

Jesus' Mother

#0547

Study given by W.D. Frazee—August 31, 1968

We have been told it would be well for us to spend some time each day meditating on the earthly life of Jesus, especially the closing scenes. As we dwell on His great sacrifice for us, our love for Him will be strengthened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His Spirit. So let us gather at Calvary this morning as we listen to the words of Scripture and meditate on these closing moments of Jesus' life on earth.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” John 19:25-27.

This is about midday on Friday. Jesus was crucified about 9:00 in the morning. For three weary hours, He has hung there. He spoke to the penitent thief words of comfort and assurance. He is just about to go into those dark three hours between midday and His death at 3:00 in the afternoon. But as He hangs there and His eyes wander over the crowd gathered around the cross, He sees one figure that arrests His attention. It's His mother.

She was there when Jesus was led out to Calvary. But as the hammer and the spikes were brought and the form of Jesus was stretched upon the cross, the disciples took away from the scene the fainting mother of Jesus. But she could not remain away long from the One she loved, her own Son. Jesus was not only the Son of God, He was the Son of Mary.

And our Savior, as He hangs there, is keenly conscious of this tie that exists between Him and His dear mother. He knows that He is approaching death. He has no money to leave her. But there is a legacy. There is one who loves Him very much. That's John. Of all the disciples, John was closest to the Master. As he stands there supporting the widowed mother of Jesus, she's leaning on him lest she faint, Jesus, conscious of His approaching end, and of the need that Mary would have for a home and support, says to Mary, “Woman, behold thy son.” Then looking at John, He says, “Behold thy mother.”

What an expression of confidence that was on the part of Jesus. How the heart of John must have thrilled in response to think the Master was entrusting to him the care of His mother.

I wonder, though, about the practical problems involved. Do you suppose Mary had social security checks coming in monthly? Did she have an annuity or a pension that would take care of her food? What was John getting into anyway? What was he taking on? A problem? Yes, a whole *series* of problems.

It says:

“And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” John 19:27.

But that costs money, doesn't it? Yes. Let me ask you: What did Jesus have in mind in making this arrangement with John? Was Jesus' mother to support John from then on, or was John going to support Mary? Which do you think?

This is a very practical problem. But love solved the problem. Love solves all problems, my friends. We might linger over this experience thinking of the lesson it brings to every one concerning the duty to honor and love and provide for one's parents. And we would do well to meditate on that. But I would have you think of something larger than that.

To get our minds thinking in that direction, may I ask you: Is there any place in the Bible other than the Gospels that tells about the birth of Jesus, that tells about the mother of Jesus bearing Him? Did anyone besides Matthew and Luke record that? Where else in the New Testament would we find the story of the birth of Jesus? Let's turn to the last book of the Bible—the book of Revelation, the 12th chapter.

Here, John sees a great wonder—a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. Then a great red dragon appears, and we see him ready to devour a Child that's to be born.

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days” Revelation 12:5-6.

Is this the story of the birth of Jesus? Yes. Is He the Man-child born in this world and then caught up to God and to His throne? Yes. Who is this woman who bears Him. Who is this mother that brings Him forth, who after His ascension is persecuted by the dragon, and finally flees into the wilderness for a thousand two hundred and threescore days? We recognize these as the great years of persecution in the Dark

Ages. Who is this woman? The church. Indeed. But she is represented here as having what relationship to Jesus? His mother. She bares Him.

The dear Lord uses various human relationships to teach us various aspects of His character and of His plan for us. And so, in the light of this 12th chapter of Revelation, let us go back to Calvary. Let us see the Son of God hanging on the cross, and this time let us see in the mother who stands there not merely Mary, His mother in the flesh, but let us see the church of Christ. And let us gather at the cross and hear Jesus as He commits to you and me a legacy.

In my imagination, as I look at Jesus hanging there, I hear Him say to me, speaking of His church, Behold thy mother. Is the church my mother? Am I the one to whom has been committed the care of this dear mother? Has Jesus asked me to take a relationship to His church such as John took to Mary? Wouldn't it be a wonderful thing if Jesus were to stand here this morning and ask you and me to do that very thing?

I say He's doing it. Jesus has asked you and me to take on the work of supporting and caring for His church. And this church is the dearest object on earth to the Son of God. He is no longer in this world in person. He is in Heaven doing a work for us. And from the cross of Calvary He speaks to us, inviting us to care for His mother.

This takes money. And as long as the care of the mother of Jesus is entrusted to us, it will take money. Oh, I would hate to think of the mother of Jesus being sent to the poor house. Wouldn't you? I think it's a great honor that is given to you and me to be invited to care for the church, to support the church. And that's what you and I are for.

I fear that too many look upon religion as an arrangement in which the church takes care of us instead of our taking care of the church. Why do we come to church? Why do we come to prayer meeting? Is it for what the church can do for us, or is it what we can do for the church?

Don't misunderstand me. I'm sure that John received many spiritual blessings by having Mary in his home. Don't you think so? Wouldn't it be a wonderful blessing to have in your home the mother of Jesus? Again and again, she must have recounted to John and to those who were in his household the story of Bethlehem, the early years at Nazareth, and the wonderful story of the earthly life of Jesus. Undoubtedly, it was a wonderful blessing to John to have the mother of Jesus to care for. But, again and again, he had to come face with the practical problems of looking after her material support.

