

Date: May 12, 2024
Individual Message: **Mother's Day 2024**
Title: **A Mother's Pure Heart**
Text: **2 Timothy 1:4-16, 2 Timothy 3:14-15**

Introduction

A Junior High science teacher lectured on the properties of magnets for an entire class. The next day he gave his students a quiz. The first question read like this: "My name begins with an "M," has six letters, and I pick things up. What am I?" Half the kids in the class wrote, "Mother."

That reminds me of the father who was trying to explain the concept of marriage to his 4-year-old daughter. He got out their wedding album, thinking visual images would help, and explained the entire wedding service to her. When he was finished, he asked if she had any questions. She pointed to a picture of the wedding party and asked, "Daddy, is that when mommy came to work for us?"

Mother's give a lot for us, don't they? And often we take it for granted. Mother's Day was started as a movement among a few Christians following the Civil War to recognize and honor the unsung everyday heroes we call moms.

Today on Mother's Day, recognizing that mothers truly are a gift from God. We're going to look at a mother's pure heart; a couple of characteristics of mothers that help us understand and know God better.

What is A Pure Heart?

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Jesus spoke this during His famous Sermon the Mount.
So what did He mean by "pure in heart?"

The Greek word for "pure" here is *katharos*.
It means to be "clean, blameless, unstained from guilt."

- Interestingly, the word can refer specifically to that which is purified by fire or by pruning.
- John the Baptist told people that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire (Matthew 3:11).
- Malachi speaks of the Messiah as being like a "refiner's fire" (Malachi 3:2).
- Jesus refers to believers as being the branches and to Himself as being the vine (John 15:1-17).
- For a vine to produce fruit, it must be pruned.

Those who are truly "pure," then, are those who have been declared innocent because of the work of Jesus and who are being sanctified by His refining fire and His pruning.

The Greek word for "heart" here is *kardeeah*.
The physical heart and also the spiritual center of life

- It is where thoughts, desires, sense of purpose, will, understanding, and character reside.

So, to be pure in heart means to be blameless in who we actually are.

- Being pure in heart involves having a singleness of heart toward God.
- A pure heart has no hypocrisy, no guile, no hidden motives.
- The pure heart is marked by transparency and an uncompromising desire to please God in all things.
- It is more than an *external* purity of behavior; it is an *internal* purity of soul.

The only way we can be truly pure in heart is to give our lives to Jesus and ask Him to do the cleansing work.

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

God is the one who makes our hearts pure – by the sacrifice of His Son and through His sanctifying work in our lives.

1 John 3:1-3

¹ See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. ³ And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

A Mother's Pure Heart Offers Love

Being a parent now myself, I have a little different perspective on motherhood/parenthood, particularly the love a parent has for his/her child.

- Though I am a father, I have experienced the love from the pure heart of my mother and I have witnessed it my wife's love for our kids and grandchild
- I believe one of the primary characteristics of a mother, is a mother's love. A mother loves her children unconditionally and sacrificially.

Unconditional Love

- A mother loves her child no matter what they do.
- If you think about it, right from the beginning, children do nothing to deserve love.
- When they are in the womb they cause discomfort, morning sickness, pain during the many months of pregnancy, and of course they cause a LOT of pain during the delivery. (Perhaps you like to remind your child of that: "do you know how much pain you caused me? I was in 24 hours of labor with you!")
- When they come out they look cute but all they do is eat, poop, sleep, and cry. They require constant attention, feedings every 2-3 hours, sleepless nights.
- Yet mothers amazingly love them unconditionally.
- Oh, I'm sure there are those moments, but love is still there.
 - How is it that when our kids are screaming, crying, having a temper tantrum, being rebellious that a mother can still love them?

- How is it that when they grow up and make poor decisions in their life, perhaps even rejecting their parents' advice and perhaps their parents themselves for a time, a mother, with a broken heart, can still love them?
 - Love like that is illogical; it doesn't make sense; why would someone love without thought of return when the cost is so high?
 - Where does that love come from?
 - It doesn't come from millions of years of evolution.
 - It comes from God, it is a gift from God.
 - The Bible says we, both female and male, are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27), and that God is love (1 John 4:8,16).
 - We were hard wired by God to love.
- I believe the love a mother (or father) has for her child is God's greatest example of the kind of love God is, and that he has for us.
 - Yes, it is true that sometimes you will see a mother or father who does not love their children unconditionally; perhaps there are strings attached, "if you do this then I will love you," or they remain emotionally distant, but this is really a result of love being twisted by sin in their life, it is not part of God's design.
 - Even speaking to adoptive parents, I know one of their concerns in adopting a child, was how they would connect with the baby; "How would we love a child who was not genetically ours?"
 - What a dumb thought that was, love is a gift from God, it is not genetic, it is not inherited, it is a gift and a choice. Adoptive parents quickly discover that they truly love that child just as if it came from them. That is a miracle of God's love.

