

MOTHERHOOD

INTRO: Preaching on family life is not my forte, if I even have one. Such days as Father's Day or Mother's Day are a struggle and usually do not give a message on those days. Usually I pray for them and give some words of encouragement. But I thought I would see how it went and I sat down and began to work on it. My first thoughts were on the word, *motherhood*. Why did God choose to make mankind in such a way, as to require mothers in order to bring about human beings?

Now you understand why God made human beings. The very first question in our Catechism is, "What is the chief end of man?" Our German Catechism says, "Was ist das Notwendigste, wonach ein Mensch in diesem Leben trachten sol?" I would put it like this: Why am I here? Why did God make man? What should be our chief goal in life? The answer in our catechism is: *In Gottes Gemeinschaft und Gnade zu Leben und nachmals die ewige Seligkeit to erlangen*. That means, "To live in God's fellowship and grace and to obtain eternal life in the future."

I think the answer in our catechism is too man-centered, and would better begin something like this: "To glorify God," and then it could continue with what the catechism says. There is no higher goal anyone can have in life than to live for the glory of God. Now what that means needs time to explain and that is not the purpose of this message. But let me simply say this, if my goal is to glorify God, and there is no better or greater goal to have, then life will not be centered around me, but centered around God. And we all know that is how life should be.

Now, if glorifying God is reason God created mankind, then what is the purpose of motherhood? Well, surely the glory of God must be in that purpose. So we want to look at that, how it is achieved and then the sanctity of motherhood.

I. THE PURPOSE OF MOTHERHOOD

So let me begin by asking you a question: Is it right for God to make man to glorify Him only? If God desires of me that I do everything for His glory, is that good or bad? If I do everything for my own glory, is that good or bad? Is that not selfishness in the extreme? Is that not our age?

Me, me, me; I, I, I. I like to quote L. E. Maxwell's little ditty:

We had a little party,
 This afternoon at three.
It was very small,
 Three friends in all,
Just I, myself and me.
 Myself ate all the bread,
And it was I that drank the tea;
 It was also I that ate the pie,
And passed the cookie to me.

You might enjoy that in Plautdietsch. It goes like this:

Wie hauden ne kjliene Jezalschaft,
 Fondaujgel nomedach, bie dree.
Wia mol zeeja kjlien, aulus toop dree Frind,
 Bloos ekj, miezelfst, un mie.
Miezelfst eet aul det Broot,
 Un ekj drunk aul dem Tee,
Daut wia uk ekj dem Pei op eet,
 Un räkt de Küak no mie.

Now let me ask you, if I live my life like that, is it not selfishness in the extreme? Is that not narcissistic? Do you know people who are narcissistic? Here is an online definition of narcissism. They call it a personality disorder. The Bible calls it sin. Here is what the definition said. Narcissism: "...is a mental condition in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationships, and a lack of empathy for others." When you talk to people like that, they also have three very good friends.

Now let me ask you this question: If God made everything for His own glory, including motherhood, is that not selfishness in the extreme or narcissistic? If He made us for His own glory, if everything is to be about Him, is He not a narcissist?

So let me try to explain this. God is neither a narcissist nor a selfish being. We meet the word 'good' for the very first time in Genesis 1:4. God had created the heavens and the earth, but it lay in darkness. So the very first thing God did after that, is He created light. Light is an amazing thing. We can't define it but we all like it, unless we are doing something we shouldn't be doing. And when God saw the light He said the word 'good' for the very first time. He said it was good. Seven times in Genesis 1 we find the word 'good.' And the seventh time it says this in Genesis 1:31:

31 Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.

When God had created everything, He stood back and looked at it all and indeed it was very good. I have told you what I believe God's main attribute is. Let me see if you remember? It is His goodness. I believe that whatever we find that God is, that is good. You will never find anything that is bad. I have mentioned to you at other times that I believe the chief attribute, the attribute of God that stands above all others is His goodness. He is holy because He is good. He is righteous because He is good. Whatever else He is, He is because He is good. And as I understand goodness, it is that which relates to the well-being of anything.

Why did I tell you that? Because I asked if God is a narcissist or selfish because He created us to glorify Him. You may wish to ponder through what I want to tell you now, and then see if you agree. Here it is: When we live entirely for the glory of God, it will be good for both us and God! That is why He is not a narcissist, though He desires all of mankind's glory.

But when we live entirely for our own glory, it is never good for us nor is it good for anybody else! So far is God beyond man, that when we live for His glory it is always good for both God and man! I mean, always! There is never a case when this will not be true.

