

Behold Thy Mother

#0720

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 3, 1965

We have been told that it would be well for us to spend a period each day, have a little time every day when we meditate on the life of Christ, especially what? The closing scenes. We are to dwell on that great sacrifice for us. And so this evening, I want to share some recent thoughts that have blessed my soul as I have been looking at the cross.

“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.

There is something beautiful, sadly beautiful, about this scene. There is Jesus. He is the Son of God, but He is also the Son of Mary. I am glad He’s both. Aren’t you? Yes. If He were any less than the Son of God, He could not be our Savior. And if He were not the Son of Mary, we could claim no relationship to Him, could we? He is our Brother.

Well, He hangs there. It’s nearly noon. In His agony that He has been enduring ever since Gethsemane the night before, He’s still thinking of something. He knows that the hour for Him to die is near at hand. He has been dying for hours. But as He nears the time when He must bid farewell, He thinks of that mother.

There she is standing by the cross supported by her sister and Mary Magdalene, and John is standing there. The disciple whom Jesus loved, the Scripture calls Him. We’re told that He was the youngest of all the apostles. And His young heart opened to the Savior’s love more fully than any of the others. They all loved Him some. John loved Him most.

And so He got more of Jesus’ love, not that Jesus was partial, but John had a greater capacity. And the greater your capacity, the greater love from Jesus you can have friends. But I will tell you this. He loves you so much. He will give you all the love you will let Him. Don’t forget that! There is plenty for you.

But this is John the disciple whom Jesus loved. So as they are standing there

looking up at that figure on the cross, Jesus speaks to Mary, that dear mother that cared for Him when He was just little in her arms, and guided Him through those years of infancy and childhood, and on up into youth. He hasn't forgotten any of it, and His devotion is keen. But He knows that He is going to be gone—gone soon to the tomb, and then from the tomb soon on back to Heaven.

What will He do? He makes provision for her care. He has no money to leave her. He has no property. But there is somebody that loves Him more than anybody else, and that's John. And as far as I know, Jesus had not worked this out with John at all in advance. He had not made these arrangements with John. He would, some might say, He would simply presume on John's love.

But John didn't take it that way. He accepted the legacy as a precious trust. And when Jesus said to His mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" oh, how the heart of John must have thrilled to think Jesus trusts me enough, and loves me enough, and knows I love Him in such a way that He is entrusting to my care the dearest one on earth to Him! That was a wonderful compliment, wasn't it? More than that, friends, what a wonderful expression of trust and confidence it was.

"And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home" John 19:25–27.

How long? Oh my friends, as long as she lived. As long as she needed care, John was to her all that Jesus would have been had He tarried in the flesh.

Now we might spend the rest of the hour this evening studying the lesson which is clear and obvious concerning both the duty and the privilege of each child to minister to his parents. That Fifth Commandment that Jesus here gave the most beautiful demonstration of, says... will you repeat it with me?

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God gives thee"
Exodus 20:12.

Yes, Jesus was revealing that spirit. And so, I say we might spend considerable time in thinking about that, and I trust we all will. But I would like to go a little farther, a little deeper, a little closer. May I ask you something, friend? Is there anything in the Bible, other than the Gospels, that describes the birth of Christ, is there anything in the book of Revelation, that wonderful book that closes the sacred canon, that tells us about the birth of Jesus? Is there? Any of you remember?

Where is it? Revelation 12. Will you turn with me? Let's see what we can find that might help us look more deeply into this lesson from the cross. Yes, in Revelation the 12th chapter, the 5th verse, we read about the birth of Jesus:

“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.

In this picture of the birth of Jesus, tell me, friends, of whom was He born as pictured here? What does it say? The woman. He was born of this woman. Was He? Was He really born of this woman? And when He went to Heaven, what does it say the dragon did to this woman?

“He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child” Revelation 12:13.

Was that Mary? Mary was a part of it, wasn't she? She was the agent. But oh, my friends, there was something more. For, this woman did not begin with Mary and didn't end with Mary. Did it? For here we see here going out in the wilderness for how long?

“...a thousand two hundred and threescore days”
Revelation 12:13.

This is prophetic symbolism, literal years. For over a thousand years, this woman lived. Lived in the wilderness, and is that the end of her? Oh no.

The 17th verse, if you know it, say it with me:

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17.

So here is a woman that was here in this world before Christ was born, and she is here all down through, on down to the very remnant, the last. Is she still here? Oh, yes. She is still here.

