ladies.

I'm going to use several mothers from the bible to explain 3 of many aspects of motherhood, which are also 3 of many likenesses with God and 3 key aspects for success:

## **To protect, to expect and to love**

### **To protect**

I came across a mom that is probably not that well known -- Her name is Rizpah and we read about her in the 21st chapter of Second Samuel, she is certainly a mother worthy of honor.

Let me give you some context so you can better picture the passage.

Rizpah was one of Saul's concubines (now a concubine is simply a wife who did not bring a dowry into the marriage). And she had 2 sons by Saul. And at this time Saul is dead and David is the King....

As chapter 21 opens there is a famine in Israel, a famine that had been going on for 3

years... And David in the midst of this famine realizing that it was probably a judgment from the Lord, sought God's face (a good thing to do I might add when we are facing famines in our own lives; be they physical, emotional or spiritual). And the Lord told David the reason for the famine, He said, "IT IS ON ACCOUNT OF SAUL AND HIS BLOOD STAINED HOUSE; IT IS BECAUSE HE PUT THE GIBEONITES TO DEATH..."

What the Lord is talking about here, is a treaty that Joshua had made with the Gibeonites, shortly after Israel had entered the promised land and defeated Jericho. In the name of the Lord Joshua swore that Israel would always protect the Gibeonites... Well 400 years later when Saul was King things changed, Saul, as you know, towards the end of his life was ruled by pride, self will and ungodly desires, and he therefore broke the treaty and attempted to annihilate the Gibeonites... And this is why God had brought a famine on the land God's people had broken a treaty that they had made in His name.

So David called the Gibeonites to His throne room, and asked them what he could do to make amends for what Saul had done. And what they asked for was for 7 of Saul's descendants to be delivered to them, so they could kill them and disgrace the house of Saul. David agreed and delivered the 7 men to the Gibeonites 2 of them were the sons of Rizpah.

In other words, Rizpah basically passed from being a queen, to being a widow, to losing both of her sons in a horrible way.

### **Samuel 21: 9-10**

**“And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the hill before the Lord. So they fell, all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.**

**Now Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of the harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night”**

From the beginning of the harvest until the rains poured, Rizpah protected her children, it is a period of about 6 months, can you imagine? For six months, every day this mother fought off the birds that came to feed on the bodies of her sons, with the sun shining and the heat rising, -- and every night she fought off the wild animals that came to devour the bodies of her dead sons...

She was protecting them, protecting her sons from further disgrace and humiliation. There wasn't much she could do for her sons now, but she did what she could... Rizpah protected her sons, fiercely....

AND GODLY MOTHERS WILL PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN.....

If you think six months of fighting beasts and birds is tough come with me to Genesis 3:15 to see part of what God says to the woman and the devil after the forbidden fruit issue.

### **Genesis 3:15**

**“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head And you shall bruise His heel.”**

So for starters, mothers have to deal with the most dangerous enemy, much worse than any beast of the field. Who will restlessly try to destroy her kids through drugs, alcohol, pornography, gangs, etc. Not only six month but all their lives!. At the same time and with the same intensity he will try to destroy her or at least mislead her in order to get them. And it gets worse...

### **Ephesians 6: 12**

**“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.”**

Why does satan want our children? Because, IF HE GETS THEM WHILE THEY ARE YOUNG it's more probable that he'll keep them for all their lives and that he'll have their kids too. Satan is real and he seeks by whatever means to turn your children hearts from God. Just remember Ahaz, the motherless king we just read about in Chronicles.

So before it is to late, PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN!!! BE A RIZPAH!

Having the same enemy trying to take away the soul of their kids, to turn their kids against them, to destroy their kids is the first similarity between mothers and God. But that was taken into account in the specifications for design.

