

*“Woman, Behold Your Son”*

John 19:26

April 3, 2016

This morning we are going back to Jesus’ third word from the cross in John 19:26-27: *“When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.”*

Just think of John love and sacrifice → Bonnie (Mom & Dad)

Even greater than the graciousness and sacrifice of John, consider the what we see in the heart of Jesus:

- We see the selflessness (other-centeredness) of Jesus. In the midst of His greatest agony, His focus is not on Himself or on His needs but on the Father’s will and the interests of those for whom He is dying—that’s what a sinless heart does!
- We see the compassionate care and love of Jesus as He ensures that Mary’s future needs will be met.
- In this we see the personal warmth of Jesus toward those He loves.

*I want you to see what great confidence we can have in Jesus’ care for us through the priority He placed on both natural and spiritual relationships even from the cross.*

**1. We see the high value of fulfilling our responsibilities to one another in family relationships.**

If ever there was a time that we might expect Jesus to be distracted by His own needs or pain, it would be now during crucifixion. Yet His perspective is not fixed on Himself but on others. As Jesus uses His limited human strength to ensure that Mary would be cared for, this is one of the greatest displays of the mind of Christ in [Phil 2:3-5]

In His greatest moments of agony, Jesus turns His attention to the future needs of His earthly mother. This is also the most momentous hour of spiritual significance in all of history. If ever Jesus should be unconcerned

about earthly matters, now is the time. Yet He cannot do that. He must fulfill all righteousness and the fifth commandment lays on children the responsibility to honor their parents which includes caring for their needs in their later years. I Timothy 5:8 says that *“if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.”*

The fact that Jesus entrusts Mary’s care to John in her aging years, even from the cross, shows how highly we should value our responsibilities toward one another in our family relationships.

It’s also a reminder to us that even when we are engaged in spiritual ministry, there are times when our families will bear the sacrifice with us just as Mary suffers alongside of Jesus, yet even the most significant spiritual work must not rob our families of having their needs met, both earthly and spiritual.

Do you see how Jesus establishes the high value of our family relationships and responsibilities by entrusting Mary to John’s care in His greatest hour of suffering and His most significant hour of doing the Father’s will?

**2. We see an even superior value on relationships rooted in the Kingdom of God through Christ than on natural family relationships.**

Here we see Jesus doing something that reflects His earlier teaching. The question is, why did He entrust Mary to John’s care when Mary had other children? John 7:5 says that His brothers were not believing in Him. We assume that they did not become believers until after the resurrection. After Jesus’ ascension, Acts 1:14 records that the disciples *“all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.”* So there was a turning point in His brothers’ faith, but didn’t likely occur until after Jesus’ resurrection. It seems likely then, that Jesus wanted Mary to be in the home of believers who would strengthen her faith as well as meeting her physical needs.

But there is something more happening here. Jesus is exalting the value of spiritual kinship over biological kinship when families lack the common bond of faith. Remember what happened earlier in Luke 8:19-21: *“[Jesus’] mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him*

*because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."<sup>1</sup>*

I don't think we should interpret this passage as marginalizing family relationships but rather showing the superiority of spiritual kinship. The most enduring and binding relationships are those that last eternally in the kingdom of God. Jesus is exalting the importance of obedience—even over family! Those who hear the Word of God and obey it have greater access to intimate fellowship with Jesus than even His own earthly family—especially in their state of unbelief.

Just think of the implications of this. Even you and I can have a relationship with Jesus that He values as superior to family if we walk in obedience to His Word and carry out His Father's will. "Loving obedience to the Word of God puts us in a relationship to Jesus which is more certain to be heard and helped than his nearest family relations."<sup>2</sup> If Jesus took care of Mary because she was His earthly mom, how much more will He take care of you who are united to Him eternally by faith?

When Jesus entrusts Mary into John's care, He is applying this very principle that spiritual kinship outweighs unbelieving family relationships. Those of you who come out of unbelieving families, know that there is a level of depth and fellowship that you can have with believers that exceeds what you can have with unbelieving family members. There is a common loyalty to Jesus that impacts every core value in your life—a worldview that is defined by the Bible and only shared by those who come under the authority of God's Word.

So let me summarize what we have discovered so far...