“In the book of the Revelation, under the symbols of a great red dragon, a leopard-like beast, and a beast with lamb-like horns, are brought to view those earthly governments which are especially engaged in trampling upon God's law and persecuting his people. Their war is carried forward to the close of time. The people of God, symbolized by a holy woman and her children, are greatly in the minority. In the

last days only a remnant exists. John speaks of them as those that ‘keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ’” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Volume 4, page 276.

Oh, I am glad we know who that woman is! Aren’t you? All right.

Now let’s go back to the cross. And this time, let us see not merely that human mother Mary, but let us see in Mary, this woman that brought forth a man child that Revelation 12 is talking about.

Mary is standing by the cross. Where is she looking? Oh, she is looking at that figure on the cross. Is that where the church is my, friends? Does the church stand by the cross? Is the church looking at that figure on the cross? All her hopes, all her longings, all her ambitions, everything centered in that One on the cross? Oh yes.

That is the picture of the church—the true church.

But ah my friends, as truly as Jesus left Mary in this world, He left His church in this world. And He is looking for somebody who will be a son to her as John was a son to Mary. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if God would say to some young man here, “Behold your mother.” Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if Jesus could say to His church as He looks at some young man, “Woman, behold thy son.”

Ah my friends, no greater legacy could be given to you. And every young man has this privilege if he will stand by the cross as John did. And every young woman can have this great privilege. Did I say the young men and the young women? Ah friends, every soul here can come to the cross and look at Jesus, and if we will linger long enough and enter into His love fully, we too shall hear that voice speak to us, “Behold thy mother. Take her to your home. Take care of her. Look after her. She is the dearest object on earth to Me. And the way you can show your love for Me is to show your love for her.”

Oh, that God may give us a love like that for His church, my friends!

That leads me to the next question. What is this relationship for? Did Jesus commit Mary to John’s home with the idea that Mary would support John, or that John would support Mary?

Which do you think?

And so may I ask you, friends, when you think about the church, what do you think about it? Is the church to support you, or are you to support the church? Or, is that a good question? Is that a fair question?

I think it is *the* question we need to consider. God has a work to get done in this world, and if hiring people to do it would solve the problem, He would have the angels tear up the pavement up there and send the gold down here fast to pay the laborers.

Do you agree with me? He's anxious to get this work done.

But Heaven's work can only be done through love. You can't buy love. And Jesus is looking for some people who will care for His mother, who will do with the church what John did with Mary, look after her, cherish her, support her, take care of her. Will you do that? If you will, friends, there is going to be a wonderful reunion soon of the mother and all the children including the Elder Brother and all the family.

Wouldn't you like to be there? I want to have a part in that. Don't you?

The apostle Paul is a wonderful example of this devotion and this love. You remember that on the road to Damascus, Jesus met Him and changed the whole course of His life. From that time, he had just one thing to live for, that Jesus of the cross that he had met on the Damascus road.

You remember that in that very first encounter with Christ, Christ put Paul in touch with His church just as He had brought John in touch with Mary at the cross. You remember that, don't you? Paul never forgot it. He spent his whole life not only in telling everybody about Jesus on the cross but telling them about the wonderful church that Christ had established. And gathering into its fellowship both Jews and Gentiles by the thousands, in Syria, in Galatia, in Ephesus, in Macedonia, in Greece, and wherever the providence of God led him.

Paul was misunderstood. But Paul never misunderstood this subject. He gave his whole life in his devotion to Christ and His church. And to him, they were inseparable. They are inseparable from the children of God today.

Now Paul's devotion to the church and the work of God was very practical. Paul was a rich man when he accepted the Gospel. But he kept spending his means in the work of God, until finally, it was all gone, and he was just as poor as Peter the fishermen. But several times when we see Paul in his apostolic ministry, we see him not only preaching on the Sabbath and visiting homes, but we see him doing a very peculiar thing. What is it? Working with his hands.

Let's turn over, please, to Acts the twentieth chapter and let him speak for himself in this. Speaking to the elders in the church at Ephesus, this church that he had raised up, he spent some time in that city. Here he is on what of his journey's back, and he is talking to them for the last time.

"I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands..."

And he held out those toil-worn hands.

“...these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive” Acts 20:33–35.

Now, my friends, before I say something, I want to say something else, for I don’t want to be misunderstood. I believe with all my heart in a tithe-supported ministry. The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy make that clear. I believe with all my soul in church organization. You know that. And what I’m saying is not less than that. But I simply call attention to this fact that Paul had such a devotion to Christ and the church that He rejoiced to give a demonstration as a self-supporting apostle.

