

Who is my mother?

John 15:9-17

May 9, 2021

A pastor attended a convocation and heard the main speaker telling a joke before he delivered his presentation. He said, "I have to confess that I once loved a lady dearly before I met my wife. She was married then and still is. In fact, I spent many years of my life in the arms of another man's wife. She was my mother."

The following Sunday, the pastor decided to use this joke to get the attention of his church members before his sermon. He said loudly, "I have a confession to make. I was in love with a woman before I met my wife. She was married then and still is. In fact, I spent many years of my life in the arms of another man's wife and still in love with her." Then he was too excited to remember the next line.

What do people do on these dates?

First Sunday of Feb in Kosovo. Second Sunday of February in Norway. March 8 in Russia and Bulgaria. Fourth Sunday in Lent in England and Ireland. March 21 in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. March 25 in Slovenia, April 7 in Armenia, First Sunday of May in Spain and Hungary. May 26 in Poland, Last Sunday of May in France.

December 22, three days before Christmas in Indonesia. Second Sunday of May in America, Ghana, China, and Canada.

Yes, it is the day honoring mothers. Honoring mothers is global. All the people in the world observe one day annually to recognize mothers and their sacrifice and love and give thanks to them.

“How can God love all the people in the world?”

“God has created many moms.”

God loves us through our mothers and their sacrifice and love. When we honor our mothers, we honor God who have blessed us with our mothers. No God, no mothers; no mothers, there is neither life nor love.

I am sure positively that there is not a person that in one, five, ten, a thousand different ways has not been forever influenced by their mother.

“Honor your father and mother.” It is one of God’s commandments. So we honor our mothers whose love and care has molded us and influenced the way we think and do and live. Everyone knows that there are no perfect mothers in the world. Their love is not perfect. We might be damaged emotionally and mentally due to our mothers’ harsh words or acts.

John Wesley. The one who began the Methodist movement in England and is known as the founder of Methodist movement. Many scholars have concluded that we cannot really understand John Wesley, unless we understand his mother Susanna Wesley. She was so instrumental in his life that she inevitably affected the Methodist movement and its direction.

But I am sure Susanna Wesley was not a perfect mom and she was one of mothers who make mistakes.

Today might be a perfect day, not only express our thanksgiving to mothers, but also understand our mothers' fragility and humanness and forgive their transgressions with love, saying, "I love you the way you are."

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I am totally convinced that the person who influenced Jesus the most, second only to God, was Mary.

But very clearly Mary's role in God's plan did not end at the birth of Jesus. God used her to help mold the personality and ministry of Jesus.

See how John begins the 2nd chapter of his Gospel. "There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there." Where? Where Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to.

Mary was there for Jesus and with Jesus. She was there to support him. Her love surrounded him.

When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." Then Mary, his mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

Here we see Mary putting her total trust in her son. Mary loved her son, Jesus and supported him wholeheartedly. And I think Jesus

was able to do carry out God's will with confidence and boldness thanks to Mary, his mother's love and support.

Do you remember what Jesus did to his mother Mary before taking the last breath? Jesus had a conversation with his mother before he died on the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son." And to his disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

He did ask John, his disciples to take care of his mother, Mary out of his heartfelt concern over his mother's future.

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But is it necessary for John to include this conversation between Jesus and him in his Gospel? Do you think John include this to tell us just how much Jesus loved his mother?

Bible scholars tell us that there is more than this. They agree that John intended to include this story in his Gospel to let his church something important. That is, to tell his church community that Mary is not only Jesus' mother, but also a mother to all who belonged to the community of faith.

Jesus had the same intention. By saying to his mother, "here is your son" and to John, "here is your mother" Jesus broadened our understanding on family and invited to expand the boundary of the family, from the blood-related family to the love-related family.

Do you remember the incident recorded in Mark 3:31-35?

31 Jesus' mother and brothers searched for Jesus. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." 33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. 34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

"Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." Wow. What a radical statement it is! Who is my mother? Jesus did not say Mary. He said those who do God's will is my mother.

Is Jesus breaking or demolish our family structure? No. Here Jesus was not talking about a blood related family structure. He was talking about a new family, a love-related family, the Kingdom of God.

Jesus challenges us to think out of box and see a bigger picture of who we are and what we do as God's children. Yes! Believing Jesus and following Jesus means breaking out of the ordinary family relationship.

We, Christians are people joining a new relationship and a new family. Our primary interest as Christians is going beyond our family line and following God's will and doing it with other disciples of Jesus Christ, whom Jesus claims as his sisters and brothers and mothers and fathers.

Have you been to a Baptist church? I have. I had a chance to attend a Baptist church in Los Angeles, CA where Kyong Hee worked as a pianist. It was before we married.

I was surprised by the way to call me. "Good morning. Brother Kun Sam." They called one another as sister and brother. "Brother Tom. Sister Nancy." It was an eye-opening experience to me, a long time Methodist and made me think over about my identity and the church identity.

"Who is your mother?" "Who is my mother?"

I have a mother in Torrance, Ca. I will visit her this summer to celebrate her 98th birthday. The whole family will gather for this happy occasion. I am looking forward to the family.

Do you know what? I do have many moms here in Fairfield Grace, as well. Where is your mother? Look around.

Pat Rozelle is one of our mothers who faithfully served the Lord and his church. She passed on and entered the eternal life last Wednesday night. We all are saddened by her departure. She is not there any longer in her favorite couch.

She loved the Psalm 23 and told me over and over she would like to go and sit beside still waters and she has gone. No, the Lord led her beside still waters. I told her two weeks ago, "Pat. Mom, know this. Sooner or later I will join you. Wait for me. I love you, mom" I am blessed by and thankful for living with her and sharing love with her at Fairfield Grace.

Jesus told us: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35).

Jesus said, "Woman, here is your son! John, here is your mother!"

Thanks be to Jesus - from that hour on - none of us should ever have to live alone and die alone. We do live together and love one another together. We are Jesus' family to laugh together and cry together and bear burdens together.

Look around to see your sisters and brothers. Look, here is your mother. Happy Mother's Day! Amen. Amen. Amen.