

Answer The Call: Here is Your Mother

05.08.2022

Good morning, Church! It's great to be with you all this morning. I am so glad you chose to worship with us this morning (either in person or online). If we haven't gotten the chance to meet, I'm Rob. I have the privilege of being on the ministry staff here at WellSpring leading our Middle School and High School ministries.

Happy Mother's Day! Today is a special day that we get to stop and recognize just how wonderful all of you mothers out there are. I am so glad that even after the breakfast in bed you all certainly had this morning and the foot rubs that you were willing to be a part of our worship today.

Some of the moms are feeling robbed this morning. Fathers and children, did you not know those were the things you were supposed to do? I'll get you out of this one:

Something else many of us do not know is the history behind Mother's Day. How exactly did this day come to be?

It started, as you can imagine, with a mother. Her name was Anne Reeves Jarvis. She was a mother of 11 children and was an active Sunday school teacher for her small Methodist church back in the late 1800s. She had 11 children with large age gaps between them. Her 9th child, a daughter named Anna Marie Jarvis, was in her mother's Sunday school class one day when her mom was teaching about motherhood.

Something I love about WellSpring is how many different church backgrounds we have here. Maybe growing up you had the unique privilege of having one of your parents be a Sunday school teacher for you, or perhaps even you were a "PK-Preachers Kid". If that's you I hope you appreciate the prayer her mother prayed at the end of this Sunday school class. Her mother closed with a prayer which went like this:

“I hope and pray that someone....., sometime.... will find a memorial Mother's Day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it.”

Thankfully, somehow, her daughter picked up what she was putting down and went on to become the founder of what we now celebrate as Mother's Day.

Mother's Day and the celebration of motherhood became a larger deal in American society and culture because a woman who was fiercely devoted to Christ and to her family believed in the value that Jesus places upon motherhood.

In fact, Anna Marie, the daughter who started it all, was so passionate that the appreciation of mothers, that when Mother's Day became more and more popular, she began to fight against it because she felt the commercialization of this day has taken away from the core purpose behind its creation. Her words on this were:

“A printed card means nothing except that you are too lazy to write to the woman who has done more for you than anyone in the world. And candy! You take a box to Mother—and then eat most of it yourself. A pretty sentiment.” - Anna Marie Jarvis

Mothers in the room I hope when you woke up today you felt appreciated and cared for. I hope your spouse and children have taken notice of all you do for them and others. But I think we will have only taken a small glimpse at the heart of God if we don't take the time this morning to recognize Mothers for their deepest identity – not as mothers, but as daughters of the Most High God.

Mothers in the room: we love you and celebrate you today, but you were a daughter before you became a mother. And you are still a daughter of the King.

Mother's Day in many ways has become and stayed this commercialized moment in the year where card, flower, and chocolate sales skyrocket while motherhood is minimized to a list of tasks or a job.

We are not going to let that happen this morning.

We are not going to miss the holiness and importance of WHO you are.

Now some of you may be wondering this morning: “how is this 25-year-old man with no children going to talk about what it is like to be a mother?” I am not doing that this morning.

I cannot speak into motherhood and all its challenges and joys from experience, but I can say with confidence that within the life of Jesus we can gain a better understanding of the heart of God. And the heart of God beats heavily for his daughters. All of God’s children are loved and important to Him, and in the narrative of Jesus we see examples of all the ways the Father loves; and these gospel letters are not short on examples of God’s heart for his daughters.

I want to pause before we continue this morning and recognize that there may be some of you listening today who have a negative association with Mother’s Day. Maybe this day reminds you of the mother who is not here with you to be celebrated today. Perhaps today is less a celebration and more of a reminder to you that becoming a mother is not an option you have. Today could even be a day that forces you to think back to the child you lost.

Hear this: If you are a mother, if you can’t be a mother, if you’re a mother waiting to see your baby again on the other side of eternity, or if you are a woman in the room who may or may not become a mother some day: You are a beloved daughter of a God who has called you HIS. And while I cannot begin to fathom the reality of the loss and hurt you may be carrying today, I can say with confidence that comes from the truth of Jesus that you are deeply, deeply loved. Our Father’s heart beats heavily for His daughters.