Ladies, you are gifted with teaching skills, you naturally teach your kids, you naturally help them become self sufficient in their tasks, in their responsibilities, in their problem-solving and in every way. You teach them by example, you teach them by repeating

things to them for as long as it takes to engrave a concept in their minds, hearts and souls, you teach them by praying to God and believing in him. And guess what:

**“Give a boy a fish and he will eat one day, teach a boy to fish and he will eat for life”**

The best way to protect your kids is teaching them how to deal with temptation, how to fight evil and very especially how to wear The only armor that can truly protect them,

**Ephesians 6: 10-11**

**“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”**

**Ephesians 6: 17**

**“And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God”**

This armor, and the shield and the weapons that scripture provide for our kids are ready and sufficient, even in our days. However, while they put it on or any time they get distracted the Rizpah approach comes handy.

Do you believe in God? Do you believe that the bible is his word? Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for our sins and is alive today? Do you believe that he has all authority in heaven and earth? Do you believe that greater is Him that is in you than he that is in the world? Do you believe Jesus when he said that he is our good shepherd and nothing can hurt us if we are in his hands?

Then isn't Jesus Christ the best protection you can give your kids... Well how do we do that?

In 2 Timothy 1: 5 Paul mentioned how real and active faith was passed from one generation to another in Timothy's family. First his grandmother Lois demonstrated her faith; then his mother Eunice demonstrated her faith. And she taught Timothy from God's word and practiced her faith right before his eyes, even though her husband was a Greek. Faith is passed on in the home.

"Mothers must realize the importance of their examples in the development of their children's characters. We must realize that our children can see through the masks we put on. Our inner attitudes and thoughts will be revealed to our children by our day to day words and actions..."

If a mother says prayer is important but her children never see or hear her pray, they will follow her example rather than her words. If a mother says the bible is an important guide to living but she never reads the bible to them or herself, her children will follow her example and not her words. If a mother says Sunday school and worship are necessary but seldom goes herself, her children will follow her example rather than her words. If a mother says it is important to give to the church but her children see a checkbook that tells a different story, they will follow her example and not her words. If a mother says, "God's way is the only right way," but hardly gives God a thought as she goes about her daily activities, her children will follow her example and not her words... Yes God's way of life must be taught verbally, but it must also be caught by observing God's life-style at work in our lives. You give your children Jesus by modeling Christ in the home, by teaching your kids about Christ, but getting them actively involved in church.. Start early.

Moms, dads, parents, do you want to protect your children? Do you want to give them something, do you want to give them the only thing that can protect them from the evil one? then give them Jesus! Start early, building your relationship with them and theirs with God... Will you determine today, now, to protect your children?

## To expect

Now lets read about Mrs. Zebedee, the mother of James & John.

**Matthew 20:20-23 says**

**“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.**

**And he said to her, “What do you wish?”**

**She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”**

**But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”**

**They said to Him, “We are able.”**

**So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father””**

Mrs. Zebedee was aware of the teachings of Jesus about His kingdom. She was also very

aware of the fact that her sons, James & John, were close to Him. They were two-thirds of the inner circle of Peter, James, & John.

So she was certain that when the Lord formed His kingdom that they would have positions of responsibility & authority. But in the first part of this same chapter, Jesus tells a story that must have disturbed her.

It was a story about a landowner who went out to find laborers early in the morning. They agreed upon a fair day's wage & started working. Then at noon he went out & found some more, & they started working. Then towards evening he went out & found some more & they started working. Yet, when the Lord paid them off at the end of the day they all received the same wage.

It must have caused Mrs. Zebedee to wonder, "Will my sons really have positions of authority in the Lord's new kingdom?"

So when the opportunity presented itself she came to the Lord. Matthew says that she bowed before Him & made this request, "When you establish your kingdom, I would request seats on your right & left hand for my two sons."

We might very well criticize Mrs. Zebedee for her presumptuousness. But since today is Mother's Day, maybe we ought to think for a few moments concerning some positive things about Mrs. Zebedee.

We need also to recognize that when she came to Jesus, while Jesus did not grant her request, neither did he deny it. He simply reminded her of the cost of being seated on the right or left & then told her that it is the Father who determines who will be seated there.

## I. SHE PRAYED THAT HER SONS MIGHT BE A PART OF THE KINGDOM

Now, what are some of the good things about Mrs. Zebedee? First of all, she came to the Lord, praying that her sons might be a part of His Kingdom. I can think of no more important task of motherhood than that - to seek to ensure that your children are a part of the Kingdom of God.

