

## THE PRICELESS GIFT OF MOTHERS

### Luke 1: 26-48

Well, today we've spent some time reflecting on the priceless value of a Godly mother. And as we have seen, some of the greatest men in history go back and give credit for their greatness to the greatness of their mother. And so in my message this morning I want us to take a look at one of the mothers in the Bible who ranks right up there with the greatest of them all. Two of her sons, James and Jude, each wrote a book in the NT. And another of her sons was the Man that the whole NT was written about. His name was Jesus, and James, Jude, and Jesus' mother was Mary. And mothers, let me tell you, if you are looking for a giant to follow, if you are looking for a model for Christ-honoring motherhood, then you need look no further than Christ's own mother, Mary.

Turn in your Bibles, please, to Luke 1: 26-48. Mary was a very special mother indeed. She was just a teenage girl when Gabriel came to her with the news that she would bear the Son of God. And Gabriel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one..." Now, the Greek word for "highly favored" is found only one other time in the NT. Paul uses it speaking of every believer when in Eph. 1:6 he says that we have been accepted by God in Christ. And the word "accepted" is the same Greek word as "highly favored". In Ephesians it means that God's marvelous grace was abundantly poured out upon all of us who know Christ when we were saved. The idea is that God actually pursued us to pour out His grace upon us. And what a blessed truth that is!

But the idea in our text today is that God's grace was poured on Mary in an extraordinary way, a totally unique way. Talking about highly favored! There has never been anyone on the face

of the earth that was more highly favored than Mary, to be handpicked by God to be the mother of His Son.

But think about something else. Think about the responsibility of raising the Son of God in your own home. Mary was given a charge that no one has been given before or since, to help to mold the character of God's Son, to help prepare Him for His ministry of teaching and healing in a blinded and broken world. Now, this is a great mystery, just as is the mystery of the Jesus' virgin birth. How could God the Son's character be molded by a mortal woman; how could Deity be taught anything by humanity? There is no answer apart from the Word of God. But the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man". Jesus matured in His relationship with God and His family and peers just like any other Jewish kid growing up in Nazareth. And He did it under the guidance of Mary and Joseph. No wonder that Gabriel also said in v. 28, "Blessed are you among women."

Now, mothers, you will never have the joy that Mary had in bearing the Son of God in your womb. You will never have the opportunity that Mary had to raise Jesus as your very own son. You will never have the joy of holding Him in your arms, nursing Him, bathing Him, changing Him, or teaching Him the great OT Bible stories.

OH, but listen! If you are a child of God today, just like Mary, you can still rejoice! Why? Because just like Mary, you are highly favored. God has poured out upon you His matchless grace, totally undeserved. You were hell-bound, without hope, and God drew you to Himself and saved your sin-sick soul. And now, just like Mary, the Lord is with you. In fact, you may not be able to hold Jesus, but Jesus is holding you! What greater peace, what greater joy, can you have than that?

But you are highly favored in another way. For though you cannot bear God's only begotten Son in your womb, think about what God **has** allowed you to do. God has allowed you to bear in your womb another son or daughter that He Himself created and placed there. For you see, moms, had God not ordained it you would have never conceived, you would never have the joy of childbirth. God says in Ps. 127:3, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is a reward". And by His grace you did conceive, and He is the One Who shaped your child in your womb. He or she is God's creation, not yours. And God hand-crafted your child to be one of a kind, and there will never be another one born like him, ever. And God loves your child so much that He gave up His own Son to eternal death that your child might have eternal life. And your child is so valuable to God that He has a perfect, unique plan for his life that will bring God great glory and honor. And He has given you the honor of not only bearing him but the honor and the responsibility of raising your child to love and serve Him. Wow! What a high standing you have if you are a mother! To be a partner with God into bringing one of His most precious creations into the world.

Now, for the next few minutes I want us to look briefly at three things that God worked out in Mary's life that made her the godly mother that she was, three things that will be present in every mother's life that truly makes an impact in their children's lives for Christ. And the first thing that we see about Mary was that she was **saved**. Look back at v. 46-47. Mary said that she rejoiced because God was her Savior.

Friends, contrary to Roman Catholic teaching, Mary was not sinless. She did not have an Immaculate Conception, which means that when she was conceived God miraculously protected her from original sin, and that she had the same perfect nature as Jesus. No. Mary's conception was no different than yours or

mine. David wrote in Psalm 51, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me". David is not saying here that the conception of a child by a married couple is sinful. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge". What David is saying is that every living person is born with an Adamic nature, a sin nature inherited from the father of the entire human race, who is Adam. And Mary had a sin problem just like the rest of us. She was born a sinner, alienated from God, without hope, and she needed to be saved. She needed to be forgiven of her sin and made right with God.

And somewhere in her childhood or early teen years Mary was saved. She agreed with God that she was unworthy of eternal life. She believed that one day God would send a Redeemer Who would be the final, perfect Sacrifice for sin, Who would bear her punishment that she deserved, and she placed her faith in that Sacrifice and became a child of Jehovah God, and as we will see shortly, she loved Jehovah with all of her heart.