There are a lot of great examples of mothers and strong women in scripture, but this morning I want to focus on one woman in scripture who encompasses both daughter of God and mother of a son in the most unique and powerful way. That woman is Mary, the mother of Jesus.

I could easily walk us through this morning all the different stories and examples of Mary as the mother of Jesus. Many of us are familiar with the Nativity story we hear around Christmas time, where Jesus was delivered to a virgin named Mary. Some of us may even remember that shorter passage where 12-year-old Jesus gets left behind and lost from his parents, only to be found 3 days later teaching in a temple. I believe these are incredible stories that offer great insight into the

heart of Mary as a mother, but there are two specific places in scripture we are going to dive into this morning that I believe show us the heart of Mary as a woman who loves Jesus because he is her son and loves Jesus because He is her savior.

These two stories from scripture don't bookend Jesus' entire life, but they do show us the very beginning and the very end of His ministry on earth. I don't think it is an accident or coincidence that Mary was identified in these two historical moments and her presence was documented in the text.

First, open your bibles up to John chapter 2, we'll start in verse one:

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." – John 2:1-3

So here we find Jesus, his disciples, and his mother at a wedding celebration. They are just attending and celebrating when Mary sees a problem that she knows her son can fix.

I don't know about any of you, but I can remember a few times in my life where there were volunteer opportunities or things people needed and my mother would just shout "Rob would LOVE to" – this is not what Mary did to Jesus at the wedding, but she did lean over and was like "hey son, I don't know if you saw but they are out of wine..."

She was not doing this to be a demanding mother, no, instead she was showing genuine concern for the hosts of the wedding celebration. See in that time, if you ran out of wine or food as the host it was a major embarrassment to the family. It was a failure that could stick with you. Keep reading with me into verse 4

"“Woman,^[a] why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.” -John 2:4

Okay, husbands and sons in the room, I want you to know if your wife or mom talks to you and you begin your answer by saying “woman”, you're in for a rude awakening. It will not end well for you. Just because Jesus said that doesn't mean you should.

Especially because in the context of the times, it means something very different here when Jesus refers to his mother, Mary as “Woman”.

Back in those days a woman would be more dependent on the men who carry the family name and power in order to have a healthy and safe life. It wasn't because of a woman's inability but a lack of opportunity. Mary could only live the life she lived in the footsteps and approval of the closest and oldest male relative. In this case it was her son Jesus who carried the mantle of protecting his mother and caring for her needs. So when he refers to her as “woman”, it is not a disrespectful phrase, in fact it is edifying because it shows he has accepted her importance as worth representing. Notice too that Jesus then proceeds to tell her “My time has not yet come.”

This statement is important because this wedding come right on the heels of Jesus baptism, the launch of his ministry, but he has not yet revealed that he is both man and God in the flesh. Jesus has not revealed Himself publicly as the Messiah. Mary, however knew who He would be from the moment she was pregnant with Him. Mary knew Jesus as savior, which means she was called to walk in obedience behind her savior. Mary also knew Jesus has her son, so she knew this moment in time was the one where He would take action.

⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” – John 2:5

She told them to get ready because Jesus, her son, her savior, was about to do something great.

The story goes on in verse 6:

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. [b] Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, “Everyone

brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”

Looking at the recorded scripture, Mary was there and involved the first time Jesus performed a miracle following His baptism.

I believe God often does or says things in scripture not because He has too, but because He wants to show us how something important and holy should be handled.

- God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7th. You think it was because God was tired? No, God wanted to show us the holy practice and importance of rest.
- In the Old Testament when the Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt, God could have snapped His fingers and set them free, but he needed them to choose to trust and follow Him.

When God sent his son to be Himself in the flesh of Man, do you think He *had* to make

Jesus born of a virgin? Do you think Jesus *had* to even have a mother? OR could our Heavenly Father, once again, have been showing us the holy importance of something we wouldn't understand otherwise?

Jesus' earthly life took place during a time where women were valued at little worth, given zero to no opportunity, and were treated as less than their male counterparts in almost every way. Jesus being born of Mary gave Him an opportunity to set the example to a broken world like us that women, like His wonderful mother, deserved to have a seat at the table. Because women certainly have a seat at the father's table.