When the Apostle Paul wanted to help the church at Thessalonica understand Christian love, he used the illustration of a mother with her child. He writes:

1 Thess. 2:7-8

⁷ But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. ⁸ So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

- Other than Jesus' death on a cross for us, a mother's love for her child is the next closest human example of the kind of love God has for us, and the kind of love we are to demonstrate to each other particularly as Christians.
 - I believe you, mothers (and fathers), are the first glimpse we have of God and his unconditional love for us.
 - You are how we form our first thoughts about what God is like.
 - This doesn't mean you're perfect, but you send that message whether you intend to or not.

As the Bible tells us God chooses to love us unconditionally, and he doesn't love us for what we do but simply for who we are. As the Bible tells us:

Romans 8:38-39

³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Self-giving/Sacrificial Love

A mother's love is also self-giving or sacrificial.

- When you think of all the times that mom got up in the night for those late night feedings. All the hours of comforting, rocking, singing, to get you to sleep.
- All the times she stayed home and cared for you when you were sick.
- All the times she toted you around to all your sports, dance, or band practice or whatever you were in to at the time.
- All of the events she went to for you even though she didn't really care for it herself.
- Think of what a mother gives up.
 - Moms give up their time; Someone calculated that by the time a child reaches 18, a mother has had to handle some 18,000 extra hours of child-generated work.
 - It would be equivalent to an extra three months a year!

Mothers sometimes give up their careers, their hobbies.

- I know June set aside her career and sacrificed the additional income for at least 6 plus years to stay at home and raise our two children. She made that sacrifice because she thought it was important. Mothers give up their own needs to make sure the needs of the kids are taken care of.

Again, I believe mothers demonstrate the same kind of love God has for us.

- It is a sacrificial love, a serving love.
- A kind of love where God was willing to send his own Son to serve us and make the ultimate sacrifice by giving up his own life on a cross taking our sins upon himself.

Matt 20:28

"...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Romans 5:8

"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

- God didn't have to make the sacrifice to save us and give us new life, but he did because he loves us. Mom didn't have to sacrifice, but she did out of love for us.

Thank you, mothers, for loving us, your children, and showing us what God's love is like, so that we could become his child too.

A Mother's Pure Heart Offers Faith

A second important characteristic of a mother's heart is a mother's faith.

Honor the Lord

There was a young Jewish woman named Eunice from a city of Lystra which is in the modern day country of Turkey, and like most young woman she had her eye on this young man.

- The problem was, he wasn't Jewish; he didn't believe in the Lord God, he didn't accept the Torah or the Hebrew Bible.

- So of course, her mother Lois was dead set against her courting this young man, but you know how young love is.
- Not always logical, they don't always think it through.
- She decided to follow her heart rather than her mother's wishes and the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and she married this Greek man anyway without consideration of what life would be like together with very different world views and religious beliefs.
- It wasn't long after her marriage that she saw how difficult it was to hold onto her faith when her husband's family and the community all around pressured her to conform to their beliefs.
- Her husband didn't understand, for example, why she wouldn't just go to temple of Zeus to pay honor to the god?
- Thankfully her mother Lois continued to nurture her faith and they continued to worship the Lord God on Sabbath, and they read and obeyed God's Word.
- Pretty soon Eunice and her husband had a child together, little Timmy.
 - Timmy was a wonderful boy, very smart, talented, a natural leader. But then the question of spiritual upbringing came up.
 - Would Timmy be raised in the Jewish faith, or the Greek religion?
 - Would he worship the Lord God or Zeus and the other gods, or both?
- Even though wives and children in that culture were supposed to join with the husbands religious beliefs, she took a stand and decided to go against the cultural norms and pressures, against her husband and his family, and she, along with her mother Lois' help, raised little Timmy to know the Lord and his word.
- We know this young man in the Bible as Timothy.
 - We first read about him in Acts 16 when, as a young man, his mother and grandmother became believers in Jesus as the Messiah, and he too heard the preaching of a missionary named Paul about the Good News of Jesus and believed.
 - He himself became a missionary working closely with the Apostle Paul.
 - In fact, Paul considered Timothy to be his spiritual son, as well as his protégé.

