

*Proverbs 14:1 The Wise Woman builds her house, but with her own hands
the foolish one tears hers down.*

Good Morning Church Family. When Pastor Sutton called and asked that I step-in for her we were not sure what date it would be. I agreed that I would give a message.....little did I know that it would be on THIS DAY.....Mother's Day. In the past, I have been able to rely on God to give me the nudge I needed to write something.....He never let me down. In HIS time He always comes through.....But for some reason, this particular day, Mother's Day seemed to concern me. What would I say? Then it occurred to me, where would any of us be without our mothers? God did use women to make sure that mankind would continue.....he could have went another route.....I mean, He is God.....but he chose WOMEN to help carry out HIS Plan for humanity. After a lot of prayer and Midnight Messages from God, ideas started to come.

This day that we set aside to honor the mothers in our lives came about because of the love one woman had for her mother.

Anna M. Jarvis first suggested the national observance of a day honoring all mothers because she had loved her own mother so dearly. At a memorial service for her mother held in May 1908, Miss Jarvis gave a carnation to each person who attended.(her mother's favorite flower) (St Andrew's Methodist Church in Grafton, West Virginia) Within the next few years, the idea of a day to honor mothers gained popularity, and in 1914, by an act of Congress, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

I came across A few things that Mothers have Taught Us over the years. I think you may recognize some of these.....

First, We learned to APPECIATE A JOB WELL DONE.

“If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning”

We are Taught RELIGION. “You better pray that will come out of the carpet.”

We learned about TIME TRAVEL. “If you don't straighten up, I'm going to knock you into the middle of next week.”

Then we have LOGIC. “Because I said so, that's why.”

We were taught FORESIGHT. “Make sure you wear clean underwear, in case you're in an accident.”

How about IRONY. “Keep crying and I'll give you something to cry about.”

Some moms teach about the science of Osmosis. “Shut your mouth and eat your supper”

On a personal note, My Mom taught me about WORK ETHIC.

“*Work Smart NOT Hard*”. If we were going up stairs to our room or down to the basement to play, she would always say “Don't go Empty handed”. There was a spot on the kitchen counter for items that needed to go to the basement and the steps leading up to our rooms would hold clean laundry, shoes, books or toys.....I can still hear her voice when I head up or down the steps, reminding me NOT to make a trip EMPTY HANDED!

I am sure each of you have memories of Things Your MOM TAUGHT YOU?

It is for certain that Mothers and LIKE MOTHERS need to be honored and deserve to be honored. We are sometimes blessed with women in our lives who are LIKE MOTHERS and LIKE GRANDMOTHERS In addition to being blessed with a wonderful birth mother, I had very special relationships with a couple of Aunts, a Grandmother and a neighbor, all who had a BIG Influence in my life. These women I could talk to, they would listen, give advise and well.....love me unconditionally, even when I did not deserve it Like those women, I also have been very blessed by my Church MOMS who God has placed in my life. Each of these women have had an important part of who I am today.

Those who parented us have made a difference in our lives. As adults, as Parents and LIKE Parents, You have made a difference in the lives of your children, grandchildren, your nieces, your nephews, the neighborhood kids and other children that have been a part of your life.

You may think you are past the time of making a difference in the life of children or in the lives of other. After all, some of us are Seasoned Citizens. But I tell you that God is still using you. God has a plan, a purpose and a reason for each and every one of us. We never know how we are influencing someone else. How our past, yes, the ugly past, those bad choices, our brokenness, even our scars can be a lesson or guide for someone. We do not always have to give advice or an opinion. We can Listen. Just listen to those who need to unload and talk about what is going on in their life.

Motherhood is one of humanity's oldest, most respected — and essential — human institutions. Moms help to instill and shape their children's emotional, physical and spiritual well-being. Fortunately, there are numerous mother's in the Bible whose incredible reactions, decisions and overall life experiences provide important and timeless lessons for us all.

When I read Proverbs 14:1 ...The Wise Woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down... *what I get from this, is building a house with wisdom would include following God's word and guidance. And the same woman can tear that all down by foolishly ignoring God's word.*

Today we will look at five great mothers in the Bible whose stories offer us some important guidance worth exploring and maybe integrating into our own lives:

LET'S SEE WHAT THESE INSPIRATIONAL MOTHER'S OF THE BIBLE CAN TEACH US?

