

Examples To Follow, Mary as a Mother and Jesus as a Child

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring God's commandments, particularly focusing on loving the Lord with all our heart and loving our neighbors as ourselves. It highlights the significance of honoring parents, especially mothers, as a key commandment with a promise of well-being and long life. The sermon delves into the exemplary motherhood of Mary, Moses' mother, and Timothy's mother, showcasing the impact of mothers in building a home through humility and submission.

Scripture: Exodus 20:12, Luke 2:51, Proverbs 23:22, Proverbs 14:1, Proverbs 31:10

Topics: "Honoring God's Commandments", "The Role of Mothers in Faith"

Description

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Transcript

So, continuing along the line we were just singing, in the Old Testament, God gave 10 commandments to his people, the Jews, and when the scribes came to Jesus and asked him which was the great commandment among those 10 that forbid, were implying, for them the great commandment was keep the Sabbath, they ignored a lot of the others. But Jesus said that first commandment is love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and he said I can't give you just one commandment, that coin has got another side, and if it doesn't have another side, it's a fake coin, you love your neighbor as yourself. And John says later on, you know, that if you don't love your neighbor, you can't say you love God, you don't love your brother, you can't say you love God.

But Jesus summed up the 10 commandments in two statements, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself. So when you go back to the 10 commandments, you know, God gave Moses two tablets of stone, and one tablet was to show how you love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind, and the other tablet was to show how you love your neighbor as yourself. So the first tablet had four commandments, which related to God, which when you turn to Exodus in chapter 20, you read all the 10 commandments there, I'm the Lord your God, you shall

have no other gods but me, don't make an idol, and don't worship them, and don't take the name of the Lord in vain, number three, and number four, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

That's it. Then you go to the other tablet of stones, love your neighbor as yourself. And there are a lot of commandments there about, you know, if you love your neighbor, you don't commit murder or adultery or steal, or you don't covet your neighbor's wife or daughter if you really love.

You know, whenever you lust after a woman, it's the proof that you don't love, you hate. But in that list, just like in the other list, the first commandment is I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods but me. The first commandment on the second tablet is honor your father and mother, Exodus 20 verse 12.

Isn't that interesting? When the Lord spoke about loving your neighbor as yourself, you go back to the commandment and check it. That is the number one commandment on that second tablet of stone. And what does it actually mean? In practical terms, the New Testament explains it in Ephesians six, as children obey your parents, or this is right, because this is the first commandment with promise.

And it's interesting that out of all those commandments, none of the commandments had a promise attached to it. It was just a statement. I'm the Lord your God, don't worship idols, don't take the name of the Lord in vain, keep the Sabbath.

But when it came to the first commandment on the second tablet, there's a promise attached to it. So there are two significant things about that. First, it was a number one commandment on that second tablet.

And second, there was a promise attached to it. And God could have attached a promise to many of the commandments, but he chose to attach it only to one. And that's emphasized in the New Testament.

That promise is that it may go well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. Live long means live the full number of your days. That means you don't die before your time.

For Jesus, it was only 33 and a half years. He lived a long life. He obeyed us.

Nobody honored Joseph and Mary as much as their parents, as much as Jesus honored Joseph and Mary. And so he lived long on the earth, 33 and a half years. So it's not a question of 100 years or something like that.

The period of time God's appointed for you. For all of us, God has an appointed time, but it's possible to die before that time. And it's possible with medical science to unnecessarily extend your life beyond that time.

But the right thing is the appointed time is God's appointed for us. And so that it may go well with us. I don't think there's a single believer on earth who does not want it to go well with them.

I want it to go well with me. And I'm sure all of you want it go well with you. And the Bible says, if you want, if you want that, you better honor your father and mother and obey them on your children at home.

That's why we need to teach our children. The first thing we need to teach our children is not how to eat and drink and say thank you and sorry, and all that, but to obey and respect their father and mother. And I would say, especially the mother, because children are a bit scared to dishonor or disobey their father.

But the children know the mother is the weaker vessel. They know it pretty much from right at the beginning. So they feel they can take advantages there and be rude and dishonor.

Then the father must step in and stop and tell that child, you've got to stop whatever you're doing right now and go and apologize to your mother and then continue. Honor your father and mother. I, you know, as disciples of Jesus, we have to relate this to Jesus' commandment that this must not supersede our love for him.