And now to the question: what is the purpose of motherhood? Motherhood is one of the greatest means of glorifying God for women! There is only one thing greater a woman can do. It is to remain single for one purpose, and that is to serve God with all she is and has (1 Cor. 7:34).

Look now at Genesis 1:26-28:

26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

One of the chief ways we bring glory to God is by obeying Him. And one of those very first commands God gave to man is to fill the earth with people. Today we have this ungodly fear of overpopulation. Whenever possible, I encourage young marriages. That is because of the way God made mankind and He created them to fill the earth, and when you are young you have the most energy for a very demanding task. I believe God did not make women to have a college degree. He created them to have their part in filling the earth. I understand that for most things there are some exceptions. But they are, after all, the exceptions, not the rule.

I understand that for some reason or another, some young ladies never get married and some may never be able to bear children. And it may have nothing to do with not desiring it. If that is your lot in life, seek to do all for the Lord you can in that life situation.

II. HOW TO ACHIEVE THE PURPOSE OF MOTHERHOOD

So if the purpose of motherhood is to glorify God, how is that to be achieved? May I ask mothers, does motherhood test you, sometimes almost, and maybe sometimes beyond your ability and wisdom? In motherhood, almost everything that can be tested in you will be. One of the greatest endowments on mankind by God is the free will. God created both men and women with a free will. And women have every potential to bring glory to God, and motherhood is one of those areas.

To many women in our age, when they find they are with child, they feel it a curse. Well, many in that situation should not be in it either. But the capacity to be a mother is a huge, huge honor bestowed by God on a woman. The magnitude of this honor we will hardly fathom.

This is such a very important area of man's life that every home should prepare their young ladies for this. Young ladies should learn that their roles are different from that of men. When I counsel young people for marriage I tell them it is so very obvious that God did not design women to do men's work that we should not need to be told. Oh, I am not saying there are never exceptions. But such truths are self-evident. But today we deny even the most obvious.

But if a woman is to glorify God in motherhood, she should be properly married. So God, right at the very beginning, after He had made the woman, brought Eve to Adam. That is a message for every generation, culture and place. A woman should be properly given to a man, and that is marriage. Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

So if a woman is to glorify God in motherhood, she should be properly married. And then in marriage, now will come the greatest opportunities for her to bring glory to God. But, alas, motherhood comes with many trials. She will find very many things in motherhood to be very taxing. She will find her husband taxing. She will find her children taxing. She will find herself taxing.

For example, mothers, may I ask you, how do you talk to your husband? Do you say to yourself, "When will he ever smarten up?" You see, right here you can glorify God, or you can fail to glorify Him. How do you talk to him? How do you talk to your children? May I ask you, does it take deep prayer for you to overcome how you respond to your husband or your children? You see, if only you were not married, you wouldn't have this "cluts" to put up with. Now you have to instruct him here and there and everywhere. But did you know that the Bible never said your husband should submit to you? Did you realize it said you were to submit to him? And you say, "Oh, what do you know about submission." Well, what I do know about submission is that God said the woman should submit to her husband.

Or what about when your husband wants to deal with the children, do you stand in the way? You know better than he does. Your mothering heart can't handle discipline. You love your children too much. Well, this is not a father's day message, but there are many fathers who are lax in discipline. Sometimes mothers want to discipline and the husband stands in the way. But a mother may stand in protection of her children where she ought not to do so. Many a mother has ruined many a child this way.

You see, if you will bring glory to God you will have to wrestle through and learn how to be submissive to your husband, and how to train your children. And if you will bring glory to God you will have to learn how to do that without raising your voice too much.

Earlier I said that when we bring glory to God it is good for God and it is good for us. Do you know what is good for women? In marriage, in motherhood, she is to learn to submit to her husband and to love her children. And if she learns that, what will it do to her? She will become more and more like Christ, and that is exactly what God wants to happen. There are many things God cannot do for women if they do not have a husband and children. And if she had a perfect husband and children, God would not be able to do what He wants to do in mothers either.

Now let me say one word to any ladies that may never have the privilege of having a husband or of having children. You have a special lot in life. Learn all you can about being a godly person in spite of the opportunities you do not have.

Let me take you to a passage for both mothers and grandmothers. We go to Titus 2. Paul was instructing a pastor about various things. We begin in verse 1:

1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine:

2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience;

3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—

Here Paul addresses older women. They are to be of reverent behaviour. They are not to be slanderers. This is what we usually mean by the word *gossip*. Gossiping, in its true sense is not wrong. We all do it. But because such talking wants to lend itself to tearing down other people's character, it has gotten the name 'gossiping.' It is no secret that this is an area of struggle for some older women. I won't deal with the 'not given to wine' section as it would take too much time. I have just completed a book on that. You can purchase it on amazon.com. It is called, "Wine and the Bible." There I deal in detail with every important verse that deals with this subject. But last, the older women are to be teachers of good things.