Mary had a seat at a table too, at a wedding, next to her savior and her son. And She got to see Him work, and I bet she got to say:

“MY son, brings the best wine.”

“MY savior, brings the best wine”

Verse 12 which closes this story says :

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples.

There they stayed for a few days.

And from that point on He and the disciples continue on in His ministry. We can see some stories where Mary was mentioned, others where she wasn't, but I think it is a safe assumption that Mary was with Jesus during most of His ministry. There is a strong chance she held down the home while He was travelling, but either physically or through their bond, she was always with Him.

All the way from the opening act to the final act of his earthly ministry.

Turn in your bibles now to John 19

Jesus' ministry from the day of that wedding has seen far more than water simply turned to wine. Now at the end of His time on earth, the followers of Jesus can look back on the last few years and see

- sight restored to the blind,
- the sudden calming of raging seas
- paralyzed men running through towns
- lepers and the sick healed inside and out
- Even life restored to the dead
- And many more miraculous acts

And all of those things lead Jesus here, to be punished for crimes and sins He never committed. All of that journey brought Jesus to hang on this cross with nails through his hands and feet. There he hung in the air after being beaten and mocked, insulted and spat on.

Jesus was in His final hours when we pick up here in verse 25:

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary

Magdalene. – John
19:25

Before we go any further, do you all notice anything odd about this verse? The final hours of Christ and who do we find at Jesus' side? His mother, his aunt, and Mary Magdalene, one of His most devoted followers.

3 women.

Jesus had a large group of men called his disciples who, aside from one for sure, were not mentioned as being at the foot of the cross when He was dying.

Something to note is that those men were very much in danger of a similar fate as Jesus because of their devotion to Him, but as we know in this time women were thought of as lesser. Which means even if they were not as socially powerful or influential as the disciples, they were still equally or more so devoted to Jesus in this moment and at risk of facing consequences for that.

I am not saying the disciples were not there because they were afraid or because they were cowards, I don't know the complete answer to that. But what I do believe is that these women WERE there. Not only were they present, but these women were incredibly bold and strong.

Standing beside their savior as He suffered. One of these women, Mary, was watching not her Savior suffer, but her little boy.

- The boy whom she helped learn to take his first steps.
- The boy she lost for a few days only to find in the temple
- The son who she had watched perform his first miracle at a wedding years before.

She watched as he suffered and gasped for air. She watched helplessly as He experienced the full weight of our, and her own sin. During that horror, listen to what some of Jesus' last words are before He dies:

Starting in verse 26:

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, ^[b]here is your son," ²⁷ and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. – John 19:26 -27

One of Jesus' final acts of life before falling prey to the punishment we deserved, was setting His mother up to be cared for.

Back at the beginning during the Wedding story, I explained that Jesus saying "woman" was not a term of disrespect, but instead of edification. He is showing her value by saying she is worth caring for.

As he is bleeding, suffocating, groaning, and hanging, Jesus still looks to his mother and says, "you are worth being loved and cared for". So, he looks at the "disciple whom He loved" who we know to be John, the author of this Gospel, and he says to him "take care of her."

Jesus had a whole lot on his shoulders in this moment, carrying the weight of our sin and shame and experiencing a physical torture which is one of the most horrendous in history, and yet He chooses to care for not just His mother, but his daughter whom He loves.

To show us the importance of His daughters in the kingdom, one of the final pictures we see of Jesus' life is him surrounded by powerful women, whom He sets up for success with His few remaining breaths.

So once again I say to all of you women in the room, no matter if you are a mother or not for whatever reason, please leave today knowing that our father loves you so deeply and truly. Know that with His final moments of life, the savior more than acknowledged you, but empowered and chose you for a mighty and Holy work. With his last moments He gave you a seat at the table, one we celebrate and honor today.

Children and Husbands who are here listening today, Jesus, during all His pain and suffering and in the middle of bearing the weight of our sin looked to His mother and chose to take care of her one last time. We have no excuse to only serve, love, and lift the mothers and women around us one day out of the year. Break that habit if you're in it and love your moms like Jesus loved His, with fierce devotion and care.