

Devotions for the Week of May 13, 2018

LARGE-PRINT

Mother's Day

North East United Methodist Church

By Rev. Dr. Drew M. Christian

Sunday, May 13, 2018

Read Through the Insert “*Scriptural Blessings to Pray for Your Children*” by Brian Smith.

My wife has been praying for my boys since before they were born. In recent years, each night, she prays that God would prepare them to be Godly men and knowing God knows already who their spouse will be, that God prepares and protects their future spouse, helping them grow into Godly women. We pray for their success in school, for God to help them learn lessons through difficult situations, and for them to always know how much they are loved.

Please read through the section at the end of this week's devotions, “Scriptural Blessings to Pray for Your Children”. If you are a grandparent, replace “children” in the prayer with “grandchildren.” These are promises from God's Word put into prayers of blessing to be offered over our children. These are prayers God will honor for they come from His Word and His Heart.

Monday, May 14, 2018

Read John 19: 25-26.

This past Sunday, we celebrated Mother's Day. When the Hallmark cards come out it always makes me think, “Why don't we celebrate Mother's Day everyday...why give one day a year to honor such a noble profession, such an intimate

relationship in our lives?” Jesus certainly did not live such an example. For Jesus, relationships were precedence, priority, and every day!

Jesus cared deeply for His mother...we see His love for her from the cross...as disregarding His own pain, He is only concerned with her well-being, giving her over to the “*disciple whom he loved,*” to care for her and to be her son.

There is a tremendous scene in Mel Gibson’s “The Passion of the Christ,” where Mary runs to hold her son, a grown man, now carrying a cross, fallen on the street, blood pouring from the thorns in his head. As Mary runs to Him, there is a flashback of a small Jesus, a child, falling in the dirt, and Mary, His mother, running and picking Him up, loving on Him.

The love of a mother can be a powerful reminder of God’s love. God’s love has been described in scripture like a “*mother hen gathering her chicks.*”

For many of us our mothers have played a vital role in our upbringing and faith. John Wesley once said, “*I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians of England.*” For many of us, our mother’s love and the love we share with our children, reminds us of the great love God has for us. For some of us, our mothers were not there...may have hurt us...may have neglected us...For us, we must remember that our God in heaven does not hurt or neglect us...our God in heaven offers us love that is beyond any earthly love we have ever experienced...For some of us, we have lost our mothers...we must remember that God’s love is sufficient and will sustain us in times of grief and hurt. As we think about the love God offers us that is even beyond the greatest of motherly love, it

is a time to lift our mothers up in prayer...to lift up the mother of our children up in prayer. It is time to forgive our mothers who were not there for us. It is time to write to the mother we haven't spoken to in a while. It is time to love like Christ loved...sacrificially and unconditionally, both our mothers and our children. And in loving them, remembering that Christ loved us so much, He gave His life for us...remembering that we are loved with an amazing love indeed! Give God thanks for the love He holds for you that is eternal in the heavens.

Tuesday, May 15, 2018

Read Matthew 23:37; Deut. 32:11-12; Isaiah 66:13; Hosea 13:8.

“A Hen, An Eagle, A Loving Mother, A Bear & My Shepherd” was the title of the message on Mother's Day.

A Yiddish Proverb states, *“God couldn't be everywhere so He created mothers.”* Now I believe that God can be everywhere, but God certainly works through mothers to touch and mold young men and women, to love and guide them on their life journey. Abraham Lincoln said, *“All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.”*

Not all mothers are loving and nurturing, and for some of us Mother's Day brings up bad memories, but God places women in every one of our lives, either at birth or perhaps later, to mother us and care for us. Such women in our lives show us the love of God through their sacrificial giving. Tenneva Jordan defined motherhood by saying, *“A mother is a person who seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.”* Such sacrifice and love share with us the unconditional love that God offers each of us,

ready to cover us with His wings like a mother hen, ready to protect us from our enemies like a mother bear, ready to catch us when we are falling like a mother eagle.

Take time to reflect on the women in your life who have been a mother to you, have nurtured, protected, and guided you on your life journey. Take time to perhaps call, write, and thank those who have shown you unconditional and sacrificial love. Ask God to show you who you might be a mother to, might love sacrificially.

Wednesday, May 16, 2018

Read John 19: 16-27.