1. Jochebed (Joke-a-bed) is the first mother we will learn about. In the second chapter of Exodus it tells us that Jochebed went above and beyond to save her little boy's life. That little boy was born at the time when the Egyptian pharaoh demanded the midwives kill every Hebrew boy born in Egypt — He wanted this done in an effort to control the Hebrew population.

The Hebrew midwives wanted to honor their God. They refused to participate and instead deceived Pharaoh so they could avoid killing the baby boys ([Exodus 1:17–19](#)).

Jochebed made the sacrifice not only to ignore the mandate and hide her son for three months, but to then selflessly release him hoping he could survive and be cared for.

When her child was Three months old, Jochebed placed that tiny baby in a basket and set him afloat on the Nile River ([Exodus 2:3](#)). Even Pharaoh's own daughter disobeyed her fathers decree. She found him in the basket and took pity on him, adopting him as her own child, naming him MOSES ([Exodus 2:5–10](#)).

In an amazing turn of events Jochebed was able to stay connected to her son. She was hired by Pharaoh's daughter to nurse and care for him. Exodus 2:9-10 (NIV) This story reminds me of how much a mother will sacrifice for the well being of her child. To let them go.....give them up....send them out and maybe never know how that child's life turns out. This is also an example of how someone who has NOT given birth to a child becomes their parent/mother.....someone who nurtures, guides and loves a child that has come into their life.

2. Next we have MARY: 'BLESSED AMONG WOMEN'

Mary is, without a doubt, the most well-known and revered woman in the Bible. The scriptures explain that God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother — granting her one of the most important and transformational roles in human history.

The gospel account in the Book of Luke is quite revealing. I am sure we are all familiar with this story. It shows the grace with which Mary took the shocking news that she would be Christ's mother. The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, who was a virgin at the time. Gabriel told Mary that she was "highly favored" and revealed that she would be expecting. This news had to be troubling but the angel told her not to be afraid, that she had found favor with God. Mary was told that she would have a son and to call him Jesus. Mary questioned how pregnancy was possible and was initially troubled by the angel's appearance. I think I would be a bit troubled also. But The angel reminded Mary that God can make anything happen. He backed that up with the news that her relative Elizabeth, who we might consider elderly, was six months pregnant. Once Mary realized all that Gabriel had shared with her, she responded to this life-changing news with a heart that was fully open to God's will.

Mary said, *"I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled."* Luke 1:38 (NIV)

Most scholars agree Mary would have been between 12-16 years old. I don't know about you ladies, but when I was that age, I would have been terrified if an angel showed up and told me this. Also, I am sure I would NOT have reacted with the confidence she did. Mary's reaction is a lesson in our own lives when we find ourselves faced with a difficult or challenging call from God. Mary and Joseph had their plan. They were betrothed, engaged. There was to be a wedding. But, as we know, Our Plans are NOT always God's Plan. In this instance, Mary chose to trust and obey — setting an example everyone can

learn from. When God has a plan, you can be assured He WILL show us the way to finish HIS plan. We only need to Trust and Obey.

3. The THIRD Woman I chose might be called the Ideal Mother-In-law.

Naomi is perhaps the Bible's most famous mother-in-law — and her stunning qualities of kindness, care for others and sacrifice shouldn't be lost or ignored.

Over the course of a decade, this Old Testament figure lost her husband and two sons. She and her family had left Bethlehem, to live in Moab during difficult times of a famine. While living in Moab, Naomi's husband died. Her sons had married women from Moab, Orpah and Ruth. Over the next few years both of her sons also died. Naomi and her two daughters-in-law were left with no man to help care for them. Then she heard that her homeland of Bethlehem, once again had food and resources. But she encouraged her widowed daughters-in-law to stay in their homeland of Moab rather than return with her to Bethlehem. She felt they would have a better chance at finding husbands in their homeland. This was quite a selfless act, seeing as she was now alone without her husband or her sons. But one of those daughters-in-law, Ruth, refused to leave Naomi's side, and chose to travel back to Bethlehem with her Mother-in-law.

Imagine Ruth and Naomi traveling; a difficult trip for two women alone. They did not have the comfort of modern transportation or even an animal to ride on. They walked; and it was not a couple miles. It was about fifty miles of sandy, rugged and steep terrain.

