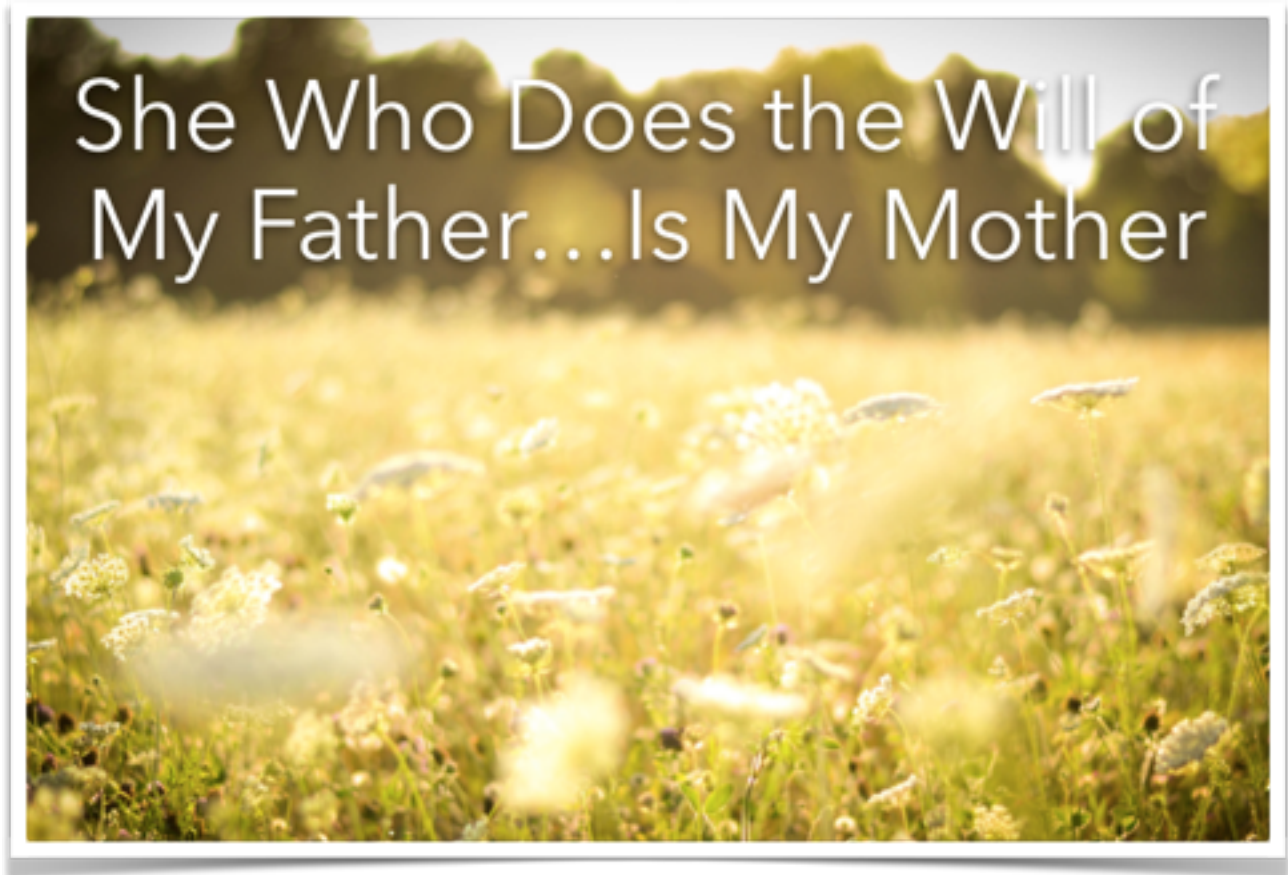


Sermon Series: *Jesus Said What?*



She Who Does the Will of My Father Is My Mother

(Matthew 12:46-50 ESV)

⁴⁶ While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. ⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Introduction

Today is Mother's Day. It seems good and right to honor mother's this morning, not because it's an American Holiday, but because it is a biblical command.

I know that, for some of you, today could be a difficult day. Perhaps your mother has died. Maybe her death has been recent. Perhaps you're presently estranged from your mother. Maybe your mother was hard on you growing up and you still have problems forgiving her. Maybe she was just plain mean or didn't care about you. Maybe your mother abandoned you.

Or perhaps you yearn to be a mother and are unable. Perhaps you became a mother when you didn't want to be. There may be pain around this topic for any number of reasons for some of you today. I do not intend for anything we do or say today to magnify your pain in an unhelpful way.

We have come together to worship God, and the fact is, that God has chosen for each of us, a particular mother. We didn't chose who our mother would be. God did that for us. I pray that today each of us will be able to glorify God and worship him for his choice and that you will be able to honor your mother today, despite any difficulties.

We Are Commanded to Honor Mother

God gives us an unqualified command to honor our mothers. God is pleased when we honor our mothers. This command is the fifth commandment.

(Exodus 20:12 ESV)

¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you."

God commands us to honor both mother and father, but today is Mother's Day so we're just going to focus on the command as it relates to mothers. Father's Day will come next month and we'll deal with fathers then.