Now the reason I went to this passage is because of what older women are to teach younger women. Paul is talking about mothers, and the areas they need to be taught in. Verse 4. The older women are to first:

4 ...admonish the young women to love their husbands,

Now you will probably say, "Hey, just a minute. Have I not heard you say that women are never instructed to love their husbands?" Yes, you have heard me say that. When I said

that, I was talking about agape love, but the word here is not agape love. The word used here is interesting. It is *philandros*. Well, the *phil* part of that word is where my name comes from. My name, in Greek is *philhippos*. That means a lover of horses, or horse-lover. The word in our text is *philandros* which means husband-lover.

You see, older women are to teach younger women how to be husband-lovers. Why do younger women need that kind of teaching? Because younger women do not naturally know how to do that! Our fallen nature has affected and infected us. So women have to be taught how to love their husbands. Every woman needs some help in this, especially when she is a younger mother.

Now you see, it is not the pastor's wife or the college graduated woman that is to do this teaching. It is the older ladies. Why? Because what needs to be taught here is not learned in school, it is learned in life. Schools never entered a more forbidden field than when they began to do 'sex education!' Shameful, shameful schools! If ever you don't want a secular school to teach anything, it is this!

Now there is just a lot to being a husband-lover. Men are a tough lot to live with and every woman said? No, don't say it. We can be an unpleasant lot! This can be taxing! Even though there are some fringe benefits, it can be very difficult. So younger women need some guidance from older women.

Then older women are to teach the younger to be children-lovers. Why? Because the devil will come along and raise your tempter and you will get frustrated and do things you should not do. You see, mothers are generally just not naturally a good husband-lover or child-lover. Some are more so than others, but all need at least some help. Mothering is a huge task. But if you will become a godly mother, you will have developed godly character.

No matter what our nature is, we all need help when it comes to raising a family. But if in all these areas we humbly, and meekly learn to overcome; we will grow in

godliness of character. And once women are older women, and have life experience, then teach the younger.

Next, the older woman is to teach younger women how to be chaste. The KJV says to teach them to be discreet. The root of this word is *holiness*. The online Bible says of this word: exciting reverence, venerable, sacred, pure, pure from carnality, chaste, modest, (it speaks of) an unsullied virgin, pure from every fault, immaculate, clean. That gives us some idea of what it means. What does that all affect? It will affect how a mother speaks. What kinds of words she uses. I am sometimes amazed at how plainly some of our Mennonite ladies speak. It seems some older women never had an older woman to teach her.

Then how about dress? Do some younger women need to be taught how to dress? You don't have to be old fashioned to be proper, but mothers should learn how to be discreet in dress. Mothers should teach their daughters how to dress properly. Oh, there are so many areas. May I ask, you older ladies, do you ever say something to younger ladies when you see things that are not in order? Do you obey the Lord in this? This is very hard.

Then the older ladies need to teach mothers how to be homemakers. I can say something positive about our culture in this regard. Most young ladies between 12 and 14 are more capable than many college grads at 20 or 30 years of age in homemaking. We got enough first-hand experience when I was in Bible school to know this.

Then the older women are to teach these mothers to be good. Anything an older woman sees that will help for the well-being of younger mothers is included here. What a huge task this is. And last, the older ladies are to teach these younger mothers to be obedient to their own husbands.

Now, older women; these, are not suggestions. Older women are to do this. And younger women, mothers, homemakers; if the older women do not tell you, and you struggle in some area, ask the older women. When it comes to instructing

others in areas of family life, I suppose we are probably all hesitant.

And I am saying this to tell you how to glorify God in motherhood. Learn to glorify God. If you will learn to love your husband, you will bring glory to God. If you learn to love your children, you will glorify God. If you learn to be chaste, or discreet, that is holy in life, you will glorify God. If you are a good home-maker, you will glorify God. If you will learn to be good and learn to be obedient your own husband, you will bring glory to God.

And you may say, "Is there no easier way?" No, there is no easy way to learn to bring glory to God in motherhood. But let me ask you, how many of you would like to become more and more like Jesus Christ? Mothers, would you like to be more like Jesus Christ? This is the way, walk ye in it. There are no easy ways for mothers. Their's, is a difficult task. But their task is of utmost importance to the well-being of mankind!