I am imagining our sand dunes along Lake Michigan. Have you ever hiked a sand dune? I have walked a trail in the Sleepy Bear National Park and that about killed me! I am not sure I could walk that trip that Naomi and Ruth took.

Although it is a short trip today from the area of Moab to Bethlehem, it would have taken Ruth and Naomi seven to ten days on foot.

We know from the Book of Ruth that Naomi took this trip two times.

The first time with her husband and then with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, following the death of their husbands.

These two women formed a strong relationship that took on the form of a mother-daughter dynamic. Over the course of time, Naomi was an excellent example of faithfulness and was a source of strength and advice for Ruth amid a new life in Bethlehem.

Naomi also made it her mission to find Ruth a new husband, prioritizing Ruth's well-being even as she suffered from her own loss and loneliness.

Naomi offers wonderful lessons when it comes to self-sacrifice and compassion for others, giving us a lens into the importance of looking beyond ourselves to secure goodness and comfort for loved ones.

Let's take a look at the woman who waited. We know that Elizabeth was a relative of Mary, Mother of Jesus. It is believed they were probably distant cousins. Luke 1:6 teaches us that Elizabeth and her husband, Zechariah, were righteous and devoted to the Lord. Like most couples they wanted children to carry on the family name. After years of waiting it was thought that Elizabeth was unable to conceive.

She and Zechariah were old when Zechariah was in the temple one day and the angel Gabriel appeared to him with a shocking message: Zechariah and Elizabeth would have a son. Gabriel told Zechariah that the birth of their son, John, would come at the "appointed time,"remember? God's Timing? Once the pregnancy happened, Elizabeth thanked the Lord.

Luke 1:25 (NIV): shares her words...

"The Lord has done this for me. In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Elizabeth's faith and character are again on full display when Mary visits her after learning from Gabriel that her cousin was expecting. Luke 1:41-45 (NIV) sheds light on what happened at the moment of their encounter — and how Elizabeth recognized the importance of trusting in God's promises:

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.’”

Elizabeth's story teaches an important lesson about waiting on God. This is something I know that we can all relate to. Just because we do not hear an answer to our prayers in OUR TIME, does that mean God is not listening? Does that mean that God will not answer? Absolutely NOT! He IS LISTENING AND HE WILL ANSWER. We just need to remember that God's timing is always perfect.

Psalm 27:14 “Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”

And last we can learn from the first woman of the bible. Eve, the first woman created by God, the wife of Adam and the world's first mother also teaches us some important lessons about life and the importance of relying upon God and clinging to His will in our lives. Most people know that Eve was deceived by the serpent in the Garden of Eden — an act that led to Adam's deception as well and Adam and Eve being KICKED OUT of paradise. The quick recap: God told Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and warned that they would "die" if they disobeyed. They didn't listen. Have you ever done this? You were told NOT to do something, because it could harm you? But you just had to try it! You didn't listen, you disobeyed and guess what? You suffered the consequences of your choices.

Genesis 3:1:2-6 (NIV) has more:

"The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

'You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman. 'For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

In the end, God expelled them from the garden and the rest is, well, history.

Adam and Eve had it all! They were in Paradise! God was providing them with all their needs. But as soon as they were told not to do something, they wanted to do it. As soon as they were told they did not need what was on that tree, they wanted it. Most of us have all that we need. Shelter, Food, Water and yet, we

are tempted by advertisements, media, fashion, “The Latest and Best” phone, car, toy”, whatever it is. We have all been tempted to or have made errors in judgment and choices. Despite making an error in her judgment and choice, Eve teaches humanity the importance of listening to God and abiding by **His** will in our lives. Material THINGS will never give us the fulfillment we are looking for. They will only leave us wanting more.

There will always be temptations. Even Jesus was tempted by Satan. What did he do? He focused on the TRUTH, He focused on God's word. As Mom's, as Parents, as Christians.....if we stay focused on God's word and the lessons of those who have gone before us, we can continue to learn and to teach and to witness to all we meet on this life journey.

So...Today, on Mothers Day, let's say thank you to all our MOTHERS AND OUR LIKE MOTHERS, those who may not have birthed us, but have been an active part of our lives. Let's say THANK YOU for their undying love, their untiring work, their unselfish giving, and their undivided devotion.

Happy Mothers Day! I hope this day is one of blessing and comfort for you. And, if for some reason, this day brings you pain or heartache, my prayer is that the Lord would be close to you today. AMEN.