He knew that was his job assigned him by Jesus Himself. Jesus had said, John, I know you love me. Take care of the one I love most in this world—my mother. And Jesus is saying to you and me, Do you love me? Take care of my mother. If she gets sick, take care of her. If she gets old, look after her. If circumstances arise that she needs special care, give her special care.

Mothers sometimes get feeble. And in a message to the General Conference back in 1892, the servant of the Lord said:

“I testify to my brethren and sisters that the church of Christ, enfeebled and defective as she may appear, is nonetheless the object of Christ's supreme regard” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 15.

Once we get this concept, and enter into this relationship, we will never be influenced by criticism of the church. We will react to it with proper righteous indignation: “The church is my mother.”

I had a dear mother. She is sleeping now, waiting the resurrection. She guided my feet for many years. We had a precious fellowship for over 40 years. My mother wasn't perfect. (It's only storybook mothers who are absolutely perfect, you know.) But I can assure you of one thing: I never got out a mimeograph sheet telling people about the faults of my mother. Did *you*, about *your* mother? Did you ever have the printing presses running so that papers and books could be sent all over the world telling people just exactly where your mother was off the beam and out of line? Did you? Why not? Well, two reasons: you love her, and she was your mother. That explains the whole thing.

I read in Ephesians the fifth chapter that Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. And if we love Jesus, we will love what He loves. Am I right? We will love the church, and we will give ourselves for it. This will lead us to close our ears to every word that would lessen confidence in the church and its leadership.

Somebody says, “The church does make mistakes sometimes.” Indeed. My mother made mistakes sometimes. I'll have to be honest with you and tell you that some of the things I thought were mistakes when I was growing up, after I came to maturity I didn't think they were mistakes. Do you know what I mean? Some of them had to do with some “feelings on the back.” Yes, I got some spankings.

Did you ever get a spanking in the church? Did the church ever administer some discipline to you that you thought you didn't need and didn't deserve? I wonder if human mothers have ever made a mistake in administering punishment? Well, if they do, we ought to take them out of the mother business and turn the children over to someone who will always know when to punish and when not to. Any candidates here for the job? God has still left that job with fathers and mothers. And in spite of the mistakes of human mothers, it's the best arrangement that God and man has yet found in taking children and rearing them through those years of infancy, childhood, and adolescence when they so much need guidance.

I am thankful for my mother. What about *yours*? And what about the *church* your mother? Or did you *know* that she was your mother? And did you know that she

was not only to be cared for and supported by you, but that she was to give you some guidance and some direction and some discipline if necessary? This is all involved in this relationship with mother.

But someone says, “The church did some things to me that weren’t right.”

One day, my younger brother and I both got a whipping. My brother was crying piteously after the whipping was over. My father heard him crying, and he said, “Titus, what’s the matter? The whipping is all over.”

“Yes I know,” he said, “but I’m crying because I didn’t *deserve* the whipping.”

My father thought a moment and said, “Yes but, Titus, think of all the times you deserved it and didn’t get it.”

And if there have been times when my brethren in the church have administered discipline and counsel or correction that I thought I didn’t deserve, I’ve taken a world of comfort in the fact that there were a lot of times that I needed it and deserved it that somehow God, in His mercy, let me go without a whipping. Think it over, and it will make you very thankful for the overruling providence of God.

Turn now to Matthew, the 12th chapter. I want to notice another angle of this, a very practical one. Jesus is speaking to a great multitude. Somebody comes and says, Master, here at the door of the building, someone is waiting to talk with you—your mother and your brethren.

“But He answered and said unto him that told him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother” Matthew 12:48-50.

This morning we are to see not only the church as a whole, as the mother of Jesus, but as we see our fellow members in the church, we are to recognize a relationship to them. Jesus represents Himself as saying at the judgment of the last day, “In as much as ye have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” What we do for the needy, the poor, the outcast, the aged, and the dependent, we are to do for Jesus in the person of His saints.

Mary is dead. Long ago, they put her in a grave in Palestine. She’s awaiting the resurrection day. But somewhere in the community about us is someone who may be in your home what Mary was to the home of John.

In the 58th chapter of Isaiah, which is the great chapter of Sabbath reform in the Old Testament gospel prophet, we have also the call to medical missionary work on a

church-wide scale. In Isaiah 58:7, where does it say that we are to bring the poor who are cast out? "To thy house." Ah, dear friends, what are our homes for? They are not merely to care for ourselves and the members of our immediate family. They are to be centers of blessing. Every home is to be a place where the light of love shines out through the windows, and where the open door invites the tempted youth, the crippled, the poor, the aged. It may be for a meal. It may be during the time of convalescence. It may be for a longer period. But if you want the joy of the mother of Jesus in your home, think how you can better support the church which is His mother. And think how you can use your home better to care for those who are near and dear to Him.

May God bless the ministry of His Word to our hearts this morning. For Jesus' sake.

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