Love for Christ must, of course, be far above love for father or mother. I mean, to me, it is like the illustration I've always used is like the light of the sun compared to the light of the stars from when we stand on earth. There's absolutely no comparison.

When the sun rises up, the stars almost become dark. That's why Jesus said you must hate your father and mother if you want to be my disciple, meaning that your love for them is so small compared to your love for me. And I believe we can really honor our father and mother and love them properly only if we love Jesus as much above our love for our parents as the sun is brighter than the stars during the daytime.

That's a fantastic example. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength and all your mind, and there's no place there for anybody else. You know, to have a pure heart, blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, is not keeping a clear conscience.

Keeping a clear conscience is just confessing all known sin, making sure our heart is cleansed, our conscience is cleansed in the blood of Jesus. But a pure heart is more than a clean heart. A pure heart is not only a clean heart where every sin is confessed.

A pure heart is a heart that has no place in it for anyone other than God, anyone other than Christ. Nobody, not even parents, nobody else. Christ occupies, it's not that I have Christ in 90% of the heart and 10% for my parents or wife or no, it's 100% for God.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. Then only can I really love my wife the way I should. The reason a lot of husbands cannot love their wives properly, I'll tell you why.

It's because they don't love Christ with all their heart. If they did, they would be infinitely patient with their wives. They would never have a complaint, never mama, never grumble.

And wives would be infinitely patient with their husbands. It's because they do not love Christ with all their heart that they find irritated and getting upset and all that. And yet a lot of believers think that I love Jesus with all my heart, the problem is with my wife or the problem is with my husband.

No, it is not brother, sister, the problem is with you. You don't love Christ with all your heart. If you did, it would be easy to love your neighbor and to be patient with those difficult people around you.

Everything depends on loving Christ with all our heart. That's why he said, compared to your love for me, your love for others must be almost like hatred, father, mother, brother, sister, everything else. Having said that, once you've understood that, but the fact remains that we still have to honor our father and mother till the end of our lives.

Even at home, we obey them. But even after we leave home, we honor them and respect them. And I believe it's right for us to teach our children, especially to honor their mothers.

And it's right for fathers by respecting their wives to show their children how to honor their mothers. I mean, if you're rude to your wife, you're not going to teach your children how to honor their mother because they see how you don't honor your wife. You're rude to her and speak angrily and get upset and all that.

And your children see it. And God gives us a period of time after our children are born. I mean, from the time you're married, even if you have a child after a year of marriage and your children don't seem, don't understand much for the first couple of years.

So it's almost as though God gives you about three or four years after you get married to get over this business of getting irritated and upset and moaning and complaining against your husband and wife. If you haven't done it by then, the time is up. Your children begin to see.

And by the time your children are three or four years old, they see. Dad and mama quarrel. They're fighting.

They're not getting along with each other. That initial period before your child can become three or four is the time in which you have to learn to be patient with your marriage partner, to respect and love. And it's a sad thing when Christians who think they are so spiritual cannot manifest this in their relationship at home.

Then their Christianity is a deception. You know what the Bible says in James 1, 26, it says, if a man cannot control his tongue, his Christianity is worth zero. That's one verse in the Bible which teaches us when our Christianity becomes zero, when our tongue cannot be controlled.

And that's especially at home with those we say our loved ones. We talk very kindly to the stranger who comes to the door, but to our loved ones. So I want to say we must teach our children to honor their mothers.

Today is Mother's Day, as we heard. Well, it's a good opportunity at least once a year to teach our children to honor their mothers. And it begins with the father showing by his relationship to his wife how the mother must be honored.

You see the balance in the life of Jesus that he, the Bible says in Luke chapter 2, that he was subject to his mother throughout the years he was at home. The last, Luke chapter 2 and verse 51, it says when he was in Nazareth, he continued in subjection to Joseph and Mary. And his mother valued that, treasured it.

How this person who is Almighty God who has come, I mean she's the one person who is absolutely sure that this is Almighty God come in the form of a baby and a little boy in my house. He's my creator. And it's amazing how he listens to what I say.

He doesn't get upset with me. I make so many mistakes, Mary says, but he respects me and obeys me. And whatever I tell him to do, he does.

She treasured it in her heart, it says, and learned something from that. We need to teach our children that. He was the perfect Jesus.