I know that many mothers pray. Sometimes they pray out of necessity. Sometimes they pray because motherhood is not easy, but extremely difficult.

Being a parent is not easy. Sometimes it is filled with joy & sometimes with sadness. Sometimes your children make you so proud you want to pop your buttons. At other

times you can't find enough handkerchiefs to dry your tears.

What good is it if our children are successful in making money, & driving fine automobiles, & living in good neighborhoods, but they don't know God? What does it matter if they gain the whole world, but lose their souls?

Being a parent is not easy. It is difficult. But Mrs. Zebedee gives us a valuable example, for she prayed earnestly that her sons would be a part of His kingdom.

We need that same concern for our children. I hope that in the heart of every mother & father here this morning there is a burden to go to the throne of God & to pray for your children, to pray that they will be saved, saved from eternal damnation, & saved for eternal life. That is the place to begin.

## II. SHE PRAYED THAT HER SONS WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF HIS KINGDOM

Secondly, not only did Mrs. Zebedee pray that her children would be a part of His kingdom, but she prayed that they would be actively involved in the work of His kingdom.

Maybe it is not enough just to be saved. Churches are full of people content just to fill a pew on Sunday mornings. There are plenty of people willing to sit back & receive the blessings, but seldom do they get involved in doing any of the real work of the church.

But where does the spirit of service begin? It begins at home, with mothers & fathers setting the example & praying that their sons & daughters, might be involved in the work of the kingdom - as teachers & leaders, - that they might be the ones to go out into the world & find the lost - to see that the church continues on until Jesus comes again.

Mrs. Zebedee prayed that her children would be actively involved in the work of His kingdom. And we need to walk in her footsteps, too.

## III. SHE HAD BIG EXPECTATIONS

Thirdly, Mrs. Zebedee had big expectations, & I like that. She didn't just pray that her children would be doorkeepers. She wanted them on the right hand & left hand of Jesus.

When you're working in a kingdom, there are no higher positions than those on the right & left of the King himself, & that's what she wanted for her sons.

We may consider Mrs. Zebedee brash & presumptuous. But I admire her boldness. Too often we have settled for mediocrity in the church. For too long we have been content with just barely making it through the door. For too long we have been content to sit back & let things happen.

It is time for some of us to take our positions on the right & left hand, to become leaders - molding & fashioning the outreach of the church - mobilizing to make sure the message of Christ goes into the entire world.

It is time to strive for excellence - to reach for the very best there is. The Lord calls us to be His disciples, & to be effective laborers in His kingdom.

Do you remember the part in the story where God is saying as He was creating a mother, "I am close to creating something very much like Myself?"

I suppose that is why today is very special - because we recognize that mother's love is probably the closest example we have to God's love. It is a love that goes through the valley of the shadow of death to bring life into being. It is a love that sacrifices itself over & over again & would even dare to lay down its life for its own offspring. It is a love that expects the best from us and for us.

## To Love

Before we leave this concept of a mother's love, I think we need to define love a little bit... Sometimes simply saying you need to love is not enough, since our world has so perverted love that many don't know what to do or how to make it practical....

I want to try to make love very specific and practical today for mothers and for dads as well...so let's go back to the basics:

### 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

**“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, it is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”**

We usually use these descriptions in weddings and to talk about husband-wife the love, but agape love applies to all relationships, including parenthood.

### 1. LOVE IS PATIENT.

How do we apply the truth that love is patient to the mother-child relationship (and as I said it applies to dads too).

Raising children requires patience doesn't it? And God says love is patient (not might be, should be, but is patient)... As I wrote this I was convinced of a child's need for patience and convicted of my own lack of patience at times....

"Our children may be intelligent, but they still do not have an adult grasp of certain concepts, they are still kids, they are children not little adults. They are forgetful, so we must patiently remind them of their chores, of their homework and of the necessity of picking up their toys and clothes. When they are having fun, hours can seem like minutes; and when they are sitting still or standing in line minutes can seem like hours to them, so we must be patient as they whine, fuss and fidget..."

