

How Much More: The Gift of Compassion

May 9, 2021

This week

I had seen some article or facebook post or something

So I did a quick search

Or I thought it was going to be quick

For “motherhood fails”

It turns out, there are a lot of websites that pop up

When you search for motherhood fails

Some are crazy pictures

You know, like the hidden camera at Walmart type pictures

But others are like good, reasonable people

Who are just...

They just sound tired

Some of these mommas just sound tired

One site I found had a place where people could write in

Mothers could write in and tell on themselves

Ways they had failed

Which – full disclosure – just seems weird to me

A lady named Genevieve said:

“I once went to pick Hudson and Thatcher up at preschool and asked Thatcher where one of his shoes was. The teacher gently and sweetly explained that, actually, I had dropped Thatcher off only wearing one shoe.”

A lady named Amy wrote in:

“The other day, I looked everywhere for a brush to comb Paige’s hair and couldn’t find one anywhere, so I ended up using a fork. No one saw it, but now you all know.”

This is fascinating

Here's this lady – feeling guilty about using a fork to brush her hair

So she writes into a website

Nobody knows until she writes into a website

To let everybody know

You know, they say there's no difference between men & women

Guys, back me up on this

A lot of us guys have done worse than that

And you're never gonna hear it from us

A woman named Meg wrote:

“Any time my daughter sees a wine glass, she points and yells, ‘MAMA!’”

That's just funny

This is my favorite – some of you may have seen this

It's a picture that a little kid drew

And that apparently the momma didn't see the drawing

Before the kid took it to school

So she sends a letter to the teacher explaining what's goin on

OK - here's the picture

And here's the explanation:

“Dear Mrs. Jones, I wish to clarify that I am not now, nor have I ever been, an exotic dancer.”

Pictures don't lie, ma'am

“I work at Home Depot and I told my daughter how hectic it was last week before the blizzard hit.

Her picture doesn't show me dancing around a pole. It's supposed to depict me selling the last snow shovel we had at Home Depot.”

Seriously for a second

I was shocked at just how many sites were written

By women

For women

Commiserating with each other

How they feel like a failure

My friend Shaun speaks at women's conferences a lot

And he told me a while back how shocked *he* was

When you go to those conferences

How much guilt and insecurity they would all share

You know, behind closed doors

I spent a little time thinking about all this

After looking at several of these "motherhood failure" websites

And I came up with two conclusions:

First of all, some of y'all are a mess

Just got a call a spade a spade

But second, Lots of you are carrying around

A lot of insecurity about motherhood

Look at this quote

We're told by sanctimommies that if we skipped our seldom and much-needed moments of alone time, maybe we could be better. If we nursed longer, maybe we would feel more confident in our parenting. If we were older/younger, emotionally wiser or more financially stable, maybe we wouldn't feel like such despicable failures.

Ladies – help me out

Is this a thing?

Because if this is a thing

I think I can speak with some authority here

The guys in your life are quite likely unaware

That this is a thing

We're walking through life oblivious

Happy as clams

I mean, am I a failure?

Sure – I mess up all the time

Does it bother me?

Sure

Probably should bother me more

But this is different

I've been married for 23 years

And I have four daughters

But I don't think I'm fully aware of how much weight you ladies feel

From all the self-doubt and insecurity

So as a guy

On Mother's Day

I'd like to say

We think y'all are doing great

Are you perfect?

No

But we're ok with that

We're ok with you

We love you

And we want to say "Thanks for everything"

For our mothers

Happy Mother's Day

{Happy Mother's Day, Mom}

And to those who are mothers to our children

Happy Mother's Day

{Happy Mother's Day, Amy}

And (to those who are) grandmas to our grandchildren

Or – let me get it correct

Nana's or mimi's or moomoo's

Or whatever other non-grandma word y'all choose

Happy Mother's Day

This all leads me to our key passage for today

This is the inspiration for a new series we're starting today

In Matthew 7, Jesus asks the following question:

Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

Now before this week, I would have said, "None of you"

But now – after reading these websites

I'm not so sure

Y'all are a mess

Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him! – Matthew 7:9-11

Jesus is saying, look around

It's hard sometimes to know what God is like

And He's saying, I get it

God's pretty overwhelming

So let me give you a picture

When you see a mom or a dad
Sacrificing themselves
To give good gifts to their kids
Know that that's just a glimpse

"How much more" will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him?

In fact

Right before this statement

Jesus says:

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

You want to know about God

Let me show you "how much more" God is

Ask – and keep on asking

I mean, He's the God of the Universe

And He created everything

EVERYTHING

But He cares enough about you

That He wants you to ask

Seek – and keep on seeking

Knock – and keep on knocking

Because as good as your momma is

God is even more

How much more!

The title for today's message is "How much more: The Gift of Compassion"

In honor of mother's day

I want to pull out three attributes

That we see in mommas

To help us get a glimpse of what God is like

God is always there for you

How many times have you talked with someone

Who went through a rough patch in life

Or maybe the rough patch was the norm for them

The smooth places were the unusual part

But they had gone through a rough patch

And lots of people had abandoned them

They had burned too many bridges

They had messed up too many times

But they would talk about how their mom was always there

I think God built that in on purpose

Genesis 1:27 - So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.

I believe we see the full image of God

When we see men *and* women

There are things about God that men bring to the table

And there are things about God that women bring to the table

We need each other

And Jesus uses that

In Matthew 7

To say, when you see parents being parents

How much more does God want to be that in your life?