Submitting to an imperfect mother. I hope you all know that Mary was imperfect. I hope you all know that Mary and Joseph yelled at each other.

Unless you're a Roman Catholic, you've got some false idea about Mary. She was an old covenant person who had no victory over sin. And you know how many so-called new covenant husbands and wives behave.

At least those who imagine they're in the new covenant. It's normal in every single home for husbands and wives to fight and quarrel with each other. And I have no doubt in my mind that Joseph and Mary were exactly the same.

I don't believe in the sainthood of Mary as if she was different. She was an amazing woman. Certainly I respect her highly because out of all the women through the generations in Israel, God waited till he found one person, a young 19 year old girl, 19 years old, to be fit to be the mother of his son.

That's amazing. It's an amazing testimony to her humility and to her willingness to accept the shame of being considered immoral for having had a son before marriage. Who understood that? Joseph and Mary understood it.

But who else understood? Elizabeth and Zechariah probably understood it. But the others in Israel didn't know that. So everywhere in Nazareth, here was this young girl who became pregnant before she got married.

And you know in a little village, news like that spreads like anything. And Mary knew that would happen when the angel came and said, you're going to have a child. And she said, how can I have a child when I'm a virgin? And the angel said, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and a child will be conceived in you and be born to be a holy child.

There'll be no sin there in that child. He's the son of God. You read that in Luke 135.

The whole conversation between Mary and that angel was less than probably just about one minute. That's all. There was no long explanation, nothing, nothing.

Just one minute. We read that whole section, the angel speaking to Mary. One minute or maximum one and a half minutes.

And what does Mary say at the end of it? Here is the handmaid of the Lord, this born slave. And in her mind goes all the shame and ridicule and all that goes on. It's going to happen when she's pregnant.

People don't know the reason. Let it be to me as you have said in your word. It's in that simple statement, you see a tremendous amount of submission to the ridicule and misunderstanding that would follow.

That was the woman God chose. And she was a young girl. I've often told young sisters and young women, would God have chosen you to be the mother of Jesus? Think about it.

Looking at your life as a young girl at your time when you got married, would God have chosen you to be the mother of Jesus, to be willing to accept the shame for the Lord's sake? And I see another thing. When they traveled together to Bethlehem, that long, difficult journey. So Bethlehem was Joseph's hometown.

That's why he was of the seed of David. And that was his hometown where his relatives were. And in those days, unlike today, relatives usually stayed in their same place where they were always lived.

So he had numerous relatives in Bethlehem. And they end up there and they find an inn, no place in any inn. And finally, she has to give birth in a cow shed with cows and donkeys and sheep and I don't know what else.

With all that filthy surroundings. Can you imagine a mother giving birth to her first baby in that situation and not complaining? That's the point. It would have been terrible if Mary was like a lot of other mothers saying to her husband, why in the world didn't you plan ahead? Why didn't you send a message ahead? You've got so many relatives here.

You could have asked them at least to provide one room for me to have a baby. Instead of that, you want me to deliver in this wretched place. Do you think God would have selected Mary if she had been talking like that? No, she submitted.

Without the indwelling Holy Spirit, without a Bible in our home, amazing mother. I'm not a Roman Catholic, but I respect Mary very highly for the mother she was. An example to all mothers.

And I believe God saw that this girl will not complain even in those circumstances. Even when she has to deliver in a filthy, dirty place, she'd say exactly what she said to the angel. Behold the bond slave of the Lord.

It's fine. Let me deliver in this place. A complete submission to the will of God.

And Jesus grew up. You think he didn't know all that? He knew what all his mother went through. And he honored and respected her.

I believe it's an example. And you know, we tell people to be like Jesus. We've got to teach our little children to be like Jesus.

And here's one thing that Jesus was. Don't forget. I mean, we tell our children, Jesus never told lies.

That's right. Follow his example. Jesus never fought with his younger brother or sister.

Good. Follow the example. Jesus respected his mother.

Every single day. Didn't argue with her. Obeyed her.

You teach that to your children to be like Jesus from childhood. That's our calling. Jesus is our example from day one.

That's why he came as a baby. I mean, God could have made Jesus a full grown man like Adam in some wilderness. And then he walks into Israel.

And there he is. He could have died for the sins of the world. Why did he come as a baby? Why did God send him as a baby? Because he has to be an example for children, for human beings at all ages.