God doesn't command us, "Honor your mother only if she meets our satisfaction." He doesn't say, "Honor your mother only if she pleases you or only if she does what you wish." He simply says, "Honor your mother." And then he adds an incentive,

"...so that your days may be long in the land..."

Paul notes that this is the "first commandment with a promise" (Gal. 6:2). If you want to live a long life, honor your mother—there's no expiration date on this command. *It pleases God to bless with long life those who choose to honor their mothers.* God is pleased when mothers are honored. God honors with long days those who honor the woman through whom he or she entered this world.

Dishonoring Mother Makes One Worthy of Death

God dishonors those who do not honor their mother.

(Leviticus 20:9 ESV)

⁹ For anyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him.

In God's way of thinking, dishonoring mother (and father) is a capital crime.¹ Those whom honor their mother, God blesses. Those who dishonor their mother, God curses (Dt. 27:16). This is a serious issue in the eyes of God. God is pleased to bless the one who honors his mother, and he is pleased to curse the one who dishonors his mother.

Jesus Honored His Mother

Jesus is pleased when we honor our mothers. I know he is because he is always pleased to do the will of his heavenly Father and honoring mothers is clearly God's will. I also know Jesus is pleased when we honor our mothers because he himself exemplified this modeled this behavior and expects his followers to live like he lived. Jesus honored his mother, Mary.

Jesus Honored Mother with Submissive Obedience

At age twelve, Jesus was ready to begin his public ministry (see Luke 2:41-52). He embarked on God the Father's calling on his life slightly too early. He forgot to text his parents and tell them where he was going. They became fearful and worried and launched a three-day long search and rescue mission. He was discovered in the temple, safe and sound, debating theology with all the Ph.D's in religion. When his parents asked him why he had treated them so badly, he said, "Didn't you know that it's time for me to get to work and do the will of God?" Evidently it wasn't. So he obeyed them.

(Luke 2:51 ESV)

⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.

He went back home, and he chose to obey them. Jesus honored his mother with submissive, God-pleasing obedience.

Honor God Higher Than Mom

However, if there comes a time when mom's will conflicts with God's will, then we must honor God more highly than we honor mom. There did come a day when it became clear to Jesus that the time was right for him to begin his ministry, and he obeyed his heavenly Father rather than obeying his earthly mother. There did come a day in Jesus' life when he had to choose whom he would honor most, his earthly mother or his heavenly Father. When mom's will is in

¹ Dt. 21:18-21.

conflict with God's revealed will, it's always right to obey God rather than mom.² We'll see an example of this in just a moment.

Jesus Affirmed the Fifth Commandment

When Jesus did begin his public ministry, on at least two occasions, he affirmed the abiding goodness of the fifth commandment (Mt. 15:4; 19:19). On one occasion (Mt. 15:4), Jesus gave the Pharisees a verbal thrashing, calling them hypocrites, for their failure to honor their mothers (and fathers).

Jesus Honored His Mother in His Death

Lastly, Jesus honored his mother as he was dying. Honoring his mother was almost the last thing Jesus did before he died. Just before yielding to death, Jesus made sure his mother would be cared for after his departure from earth.

(John 19:26-27 ESV)

²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

A couple of minutes later, Jesus was dead.³

Summary Thus Far

Jesus is pleased when we honor our mothers. He lived a life that honored Mary. He honored her in his life by submissive obedience. He affirmed the fifth commandment in his public ministry. And in his dying moments, he was making sure his mother would be provided for after he was gone.

Two Observations from Matthew 12:46-50

Now, let me make two observations from the passage before us this morning.

Motherhood is Hard

The first observation we can make is that being a mother is hard and it involves making mistakes.

(Matthew 12:46 ESV)

⁴⁶ While [Jesus] was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him.

² Acts 5:29.

³ See Jn. 19:28-30.

Matthew does not tell us why Mary and Jesus' brothers⁴ were trying to speaking to him, but Mark does. Mark tells us that Mary and her other sons thought Jesus was crazy.

(Mark 3:21 ESV)

²¹ And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind."

As Jesus launched his public ministry and began teaching, he draw significant crowds. On this occasion, he was inside a house⁵ and the house was filled with people, so much so, that his family could not get near him. They were coming to him to take him home because they thought he was loopy. They stood outside asking for him, hoping they could take him quietly. They didn't want to make a scene, but they had come **to seize him**.

They were mistaken. Mary was mistaken. Jesus was not out of his mind. He was not crazy. He was perfectly sane and he was perfectly doing the will of God the Father. But Mary had misunderstood what Jesus was doing. *She didn't want him to be publicly preaching and teaching, but Jesus, on this occasion did not obey the will of his earthly mother. Instead, he obeyed the will of his heavenly Father.*

Sometimes mom's make mistakes. Sometimes mom's misunderstand kids. Sometimes they understand perfectly—like they have some kind of uncanny, divine sixth sense which drives us crazy as kids because we're constantly left confused, thinking, "How does she know that?" Most of the time, mom's are right. But occasionally mom's get it wrong.