Shortly before Paul's death he wrote a personal letter to Timothy, which is in our Bible, the second letter to Timothy. He wrote:

2 Timothy 1:4-5

⁴ As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

- Paul recognized that Timothy's faith in Christ wasn't the result of a spontaneous decision out of the blue one afternoon after listening to Paul preach about Jesus.
- Timothy had been nurtured in his faith his whole life by his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice.
- He had seen the example of the two godly women who raised Timothy to know the Scriptures and know the Lord.
- So that when he heard the message about Jesus being the Messiah, he was open to God's Spirit speaking the truth to his heart, and he believed.
- The ground had already been spiritually tilled by the influence of his mother and grandmother.
- Later in that same letter to Timothy in chapter 3, Paul again refers to his spiritual upbringing.

Remain Faithful to Teach

2 Timothy 3:14-15 NLT

¹⁴ But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵ You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

- Practically from birth, his Jewish mother and grandmother taught him God's Word.
 - Perhaps they had memorized the Scripture and told him the stories when he went to bed, or they brought him along as they went to synagogue.
 - But in any case they took God's Word in Deut. 6:6-7 seriously:

Deut. 6:6-7

⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

While fathers do have a great impact on their children's faith life, the reason I chose Timothy's story is because you mothers and grandmothers also you have an incredible influence in your children and grandchildren's faith.

- More so than any pastor or Sunday school teacher ever will have because you are with them more than anyone. They see you, they watch you.

There is an old Spanish proverb which says, "An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy."

- Just as it was for Timothy's mom, you may be married to a husband who may not be a believer, or perhaps he is a believer but is not really into his faith and not helping contribute to your children's faith development (which is not God's plan, ...
- ...God's plan is that dads would take the lead role in their child's faith),
- ...or perhaps you are a single parent basically trying to raise your child on your own,
- ...or you are a grandmother trying to spiritually impact your grandchildren because your kids aren't doing it.

This story reminds you that you can make a significant difference in their faith.

- Because of Timothy's mother and grandmother, he grew up to be a believer in Jesus Christ, and even became a missionary.
- Mothers and grandmothers don't underestimate the example and teaching of your faith.

There was a pastor who had a long conversation with this new person to church about believing in Jesus Christ and becoming a member of his church

- When he was done the young man said he was ready to take the step of faith and get baptized and join the church.
- The pastor was curious, so he asked him, "What did I say that convinced you to believe in Christ and join the church?"
- The man answered, "It was nothing I ever heard you say. It was the way my mother lived."

Out of curiosity, how many here were influenced to faith in Christ because of a mother or grandmother?

Moms (grand-moms), the greatest thing you can do to instill faith in your children (grandchildren) is to **take your own faith seriously**.

- Don't just do it for their sake, do it for your own.
- Don't take your kids to church, bring them to church.
- Do it for your own faith.
- Quite honestly with kids, their faith is caught as much as it is taught.
- They really need both, to see it lived out, as well as taught.
- If you're just going through the motions spiritually, your kids will eventually see it, and tragically, may do the same thing when they are older.

Trust the Lord for your Children

Perhaps, mothers or grandmothers, you have been feeling discouraged lately because your children or grandchildren are not very close to the Lord,

- Perhaps they are very far from God right now, or just apathetic about God.
 - Though you tried to raise them right, you tried teaching them, you brought them to church, and modeled the faith.
 - Don't give up. Keep praying for them.
 - Many parents have told me they have found Proverbs 22:6 to be a helpful promise of God to claim.

Proverbs 22:6

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

Claim that as God's promise for your child. A mother's work is never done.

Thank you, mothers and grandmothers, for the example and teaching of your faith to bring us to Jesus Christ.

If it wasn't for my mother and grandmother, I don't know if I would be here today myself.

May God bless you, and have a happy Mother's Day.

Kids thank your moms today, and thank God.