Ladies, let me say to you, you may love your child with all of your heart, and you certainly should. You may try your very best to be the very best mother in all the world. But you'll never be a fit mother until you are a Christian mother, unless you are a true follower of Jesus Christ. Not a professing follower of Christ, but a genuine, born-again believer in Jesus Christ.

Now, before you turn me off, please here me out. You may be the best room mother in elementary school history. You may be the best soccer mom in the land. Your child may eat the best, dress the best, look the best, play the best, and score the best. They may be valedictorian of their class and get a full scholarship to Harvard. They may marry a perfect 10 and land a job with a six figure starting salary. But if your children misses knowing Jesus Christ they will miss heaven, and they will have been a failure in

life. They will miss the purpose for which they were created, and they will spend eternity in hell. And while you cannot make that decision for them, you can be the greatest influence in their lives to lead them to commit their lives to Christ. But you'll never do it unless you yourself are saved. The greatest thing about Mary that made her a great mother was that she was saved.

But God caused something else to happen in Mary's life that was part of being a great mother. Mary was not only saved, but Mary was also **spotless**. Look at v. 26-27 again. Luke writes that Mary was a virgin. We've already said that Mary was not sinless. But Mary was pure. She was doing her best to walk in the footsteps of Jehovah, to live as godly as she possibly could. She had a good testimony before God and man, for she had no glaring sins that brought shame or reproach upon her or upon her God. And moms, if you would be a mother that God uses to truly raise up godly children, you must live a spotless life before them.

Now as we said, spotless does not mean perfect. You cannot be perfect and your children know that. But they need to see a mother who loves Jesus with all of her heart and is trying her best to follow Him. To be spotless means first of all to abstain from any sexual activity outside of marriage. Teenagers, girls and boys, this commitment needs to be made now, before you ever leave home, and I charge you in the name of Jesus, keep yourselves pure! And by the grace of God you can do it! All but your committed Christian friends will think you're crazy, but if you pledge to remain pure until marriage, God will prepare someone else out there for you who has the same holy standards that you do, and He will bring that person to you, and you will have so much less harmful baggage to have to throw out to have a successful, Christ-honoring marriage. I'm telling you, America is full of frustrated, unhappy adults who ignored God's command to be sexually pure. And they cannot deal with the baggage,

because sin always brings baggage. And they cannot find a healthy, secure relationship they so desperately want to have.

Now, most of you mothers have husbands, and God would have you to be spotless in your relationship with them. Be the wife he has called you to be to him. Strive to meet his emotional and physical needs with all of your heart. Never, ever consider divorce unless he is unfaithful. And ladies, and young ladies, if you are spotless as Mary was spotless, you're possibilities of a stable home will skyrocket and you'll be so much more the good, Godly mother He has called you to be.

There is one more quality that God instilled in Mary I want you to see. She was **saved**, she was **spotless**, and she was **submissive**. When Gabriel concluded his announcement to Mary, notice her response in v. 38. A maidservant was the lowest kind of female servant. They had no will of their own. They did whatever they were told, whenever they were told. Think about that for a moment. Think about what God was asking Mary to do. To bear His Son would mean being labeled as an adulteress in her small town of Nazareth; a stigma that she would carry in some eyes all of her life. But even worse, it also meant the possibility of losing her fiancé, Joseph. In fact, she would have lost him had God not intervened. Mary knew all of that, but it didn't matter to her. She said to herself, "Even if I lose my good name, and even if I lose the man I love, I will not lose my walk with God. He is the most important possession that I have". What faith in a woman of any age!

Mothers, if you come to the place in your life that you can trust God the way Mary trusted God you will be a great mother. To do what is right and trust Him to take care of you no matter how many people ridicule you, no matter how many others are doing what is wrong. As one preacher said years ago, do right if the stars fall. And mothers, if you will do right even if the stars fall

and trust God with all of your heart to take care of you, you can be 100% certain that He will! Matt. 6:33 says, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you”. Never has God failed to take care of a single child of His who fully trusted Him. And if you will do this, I promise you, your children will rise up and call you blessed. And there’s no greater joy, no greater reward in all of the world!

I want you to see what I’m talking about with your own eyes. We have a video clip of part of a speech made this week by Kevin Durant. The speech is an acceptance speech Kevin gave upon receiving this year’s the Most Valuable Player award of the NBA. So let’s watch and listen.

Now, friends, I cannot tell you if Kevin’s mother is a Christian or not. But I do know this. It’s easy to see the impact she has had in the life of her son, and Kevin is a committed follower of Jesus Christ. And her life is living proof of the immeasurable influence that any mom can have for the good of her children and the glory of God in their lives. And let me remind you where it starts. It starts by receiving the grace of God. You can’t do it on your own, moms. You must have Jesus in your life to save you, and to make you spotless and submissive to His will. Do you have Jesus in your life? And if so, is Jesus ruling in your life, making you spotless and submissive to His will?