And especially if he had come in as a full grown man like Adam, where would there be an opportunity to demonstrate how he had a mother whom he obeyed? And an imperfect mother. A mother whom he saw fighting with the father, Joseph, but he would not despise her. You teach your children not to despise their mother.

The Bible says in Proverbs 23, sorry. Yeah, Proverbs 23, verse 22. Do not despise your mother, especially when she's old.

Maybe she's getting dementia. And forget something. Don't despise your mother when she's old.

Don't forget children, teach your children also, and also all your adults, all that your mother had to go through when you were a little baby and brought you up. I'm not asking you to love her more than you love Jesus. No, never.

Love Jesus with all your heart and don't despise your mother. And thereby you will be an example to your children that they don't despise your wife, their mother. I believe that's what we need to teach on Mother's Day, to respect and value mothers because there's a lot they have to go through.

And it's interesting that, I know I thought of this, that when Joseph and Mary went back, I don't know how Mary slipped up to walk away from Jerusalem, not even check up whether it was Jesus. I think there must have been such close families those days, children playing around with each other. She must have assumed Jesus was one of the other families.

But it's after three days that they finally found him when they came back. And it's interesting, it's not Joseph who asks Jesus. Did you notice that in Luke chapter 2 and verse 48 that they come back after three days and they find him.

And it's not Joseph. He's the father. He's not the one who asks, hey, what happened? Why are you here? It's his mother who said to him in Luke 2, 48, son, why have you treated us this way? Your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.

Boy, she was a fantastic mother, a great example. She's not the only one. Moses had a fantastic mother who had Moses only for a few years and brought him up in such a good way that when he was 40 years old, he refused the three things that all people in the world seek for.

You read that in Hebrews 11. The pleasure of the world, pleasures of sin, the wealth of the world, and the honor of the world. I will not be called Pharaoh's daughter.

I refuse the treasures of Egypt and I refuse the pleasures of sin. Those are the three things everybody in the world seeks and his mother had drilled it into his head before he left home for Pharaoh's palace when he was less than 10 years old, maybe nine years old, before that kid was nine years old. The mother had drilled into that child's head.

Don't seek for the pleasures of sin. Don't seek for the treasures of the world. Don't seek for the honor of the world.

And he remembers it 30 years later and says, no, I reject it. Another fantastic mother. Timothy's mother, another great mother who had a father who was an unbelieving businessman who was only interested in making money.

Your mothers, if you have a husband who is only interested in making money, and I tell you a lot of Christians, even so-called newcomer Christians, the main aim is money. Their mind is always, very easy to find out. If your mind is always on money, that's what you worship, believe it or not.

And you may have a husband like that, always interested in money and position and all that, and not in God. And it doesn't put money and all in subjection to God. Timothy's father was like that.

He was a businessman, Greek, but his mother single-handedly made Timothy such a wonderful young man. At the age of 20, Paul said, I want this man on my team. I tell you, brother, sister, if you have brought up your son in such a way that at the age of 20, Paul would select him to be on his team.

You've been fantastic parents. But Timothy's mother did single-handedly. Don't ever complain, mothers, that your husband is not cooperating.

Look at Timothy's mother. Moses' father was a slave who worked from six o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. He hardly saw Moses, the baby.

Again, it was the mother who brought him up. So we want to honor mothers who are like that. We pray there'll be many more like that in CFC churches and NCCF.

And it begins with the fathers respecting the mothers and valuing them and teaching the children to respect the mothers. So there's a dual thing we can think of on Mother's Day. One is that fathers and children must learn to respect.

Fathers respect the wives and teach children to respect their mothers. And also for mothers themselves to see that God can help you to be the mother you should be. Because the Bible says in Proverbs in chapter 14, in verse 1, it's a woman who builds the house, not the man.

It's the wisdom of a woman that builds the house. And that means the whole atmosphere in the house. It's the woman who does it.

How does she do it? Because the greatest thing in Christianity is not preaching. It's not teaching. It is humility.

Jesus demonstrated humility and that and submission to the father. And it's a mother, it's a wife who shows that in a home by submitting to her husband. That's why she builds the home.

And that's why in the last chapter of Proverbs, it says a woman like that is worth far more than rubies. She shall be praised because she fears God. I pray that we shall have many, many mothers like that in NCCM.

God bless you all.

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