And that in no way casts reproach upon God’s appointed plan of supporting the ministry through the tithe. Never think it lessens that obligation on the part of the church members or on the part of the church.

But on the other hand, do not miss the lesson of Paul’s devotion, and do not miss the lesson of his example. “I have shown you,” he says, “all things, how that so laboring ye ought to do” what? “Support the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

I got a letter from a young man not long ago that frankly disappointed me. He was thinking about how he might get a job in the work, as we speak of it. And by getting a job, of course, that means getting a position that is paid for out of the tithe.

You say, “Well, isn’t that all right?”

My dear friends, I think it is a wonderful thing when the *church*, led by the Holy Spirit, recognizes God’s call to a young man who is already demonstrating his dedication and love for souls and is spending his time winning souls to Christ. But that is a far cry from a young man seeking a job with the organization so that he can be supported. That’s a different thing entirely.

Too many people are patting young people on the back thinking it’s a wonderful thing that they have a zeal for God’s work because they want a job with the organization. Rice-Christians they are called sometimes in mission fields. I say to you young people, come with me to the cross and see that figure hanging there and remember, He has put all He has into this work, and He has a mother, His church. And if you love Him enough, He will let you support her. He will let you take care of her. And please, my friends, don’t say, “Well, dear Jesus, how much will you pay me if I do that?”

Oh no. Please don't do that.

In fact, if you do, I doubt if He will give you the legacy. I wouldn't trust my mother with you on that sort of a program. Would you trust your mother with somebody on that?

Oh, I know there are nursing homes all across the country filling up with mothers of children that don't want their own mothers around. I understand that. That is not the love of Jesus. That is not the Fifth Commandment. And that is not what we are studying. We are studying a love so deep and a dedication so unreserved that Christ can count on John to do for Mary all that He would have done had He been here. And Jesus is looking for somebody who will do for His church all that He would do were He here in the flesh today.

That is your legacy. Will you accept it?

Paul says:

"I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support..." Acts 20:33–35.

Not be supported!

"Ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" Acts 20:33–35.

May I read a comment in the book *Acts of the Apostles*?

"Paul sometimes worked night and day..."
Acts of the Apostles, page 352.

There should have been a law against that, shouldn't there, friends?

"Paul sometimes worked night and day, not only for his own support, but that he might assist his fellow laborers. He shared his earnings with Luke..." *Ibid*.

Who was Luke? He was the Christian physician that was working with Paul.

"He shared his earnings with Luke, and he helped Timothy. He even suffered hunger at times, that he might relieve the necessities of others. His was an unselfish life" *Ibid*.

Oh friends, I would like to know more of that love that filled Paul's heart? Wouldn't you?

"If ministers feel that they are suffering hardship and privation in the cause of Christ, let them in imagination visit the workshop where Paul labored. Let them bear in mind that while this chosen man of God is fashioning the canvas, he is working for bread which he has justly earned by his labors as an apostle" *Ibid.*

Much to meditate on in that, dear friends.

"In the future, our work is to be carried forward in self-denial and self-sacrifice even beyond that which we have seen in past years. God desires us to commit our souls to Him, that He may work through us in manifold ways. I feel intensely over these matters. Brethren, let us walk in meekness and lowliness of mind, and put before our associates an example of self-sacrifice" *Selected Messages*, Book 2, 206.

What do you say Brethren? Let's do it. Shall we?

Tonight, let's gather at the cross. Let's see that Savior as He hangs there for us. And dear ones, whether we have sensed it or not, He is still on the cross and will be until sin is ended. And as He hangs there, He's looking for somebody to care for His mother. He is looking for somebody that will love her as He loves, and think of her as someone to support, rather than as someone to support them.

You know, if we can get this in our hearts, friends, instead of going to church to be coddled and cuddled, we will come to church to participate in getting the work done. What do you say? Pastor, there won't be any trouble in getting the work done if we learn this lesson, will there? Not a bit.

Oh for love, the love of John, the love of Paul!

"Behold thy mother" John 19:27.

Will you take her home? Will you consider it a precious privilege to care for her? It will make Jesus happy. It will cheer His heart, and it will bring you a satisfaction that nothing else in the universe can. You will know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings.

[Closing prayer by John Tindall, some more closing comments by Elder Frazee, and testimonies by people from the audience.]

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