- If Jesus places *great* value on earthly family relationships and responsibilities, so much so that He would secure Mary's

future even in His greatest moments of agony as He bore the sins of the world, and...

- If Jesus places even *greater* value on spiritual relationships that are rooted in the Kingdom of God through faith in Him, then...
- We can be certain that He will care for us no less than He cared for His earthly mother if we are walking in loving obedience to Him.

I realize that this is the opposite of the way we would naturally think. Normally we would say, "if Jesus cared for His disciples who were not His relatives, how much more would He love and care for His own mother?" But when we think this way we reverse the value of the temporal over the eternal. Jesus would say, "If I value earthly relationships this much, how much more will I value my relationships with those who are eternally and spiritually one with Me?"

## Encouragement

So what encouragement can we take to heart from these truths to strengthen our faith?

- "If Jesus could provide for the needs of His own in a moment of His deepest weakness and humiliation, how much more can he provide for your need in his present power and exaltation?"

Ephesians 1:19-20 ensures us that the infinite greatness of God's power which is working on behalf of those who believe, is the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

- If Jesus made provision for His earthly family, how much more will He provide for His spiritual children?
- Those who have been forsaken by their earthly families or those who do not share a spiritual bond of faith with their earthly families can take great encouragement that they are a part of the family of God.

Mark 10:29 – "Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt 12:46-50; Luke 12:51-53

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, from his April 9, 1982 sermon on John 19:26-27: "The Third Word from the Cross." [www.desiringgod.org](http://www.desiringgod.org).

farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.

How will those who have left family or been forsaken for the sake of the gospel receive a hundred times as much in brothers and sisters and mothers? Through the body of Christ, the church, which is the family of God. This means that those of us who have not been forsaken by our earthly families and enjoy spiritual fellowship with them, must not forget that we may need to serve as spiritual family to those who lack such earthly ties (spiritual fathers, mothers, brothers.)

## Application

So what should we do in response to these truths? How should we carry them into our daily lives?

- *We need to give great care and loving investment to our relationships within the body of Christ.* We need to live out the reality of being in covenant relationship with each other because the new covenant not only makes believers one with Christ but also members of one another as the family of God. We need to...
  - Speak the truth to one another in love
  - Extend grace to one another
  - Care for each other's earthly and spiritual needs
  - Encourage each other
  - Build our relationships in the Lord for His glory and our growth and joy

Are you living now as though the body of Christ is your most enduring family?

- *We need to take great care for the spiritual needs of our earthly family.* If natural relationships carry great weight and spiritual relationships carry even greater weight, then our greatest investment should be where natural and spiritual relationships overlap. We need to be actively engaged in discipling our children in the Word and encouraging our spouse in the Lord.

- Finally, *we must love our natural families with a whole-hearted love for God, but we must be careful not to idolize them.* There can be a great temptation for child-idolatry in our culture today. It used to be said that children should be “seen but not heard.” How far we have swung the other direction where children are often the center of home life and public life. Everything is about the child—in fact, it almost sounds sac religious to question it. So what do we do to hold our families in proper/high regard yet guard against idolizing family relationships? We begin by carefully nurturing God-centeredness in our homes, so that our highest priority is not just serving the interests of our children or our spouse, but serving God's interests in family members. It means the child can't be the center of the home, nor can the parent be the center of the home. Everyone will be happier and healthier when God is the center. When God is not the center of our homes, we will either set ourselves up to be prideful parents, or we will rob our children of the best of life by making them the center rather than God. We need our homes to be a place to humbly yield to God's loving authority and grace.

## Communion

As we come to the Lord's table this morning, I want to encourage you to adopt Jesus' view of relationships. Not only honoring our relationship with Him by purging our lives of sin, confessing and repenting of the very sin Jesus died to free us from, but also examining our relationships within the body of Christ.

In 1 Cor 11, Paul instructed us to examine ourselves before we partake of the Lord's supper. This includes examining our relationships with one another. Paul said we are to judge or discern the body rightly. In other words, as we partake of elements that represent His physical body that was given for us, we must understand that now the true body of Christ is His people—we are the members of His body. And so we must come not only honoring Jesus' sacrifice, but honoring him in our relationships with one another; forgiving each just, serving each other, caring for one another, just as Christ has done for us. **[I Cor 11:23-32]—if time**