

Remnant Life Church
May 8, 2022
The Depth of a Mother's Love
Mother's Day
I Kings 3:16-28

What NOT to Buy Your Wife on Mother's Day:

Although the only person a man usually shops for is his wife, the whole experience is a stressful one. Many a man has felt extreme frigid temperatures for a long period based on a poor gift-buying decision. And so, as a community service, I want to give you some things to keep in mind...

1. Don't buy anything that plugs in. Anything that requires electricity will be seen as utilitarian.
2. Don't buy clothing that involves sizes. The chances are one in ten thousand that you will get her size right, meaning you will only be upsetting her the other 9,999 times. "Do I look like a size 18 to you?" she'll say. But too small a size does not work either: You will then hear something like, "What are you thinking? I haven't worn a size 5 since I was in college!"
3. Don't buy jewelry. For two reasons: the jewelry your wife wants, you can't afford. And the jewelry you can afford, your wife doesn't want.
4. Don't buy anything sports related like a new driver or putter thinking she will actually believe that it's for her. She will see through that in less time than it will take you to call and make your tee time.
5. Finally, don't spend too much. "How do you think we're going to afford that?" is the likely response you will get. But don't spend too little either. She may not say anything, but what she will be thinking is, "So that's all I'm worth to him, huh?"

The idea for Mother's Day was born in a small Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia. It was 1876 and the nation still mourned the Civil War dead with the hostilities having ended less than 10 years prior. It was while teaching a Memorial Day lesson, that Mrs. Anna Reeves Jarvis began thinking of all the mothers who were suffering as a result, and she prayed that one day there could be a type of "Memorial Day" for mothers. That prayer made a deep impression on one of Mrs. Jarvis's eleven children. Young Anna had witnessed her mother's efforts over the years to help hold the war-split community and church together. As she grew into adulthood, the younger woman kept Mrs. Jarvis's dream in her heart. On the day of her mother's death, Anna was determined to establish Mother's Day in her honor.

On May 12, 1907, a local observance was held which was later embraced and brought to Philadelphia and sponsored by Wanamaker's (John Wanamaker was a devote Christian; refusing even to advertise on Sunday's who created one of the first and largest department store in the country.) By 1910, Mother's Day was being celebrated in 45 of the then 46 states, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Canada, and Mexico. Miss Jarvis was elated as she saw the dream of honoring her mother spread across the country and the world.

On May 8, 1914, President Wilson designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day "for displaying the American flag and for the public expression of love and reverence for the mothers of the country."

READ: I Kings 3:16-28

- We most often regard this passage in **I Kings** as the shining example of Solomon's God-given wisdom
 - But there is another story here as well – a Mother's Day story
 - But it is not your traditional Mother's Day story
 - There is no TV mom of the 50's vacuuming the living room and doing housework in a pleated skirt, matching blouse, heels, perfect hair and makeup and, of course, wearing a strand of pearls
 - These two mothers could not be further from that
 - Look at what we know about them
 - They are prostitutes (v 16)
 - While it was looked down on as an undesirable way of life it was tolerated (primarily because the men made the rules)
 - Often prostitutes were slaves whose owner used her to make money for himself
 - They may be women who had never married and had no other way to support themselves
 - They may have been desperate widows
 - Jesus had great compassion for them
 - No means of support and not cared for by the church of the day
 - When talking about the Jewish leaders Jesus said...
 - *"...They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."* **Mark 12:40**
 - Both of these women had conceived children but the men were no longer around
 - They were speaking for themselves before the King which meant they were alone since they would have not normally been permitted to do that
 - One thing is certain – neither of their lives are moving in the right direction
 - One has lost her baby and one is claiming her baby had been taken from her
 - There appeared to be no way of determining the truth of either story, yet Solomon agreed to hear their case
- Why would Solomon take the time to speak with them?
 - First, he had the compassion of a loving God in His life just as he had His wisdom
 - Second, his actions are a blueprint for what the church today should be – showing compassion, in whatever circumstance it is, to a lost and dying world
 - People are hurting right now perhaps as much as any time in our lifetime
 - Not necessarily physical pain or want although we have seen much of that in the last 2 years
 - But fear, distrust, anger, confusion are all escalating

- The lost need to find Jesus and it not usually be through a church service but they will most often find Him through the kindness of a Christian
- We spoke last week at the growing absence and influence of the church and Christians
 - How do we change that
 - It begins with committing our lives to following the example of Jesus Christ many times seen in the love of a mother
- So back to our story
 - This situation is as far from perfect as you can get
 - 2 women under the same roof living as prostitutes
 - One is a schemer, and the other is heart-broken
 - But only one was the mother
 - Solomon knew, in the wisdom that God had given him, that the real mother would do anything to protect her baby
 - And that is exactly what happened
 - The birth mother was willing to give up her baby rather than see him harmed
 - That is sacrificial love
 - That is what God did for each of us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ – a sacrificial love
 - And many of us here this morning saw that modeled for the first time in our mothers
- Of course, Mother's Day is not a day for celebrating for everyone
 - I don't think you ever fully recover from the loss of your mother
 - A difficult relationship with your mother often impacts the child well into their adult years

We honor our mothers today, but we should every day for all that they have done and continue to do for us.

- It is why we have been told, by God, to honor her

In **Ex 10** – Moses receives the 10 commandments on Mt. Sinai

- Nine of them are straight directives (do this/ don't do that)
- But only one carries with it a promise
 - (v 12) *Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.*

To be a father or a mother require sacrificial love

- So too does living the life of a Christian
- That becomes more and more true with each passing year
- And loving as a mother or a father does not require that you be perfect

We see the true love of a godly, imperfect parents demonstrated in both the Old and New Testaments

- But not always in the way might expect
- Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God in **Gen 22**
 - Of course, God did not allow that to happen
 - But it was a statement of Abraham's commitment to God even as he desired to be good father
- Jacob was a loving and caring father to his 12 sons whose ancestors would become the 12 tribes of Israel
 - Even though he showed favoritism which is a very harmful type of love in a family
 - But he always loved his sons in spite of all their great shortcomings
- Hannah dedicated Samuel to a life in service to God in the temple (**I Sam 1**)
 - She sacrificed her time with him to honor the promise she made to God
 - That is living sacrificially
- Mary dedicated Jesus to God (**Luke 2**)
 - She knew before Jesus was born that He would live a life different from the other boys
 - She raised Him in order to prepare Him to leave

Sacrificial love takes many shapes and forms but there is one characteristic true to them all – the love is unconditional

- That love is agape love
- It is not the world's definition of love it is God's
- A mother's love is unconditional
- A father's love is unconditional
- And most importantly, the author and the finisher of our faith, His love is unconditional

And so, what is the best way to honor our Mother's today?

- Certainly cards, flowers, and gifts play a role
- But they are all secondary to what is most important and lasting
 - Be a willing and loving part of the legacy she has created
 - Give that same sacrificial and unconditional love you received from her to others
 - **Ex 10:12** – *Honor your father and mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*