Even in His last moments on the cross, Jesus thought of his mother...Jesus emphasized relationships. No one was meant to go alone through this world and the tragedy one has to face. William Barclay writes, *“There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the cross, when the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of his mother in the days ahead. He never forgot the duties that lay to his hand. He was Mary’s eldest son, and even in the moment of his cosmic battle he did not forget the simple things that lay near home. To the end of the day, even on the cross, Jesus was thinking more of the sorrows of others than of his own.”*

Jesus not only holds his mother up, but throughout his ministry Jesus holds up all his relationships. He constantly bridges cultural gaps that keep people from knowing and loving one another. He did this when He reached out to the Samaritan woman (John 4: 1-26). He places relationship above work telling Martha that Mary has chosen the right path by focusing on her relationship with Jesus rather than duties (Luke 10: 38-42). He preaches the need and command to *“Love one Another,”*

that this was, along with loving God, the most important commandment (Mark 12:31).

Are you holding your relationships as a priority in your life? Are you intentionally working to keep those relationships growing? Are you thinking more “of the sorrows of others” than of your own? Ask Christ to help you open your heart to others and focus your time on the relationships that cross your path, which God sends your way and has put into your life.

Thursday, May 17, 2018

Read I John 3: 1-3.

I don't believe there is any place where we can go to understand more, the relationship between us and God, then to look closely at the relationship between a mother and a child. Perhaps that is why God has blessed so many of us with children, to help us to see the relationship he wants with each of us...to help us to see how God sees us...

After an Emmaus weekend, I realized that God looks at me and each of you like Deb and I look at our sons while they are sleeping at night – We go in to check on them & sometimes just sit there watching them sleep – so perfect, so beautiful – so innocent – at those moments we realize that there is nothing our boys could do to stop us from loving them – they are our children – they are precious...we would give our lives for each of them...

That's how God sees us – there are times God is disappointed, frustrated, crying for us – but God will never stop loving us...we are God's children...

Friday, May 18, 2018

Read Matthew 7:11 and James 1:17.

During a week that we celebrate the love of the women in our lives who have cared for us, let us be reminded once more of God's amazing love for each of us...a love that is always perfect...always available.

Max Lucado, in his book, He Chose the Nails, writes, *“Have you ever wondered why God gives so much? We could exist on far less. He could have left the world flat and gray; we wouldn't have known the difference. But he didn't. He splashed orange in the sunrise and cast the sky in blue. And if you love to see geese as they gather, chances are you'll see that too. Did he have to make the squirrel's tail furry? Was he obliged to make the birds sing? And the funny way that chickens scurry or the majesty of thunder when it rings? Why give a flower fragrance? Why give food its taste? Could it be He loves to see that look upon your face?”*

He goes on to writes, *“If we give gifts to show our love, how much more would he? If we – speckled with [selfishness] and greed – love to give gifts, how much more does God, pure and perfect God, enjoy giving gifts to us? Jesus asked (Matt. 7:11), ‘If you hardhearted, sinful men know how to give good gifts to your children, won't your Father in heaven even more certainly give good gifts to those who ask him for them?’ God's gifts shed light on God's heart, God's good and generous heart. Jesus' brother James tells us: ‘Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light’ (James 1:17). Every gift reveals God's love...”*

Don't ignore God's love. Give thanks today for His tremendous gifts, for giving you His heart in the shape of His Son, Jesus Christ.

Saturday, May 19, 2018

Read 1 Peter 2:5.

On Mother's Day we remembered those women in our lives that helped make a home for us...who helped raise us...who, though perhaps not our biological mother, inspired and encouraged us, built us up. We celebrated the women who molded us, taught us, and showed us areas we needed to work on and walked with us on the journey.

God is ready to build us up as well, protecting us from the wind, rain and storms of life. The question is, "Will we let Him?" Will we let God build us up? Will we let God into our hearts and allow Him to pull out that which is holding us back? Allow God to mold us into the man or woman that God created us to be instead of saying "This is just the way I am"? Will we let God into our relationships, forgetting the foolish notion that we can "fix" things ourselves? Will we let God have control of our lives and allow Him to give us directions for life? Will we allow God to confront us with our addictions, bad habits, selfishness, pride, arrogance, and the many other faults and weaknesses that get in the way of us and our loved ones? Will we look in the mirror?

Take time this week to take a hard look at yourself. *Many times, we want to makeover the other person when it is us that needs to get the extreme makeover.* What is it in your life, in your relationships, that you need to give over to God, which you need to allow God to change in you?

Pray that God will show you the blemishes that He is

ready to glaze over, to remold, and to remove if only you will surrender to Him and let Him “fix” it. Take time just sitting with God tonight and know that He is the potter and we are the clay. Let Him mold you into the likeness of His Son, Jesus Christ...Let Him mold your relationships into the likeness of the relationship between God and Christ, Himself.

And Don't Forget to Invite Someone to Church Tomorrow!