Now don't get me wrong I am not telling parents to be permissive (I believe in discipline and responsibility), but God does tell us to be patient doesn't He? Do you think He wants us to be patient with our Children? Our kids are kids and our patience can go a long way in demonstrating our love. Is God patient with His children? Does this mean that God is permissive? CERTAINLY NOT!! Love is patient.

### 2. LOVE IS KIND

Kindness refers to tenderness and affection.

"Children need kind and gentle words of love and concern and loving embraces. How often do we tell our children we love them? How often do we praise their efforts? How often do we tell them we appreciate them? Do we spend more time criticizing them and showing irritation with their actions and attitudes than praising them? How often do we hug, kiss or embrace our kids.... I am sure that many of you heard of the test years ago performed with a monkey who was given food and water, but denied the touch of another and he died.... Touch is so important. In the Old Testament a father always made physical contact with his child when he gave his blessing to his children. And parents if you have a hard time doing this, you need to work through it (God will help you) you need to break the cycle... You are a paren. And you also need to give your parent what they need.

### 3. LOVE IS NOT RUDE

A mother should be polite and courteous to her children. We expect our children to say

"please", "thank you" "excuse me" and "I'm sorry." but often do we treat them with the same consideration? We don't want our children to interrupt us when we are talking but we interrupt them. We teach that saying "shut up" shows disrespect, so why do we sometimes use such terms with our children? We want our children to share food, toys, etc. but how many times do we guard our own possessions from our children's touch or use? We must be alert to how we are treating our children and determine to be as polite and courteous to them as we expect them to be to us and others."

#### 4. LOVE KEEPS NO RECORDS OF WRONG

We need to forgive our children AND when we forgive we need to really forgive and not bring up past mistakes that we said we'd forgiven.... We need to be like God the Father. When is the only time God is pictured as being in a hurry?

**When he is forgiving his repentant children!**

#### 5. LOVE REJOICES IN TRUTH

A loving mother will maintain her honesty and integrity no matter the circumstances. Her children will be able to trust her word and her promises.

They will see her honesty displayed in all aspects of her life... No white lies, half truths and situational lying.

And she will not excuse her child action by blaming a school teacher or others when her child makes mistakes. She will encourage her children to pay their debts and take responsibility for all wrong doing. And she will not tell "stories" or lies to appease their child's curiosity or silence their questions...

#### 6. FINALLY LOVE BELIEVES ALL THINGS...

A mother must show and tell at an early age her belief in her child, she must let him or her know that they have a bright future, that they are a special and that they are a vital part of the family.

Dear brothers and sisters, with this we finish 3 similarities of mothers and God as well as 3 very important aspects of motherhood, as well as 3 key aspects in ensuring our kids success, well being and eternal life.

**To protect, to expect and to love.**

I used some unusual passages to take an unusual approach making an unusually long message and hoping to make an impact and create awareness.

We do have a big task as parents, as followers of Jesus, as a generation and as a church, but we have the Lord with us, let's do our best to share this blessing to our kids and everybody around us.

Before we leave, Ill go back to the ladies. Proverbs 31 is a more typical mother's day passage, I will not read it because it is too long, a message in itself. It describes a virtuous woman.

Some think that it is a description of an ideal woman, not necessarily one that existed.

For me, it is a description of a magnificent woman, a description made by her mother in law, who knew the importance that choosing the right woman had for the king, his heirs, the kingdom and for ensuring godly future generations. As we read in Chronicles, one bad choice led to the burning of heirs.

This description was not only made by a proud mother in law but was accepted by the woman's husband to the extent of making it public in writing himself, honoring her for centuries until our days.

I can only "believe" that this woman existed then, but I am absolutely sure that many like her exist today, are here today, thank God.

Let's pray...

God, we thank you for this day and we thank you for all mothers. We pray that you help them in their great task, bless them with patience, perseverance and faith. Bless them with supportive husbands, children and friends. Help us all become more like you, let us be good examples and not ugly warnings, let our kids make it to your kingdom and have tasks there. We pray all of this in the name of Jesus our Lord, amen.