So let me take you now to a most difficult passage. We go to 1 Timothy 2.

11 Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.

12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.

15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

Verse 15 is a most difficult verse. What does Paul mean when he says a woman will be saved in childbearing? I have mentioned this verse to you before but we'll look at it again. My explanation is this: Salvation has three tenses, past, present and future. I got saved in 1972. That is my past tense salvation. I filled with sorrow over my past

life and on a dark back-street in Vancouver B.C. I gave my life to Christ, past tense.

Right now God is in the process of saving me. I am learning of new things in my life that need to be gotten rid of and new things that need to replace those. There are days when I go through very deep struggles because of the work I am in, and God is seeking to teach me how to overcome those and to trust Him. Believing, in the NT, is almost always spoken of in the present tense. I cannot quit believing and still be on the way to heaven. If I quit trusting in Christ day by day, I will not be going forward.

I received an e-mail titled 14 ways to try to lose your salvation but you can't do it. Nobody ever loses their salvation, but plenty throw it away for a pottage of sin. Present tense salvation is present tense, continual believing. No matter what difficulties life may bring, no matter what temptations life may bring, I continue to believe.

And then there is future tense salvation. Past tense salvation delivers us from the penalty of sin. Present tense salvation delivers us from the power of sin. Future tense salvation will deliver us from the very presence of sin.

So when Paul says of women are saved in childbearing, is it past, present or future tense salvation? Well, without question, it is present tense salvation. Mothers, through childbearing, God will work into you, things you need to get in; and He will work things out of you that you need to get out, and you will find you have plenty of both! Those draining days; those sleepless nights; that crabby husband; those busy children, all of these can do things in your life that there are no other ways of doing.

You see, our verse is a general truth. This is what is true for women in general. For women who never marry or have children, there are other things that are just as trying. And they can learn to glorify God right there. But if you

are not a mother, there are some opportunities you will not have.

III. SAFEGUARDING THE SANCTITY OF MOTHERHOOD

Now let me say a few things about the sanctity of motherhood. Motherhood presupposes marriage and marriage is a holy ordinance sanctified by God. It was ordained by God and it was approved by God. God's desire is that mankind should fill the earth with people. And let me just mention that fear of overpopulation is a sin. It is totally against God.

Let me say to those who are not married, to enter a relationship and bear children before marriage is violation of the sanctity of motherhood. Maybe someone will listen to this message say, "Pastor, I have violated about every area I could have violated. My life story is a mess from childhood until now." I had such an e-mail not long ago. Well, I have good news for you too. Let me first say to anyone who has so failed. A while ago I read a chapter here written by L. E. Maxwell on forgiveness. He said of the modernist in his day, that he said, "We have gotten rid of that old and troublesome way of repentance." But we will never get rid of that troublesome path if we want to grow spiritually. It still works today. In that chapter, he spoke about the difference between being pardoned and being forgiven. To be pardoned is to have the penalty removed. To be forgiven is to have the sin washed away. It is simply amazing that a person can be so horrible as to take another person's life and on the ground of true repentance one can be pardoned AND forgiven! Is that not almost beyond comprehension? It is amazing what true repentance does for both God and man! And so it is with the sin of violating the sanctity of marriage. Repentance pardons and brings forgiveness!

Today, a huge thing for women is the claim to have the right to do with their body as they wish. It is, after all, she claims, her very own body. But the facts are that nobody, but nobody, has the right to do with their bodies as they wish. It is a violation of the sanctity of

motherhood. If women have such a right, then so do men, and there should be no, "Me Too" movement. Yet if somebody else does with their body that which violates this woman's body, all of a sudden, so called rights become violations!

But when she says she has a right to do with her body as she wishes, she is not telling us what she really means. What she really means is that she has the right to fulfill her lustful desires however and whenever she pleases. And if she has an accident, she has a right to abort. But what has not dawned on her is that she has violated the sanctity of motherhood. And to that violation she has added murder of the innocent! She has caused to come into existence another human being, and with that, she has obligated herself to care for this person until they are fully on their own. And because she does not want the consequences of her pleasure, she murders her own offspring. Nobody has such rights!

And once more, let me add, that though she has been so very, very wicked, in true repentance she can be forgiven and have her slate wiped clean. A more gracious message cannot be given! But, it can only take place through that old way of repentance!

All over planet earth, the sanctity of marriage is violated. And when people marry, and then they fight and divorce and remarry, again they violate the sanctity of marriage. The damage done to children will never be described by any writer, and it happens because of a violation of the sanctity of marriage and motherhood.