Scriptural Blessings
to Pray for Your Children & Grandchildren
by Brian Smith

Assurance of salvation. Lord, lead my children to trust only in Jesus' sacrifice for their eternal salvation; assure them that their souls are secure in Your hands. (Jn. 3:16, 10:28-29; 1 Jn. 5:13)

Intimacy with God. Draw my children face-to-face with You, that they might taste Your goodness & long for more of You. (Ex. 33:11; Ps. 27:8, 34:8, 42:1-2)

Spiritual blessings. Father, remind my children that You have adopted them in love. Enable them to experience all the spiritual blessings they have in Christ Jesus, especially Your measureless love. May they act, speak, and think in ways fitting for a child of God. (Eph. 1:3-14, 3:17-19, 5:8-10)

Confidence in prayer. Assure my children that You hear their prayers and that You always answer as a caring Father, even when they do not receive what they want. (1 Jn. 5:14-15; Mt. 7:7-11)

Repentance. When my children sin, quickly lead them to confess and repent so that they might enjoy a clear conscience and unbroken fellowship with You. (Ps. 32:1-2; 1 Jn. 1:5-9)

Sanctification. Transform my children into Christ's likeness. Use whatever circumstances You, in Your perfect wisdom, deem necessary to produce a harvest of righteousness and peace in their lives. (2 Cor. 3:18; Jas. 1:2-4; Heb. 12:5-11)

Hope and rest. Bathe my children in restful, confident hope as they trust You with their self-worth, relationships, life's work, and _____ (other concerns). May they overflow with Your peace. (Jer. 29:11; Mt. 11:28-30; Ro. 15:13; Phil. 4:6-7)

Comfort. Through every hardship, may Your Spirit bring tangible consolation to my children so that they will know that they are not alone. Right now, they need Your comfort to get through _____ (pray for specific trials or losses). (Mt. 5:4; Jn. 14:16-18)

Freedom. Guide my children into truth so that they will enjoy genuine freedom. (Jn. 8:31-32,36)

Friendships. Provide my children with friends who are supportive and truthful. Keep them from relationships that would draw them away from You. (Eccl. 4:9-12; Prov. 27:5-6; 1 Cor. 15:33)

The unimaginable. Gracious Father, shower my children with blessings that exceed my dreams. May Your love flow abundantly into their lives. (Eph. 3:17-20)

Effective parents. Help me (and my spouse) to be the influence my children need at every stage of their growth. Keep me willing to listen to anything they want to discuss. (Prov. 20:7; Eph. 6:4)

Marriage and children. If it is Your will that my children marry and have children, guide them to godly spouses with whom they will enjoy flourishing relationships. May they pass along a rich heritage to future generations. May those who remain single experience the joy of living in undivided devotion to You. (Ps. 127:3-5, 128:1-4; 1 Cor. 7:32-35)

A healthy church. Provide my children with a unified, prayerful, Bible-teaching church family that will draw them into community, give them a hunger for Your Word, and involve them in Your work; bless them with spiritual leaders who are trustworthy and humble. (Acts 2:42, 4:32-35; Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13)

Holy Spirit. Fill my children with Your Holy Spirit. Show them how to exercise their spiritual gifts, and enable them to bear all the fruit of Your Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Eph. 5:18; 1 Cor. 12:4-28; Gal. 5:22-23)

Influence. Lord, may my children attract many to You as they influence the world with truth and righteousness. (Mt. 5:13-16; Mk. 1:17; 2 Cor. 2:15-16)

Success. As they study and apply Your Word, may my children bear much eternal fruit. Grant them success in _____ (specific God-honoring endeavors). (Josh. 1:7-8; Jn. 15:8; Jas. 1:25)

Wisdom. Bless my children with wisdom, and give them a constant hunger for more. Fill them with the knowledge of Your Word and Your will. Grant them a life-giving fear of You, for that is where all wisdom begins. (Prov. 3:13; Jas. 1:5; Col. 1:9; Prov. 9:10)

Guidance. By the Holy Spirit's power, lead my children along paths of righteousness. Specifically, guide them in _____ (circumstances your children currently face). (Prov. 3:5-6; Jn. 16:13)

Protection. Keep my children physically safe and healthy, and guard them from the evil one. Help them resist _____ (specific current or future temptations). (Jas. 5:14-16; Jn. 17:15; 2 Thess. 3:3; 1 Cor. 10:13)

Provision. Supply my children's earthly needs. At the moment they need _____. (Mt. 6:11,25-33; Phil. 4:19)

Eternity. Remind my children of the eternal rewards You promise. Let this perspective motivate them to lay up treasure in heaven. May they seek first Your kingdom and righteousness by living with integrity and investing generously in the lives of people. (1 Cor. 3:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:1,10; Jn. 14:2-3; Mt. 6:19-21,33)

To Contact or Set an Appointment with Pastor Drew...

Cell Phone: 302-841-2569

Email: drewmchristian@icloud.com