God is always there for you

Isaiah 49 is quite possibly my favorite passage in the whole Bible

Isaiah 49:14 says:

But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, the Lord has forgotten me."

It's powerful to me

Isaiah was written over 2500 years ago

Think about how many things are different now then then

And yet

The people of God

Are saying about God

He's forgotten me

I don't know if He's busy

Or distracted

Or on vacation

But He's deserted me

You may feel that way

That God's not listening

And when you do

You likely are not going to get an audible response from God

But with Isaiah, we get one

Verse 15:

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?"

Full disclosure

I've never nursed a baby

But I'm guessing "no"

Aaahhh

No – you're not forgetting

God says:

Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

God says – you know how your mom is always there for you

Even if she fails

Even if she fails

I won't

And then He gives us two specifics:

He says, See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands

You know how you maybe will write a little note on your hand

Or used to – people would tie a little string on their finger to remind them of something

Now people use phones and such

But God's saying – I've got a reminder of you

And it's more powerful than a note or string

It's stronger than your best iPhone or Android

I've got nail scars

Isaiah is prophecying here – hundreds of years into the future

When I see the nail scars on my hands

I think of you

You've never been forgotten one day

Never

And He says

Your walls are ever before me.

You know how...

God is always there for you

God wants to help

Ask any momma

And one of the first things their toddler learns to say is
"I can do it by my self"

I've never met a mom who hadn't heard that

And I've never met a mom who taught their kid to say it
We come pre-baked with that kind of independence

And it affects our relationship with God
God wants to help

And we look at the Creator of the Universe
And say "I can do it by my self"

There's a powerful story in 1 Samuel 30

David and 600 soldiers had been fighting in battle
While their families were back at home in a town called Ziklag

At the start of chapter 30

They had marched 3 days to get home
But while they were gone

The Amalekites had raided Ziklag

So when David and his men got there

They found the city burned
And their families gone

1 Samuel 30:4 - David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

This is a horrible scene

But it was probably worse than we even imagine today
In our modern world

We have the Geneva convention and such
But in those days

Your wife being taken off by soldiers

Your kids being taken off by soldiers

David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

1 Samuel 30:6 - David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. *But David found strength in the Lord his God.*

So now – in response to the pain they felt

They blamed David

If we hadn't been out with him, they said

This wouldn't have happened

Somebodies gotta pay

And that somebody is David

But David found strength in the Lord his God.

That's a powerful statement to me

David is a talented leader

But he didn't lean on his own ability

Or his charm

Or his intellect

David also didn't fly off the handle in his grief

It says, he found strength in the Lord his God.

And then he prays

And asks God what to do

That's not normal

He's kind of formal about it

Brings in Abiathar the priest

Has Abiathar bring in an ephod

This linen priestly garment

That was used to inquire of God

All the while

The Amalekites are heading south

But David understands that he's not too busy to pray

In fact, he's too busy NOT to pray

There's no way he can get this done without God

So they sense God telling them to pursue the party

And they do

But remember, they had just marched hard for three days to get home

So at the end of that next day

A third of the soldiers tire out

They say we can't go on

So David leaves them with the supplies

While he and the other 400 push ahead

They catch up with the Amalekites

Rescue their families

And start heading back

That's setting the stage for a key reunion

They come back to the Bezor stream where they had left the 200 guys with the supplies

And of course, they come rushing up to meet them

Hug their wives and kids

1 Samuel 30:22 - But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

If I'm honest

That makes sense to me

They had come back from battle – already exhausted

They saw their city burned

Their wives & kids taken

I'm sure they were horrified about how they might be treated
They cried till they had no more strength to cry
Then they went out after their families
And a third of them were too tired to go on
So they pressed ahead
Alone

I get that
Take your families
But we're keepin the stuff

1 Samuel 30:23-24 - David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us.

That's an impressive bit of leadership
On a lot of levels
That's an impressive bit of leadership

David continues:

**He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us.
Who will listen to what you say?**

Who will listen to what you say?

What's he talking about?

He's saying – listen

If you say, God gave us this victory

But then you also say,

Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered.

Who's gonna listen to you?

It's clear you think you recovered it

You did it

You earned it

Who's gonna listen to you?

He says:

The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."

All will share alike because it is God who provided

David was clear

In good times

In hard times

Even in moments of sheer crisis

That God is there to help

This world is a mess

Broken & sinful

The kind of world that captures your wife & kids

While you're gone

But God is always there to help

God wants to help you

God is always there for you

And God provides a safe place to land

Paul writing to the Thessalonians

About his ministry there

He writes - We speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:4b)

They were trying to please God

And how did they do that?

How did they please God?

1 Thessalonians 2:7b-8 - Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

Let me ask you a question:

When you consider God
How He thinks of you
How He treats you
Is this what you think?

Is God a powerful judge?

Certainly

Is God a mighty King?

Absolutely

And humanly speaking

Powerful judges and mighty kings

Aren't typically tender

Caring

Sweet & kind

"How much more?" is our great God in Heaven?

That's the point about God

He's so much more

Immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine

He's infinite

Creating the entire universe with just His Word

He spoke... and it was

So He's infinite

But also intimate

He knows the number of hairs on your head

And David writes,

"You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights, Each tear entered in your ledger, each ache written in your book. (Psalm 56:8 MSG)

He's more

So much more

And I really want you to know Him

If you're not actively involved in a relationship with God

I want you to know that He cared so much about you

To send Jesus...