When we had an evangelist in the community I spoke to him about this and I told him that we have hardly any divorce and remarriage in the community. And he responded, "But you have many troubled marriages." And I said something like, there is a huge difference between a bad marriage and divorce and remarriage. I have been amazed to see it, from the perspective of the children. It is amazing how children will stick by their parents, though the marriage is very troubled. But when they divorce and remarry, it does damage in the children that goes very, very deep.

The Bible allows that in a very bad marriage, a husband and wife may separate, but not remarry. Let me read a few verses for you from 1 Corinthians 7. Paul says:

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

A mother and a dad, who cannot make a go of their marriage, if they separate without remarrying, still do very big thing for their children. Children can handle separation, but not divorce and remarriage. When a partner in such a marriage enters another relationship, whether it involves remarriage or not, a huge, huge violation has been committed against the children. To remarry or enter another relationship is a violation so huge, that such a person will be forever lost unless they repent and get out of that situation. And they will do indescribable damage in their children.

I am talking about the sanctity of motherhood. I have just counselled a woman online who was married for the third time. Her story is enough to make anyone weep. But no matter how you sliced the story, she is now living in sin. And the last e-mail I got she was reconsidering her present marriage.

Now I want to show you how powerful the sanctity of marriage is. You see, motherhood presupposes marriage. We go to the book of Haggai. The Lord had a few questions for the prophet Haggai. We begin in verse 10:

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying,

12 "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or

any food, will it become holy?"'" Then the priests answered and said, "No."

Holy meat is meat that has been offered to the Lord. And the prophet Haggai asked the priests, if a priest, who is holy, who has garments that are holy, and he carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and he touches any other food, will that other food also become holy? Well, the priests knew the answer to that question. That just does not happen.

Then Haggai asked a second question. Verse 13:

13 And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?" So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

When a priest who is holy touches a dead body, he becomes unholy. And Haggai's question now is, if that priest touches any food, will it be unclean. And the priests knew the answer to that too, so they said, "Yes, it will be unclean." Here is the principle. If that which is holy touches anything else, does that other thing become holy? Answer? No. But if anything unholy touches anything else, does it become unholy? Answer? Yes! That is the law of clean and unclean. That is the principle of holiness.

Now in 1 Corinthians 7, Paul deals with marriage problems that were present in the church at Corinth. In verses 10-14 he says this:

10 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.

11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

Let me just say that the word translated *divorce* here is not the usual word for divorce. It is a word that has the idea of to *leave* or *forsake*. But in verse 12 we have a man who becomes a Christian and he has a wife who does not become a believer. The case is not where a believer marries an unbeliever. The case is that of a married couple where one becomes a believer and the other does not. When either the man or the woman becomes a Christian, that makes the believer holy. We call that a saint. Every true Christian is a saint, or holy. Now the Christian of this couple wonders if he continues to live with this unbelieving partner, if that will not make the believing partner unholy. That is what the law of clean and unclean says.

So the question is that since the unbeliever will make the believer contaminated or unholy, should the believer leave his or her partner in such a case. And Paul says, "No, let not the believer put the unbelieving partner away." Why not? Now look at verse 14. It is most amazing:

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

So powerful is the sanctity of marriage that the unbeliever does not cause the believer to become unholy, though they stay together! The believer who is holy, makes the unbeliever, who is unholy, holy! That is amazing! But let me be quick to say that because someone is sanctified in this sense, that does not mean saved. It means they are set aside for a specific purpose by God. And now note that it goes on to say that the children are holy too. You see, the

word *sanctified*, means made holy. This is the sanctity of Christian motherhood.

What am I saying? Mothers, guard the sanctity of marriage. You may not always be in this church. If you will bring glory to God in motherhood, you will do all you can to protect your marriage. And if you should ever have to leave your marriage partner for any reason, make sure it is not due to your wrongdoing.

CONCL: So mothers, what is the purpose of motherhood? Well, ultimately it is to bring glory to God through motherhood. Entering marriage and motherhood is God's desire for the majority of women.

And just how do you glorify God in motherhood? Well, here are a few things; learn to be husband-lovers, child-lovers, to be discreet or chaste, good, and obedient to your own husband. That should probably be about enough until next week, don't you think? Oh, what a holy task is motherhood! Let me encourage every mother, set out to overcome in every area.

And last, to all the unmarried, guard the sanctity of motherhood, and to all the married, maintain the sanctity of motherhood. And then for every woman, whether married or unmarried; whether you have been blessed with children or not, seek to be all you can be for God in whatever lot you have received from the Lord.