The way to honor your mom in these circumstances is to forgive her when she's wrong. Whatever strong stand she may take, she only means it for your good. Give her the benefit of the doubt. Consider her motives and when she's wrong, then forgive her. And mom's, when you are wrong, it's okay to admit it. It's easier to honor you when you do.

Motherhood is About Doing the Will of the Father

The second observation is that motherhood is primarily about doing the will of the Father in heaven.

Matthew 12:48-50 (ESV)

⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

⁴ We are told in Matthew 13:55 that Jesus had four brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. He also had at least two sisters, who are not named (Mt. 13:56).

⁵ Mt. 13:1.

Obedience to the will of the heavenly Father is more relationally binding than biological birth. *Jesus is happy to claim as mothers all older woman who do the will of God the Father.* (This goes for men too.) In a manner of speaking, Mary is not the only mother of Jesus. Doing God's will is what draws us into a real and vibrant relationship with God the Father.

What is the will of the Father?

(John 6:40 ESV)

⁴⁰ *"For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

The first step in doing God's will is **looking to Jesus for salvation** by believing that he can give you eternal life and take away your sins by virtue of his sinless life and his atoning death. This is God's will, that everyone who believes in Jesus and looks to him for salvation from sin, will receive the gift of eternal life. It is God's will to give eternal life to everyone who looks to Jesus in faith.

Secondly, doing God's will, as it relates to mothers, is about **bearing fruit**—both physical fruit and spiritual fruit. The first command that God gave to Adam and Eve after creating them is,

(Genesis 1:28 ESV)

²⁸ *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it..."*

This means have lots of children. God loves children and wants his people to have lots of them. God wants the earth filled with people. Some humans don't want the earth filled with people, but God does. Overpopulation is not a problem. Underpopulation is. It's God's will that we people this whole planet. ***This means that motherhood is part of God's will for the lives of most women.***

This command is a part of God's blessing, not his curse. "God **blessed** them and said to them..." There are some women who are unable to have children for various reasons and some whom God may call to forgo having children for the sake of the kingdom⁶, but God's standing order is to...

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth..."

Oh that more women would see this calling as a blessing, not a curse. It is the consistent testimony of mothers again and again that being a mother is great joy. Yes, there are challenges and hardships involved in being a mother (or father), but God generously gives

⁶ Mt. 19:12. This verse refers to men unable to reproduce, however, by extension, it can also be applied to women.

grace in proportion necessary to fulfill every calling, including motherhood. It is God's will that most women be mothers by bearing physical fruit and having children.

For women who do not have their own physical children, it is God's will that you bear spiritual fruit. This is God's will for all his disciples.

(John 15:8 ESV)

⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

In context, "bearing fruit" means at least living a life filled with the love of God, and consistently obeying the commands of God. But it also means making disciples.⁷ It means being a spiritual mother to those who are lost. It means teaching others to love and obey God.

(Titus 2:3-4 ESV)

³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,

If you don't have any biological children to teach to love and obey God, then you can adopt some spiritual children to teach to love and obey God.

There are many examples of women who used their homes as a meeting place for the early church. They were small group hosts. Example of this are Mary & Martha (Jn 11), Phoebe (Rom 16:2), Lydia (Acts 16:15), Mary (mother of John-Mark, Acts 12:12), and Nympha (Col 4:15).

Motherhood is the calling of all God's women, whether it be the mother of physical children or spiritual children. The apostle Paul likened his own ministry to motherhood.

(Galatians 4:19 ESV)

¹⁹ my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

May this be said of Hope. May Hope be a church where people come to discover Christ. May we be a people used by God see Christ formed in others. May we be a kind of spiritual womb for those who are lost in this broken world, a safe, nurturing place where people can grow into mature children of God and faithful followers of Jesus.

⁷ Mt. 28:18-20.

Today if your mother has already died, then thank God for all the good he brought to you through her and forgive her for all her mistakes. I'm sure she was doing her best and only intended your good.

If your mother is still living, honor her today by telling her how much you love her. Thank her for all the personal sacrifice that went into raising you.

If your relationship with your mother is fractured, then earnestly pray that the Lord will help you mend it. Forgive her and be restored.

If your relationship with your mother is good, then praise God for that goodness and be sure that your mother knows your desire to honor her.

May every one of hear these words of Jesus.

Matthew 12:49-50 (ESV)

⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

If we do the will of the Father in heaven, we will be Jesus' mother and sisters and brothers.

What is the Father's will?

First, that you look to Jesus for salvation and forgiveness of your sins. Second, that we teach others to do the same while living a life of loving obedience to all the commands of Jesus.

Father, give us faith to look to Jesus to have our sins forgiven and give us strength to teach others all that you have commanded. May mothers be honored today among us. May motherhood be cherished among us. Forgive us as a nation for belittling the calling to be a mother. If there is any broken relationship with mom with anyone here today, give them the energy and endurance to mend that relationship and restore it. Father, do your work among us and cause us to delight to do your will. And we praise you for the mothers you have given us. Amen.