

Sermon: A Mother's Laugh Genesis 18: 1-15, Proverb 31:10-31

Everyone likes to laugh, and they say laughter is good for the soul. So, with that in mind, let me share with you "10 Principles of Motherhood That Every Mom Should Know":

1. If motherhood is going to be easy, it would never have started with something called labor!
2. Shouting to make your children obey is like using the horn to steer your car, and you get about the same results.
3. Raising a teenager is like nailing jello to a tree.
3. Any child can tell you that the sole purpose of a middle name is so they can tell when they are really in trouble.
4. There are three ways to get something done: Do it yourself, hire someone else to do it, or forbid your children to do it.
5. Adolescence is the age when children try to bring up their parents.
6. There are only two things a child willing to share: communicable diseases and their mother's age.
7. Money isn't everything, but it sure keeps the kids in touch.
8. An alarm clock is a device for awakening people who don't have small children.
9. A child outgrows your lap but never outgrows your heart.

It's Mother's Day. Some may find Mother's Day difficult.

Some were raised by single moms or grandparents.

Some had mothers who were not good role models.

Some cannot bear children.

Mothers are not perfect. Mothers experience joy, hurt, and pain. They are people too. Sarah was called "the mother of nations" despite her inadequacies. So, using Sarah as a model, what can we learn about a mother.

Sarah's name means "princess." She was a stranger in a strange land. Her beauty worried Abraham. As they traveled to Egypt, Abraham said to her, "I know that you are

a woman beautiful to behold; and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; then they will kill me, so he asked Sarah to reply be "I am his sister.

Once Sarah realized her sorry for not having children, she suggested to Abraham that Hagar, her concubine give him an heir. Later, Sarah became angry when Hagar stepped beyond her bounds.

In today's story, we know Sarah had a sense of humor. Her timing was off. When God approached Abraham and Sarah about giving birth to a son, both laughed hysterically. Abraham "fell on his face and laughed," Sarah, "laughed to herself. " She even tried to deny laughing to God."

What was this "to be mother' laughter about anyways? There was no natural way possible that they could conceive a child. Abraham exclaims, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" (Genesis 17:17)

Sarah was 90 years old when Isaac was born. It wasn't so much about laughter of disbelief as it was honest laughter of reality. The twist in the story-Sarah named their first-born Isaac, which means "laughter."

Sarah was known as the mother of a nation despite her shortcomings. The moral of the story is you can always learn from a mother figure.

We all heard the term a mother figure. It is a person, a woman who you feel you can ask for help, support, or advice. Mother's come in all shapes and sizes. We carry within us that image of a mother. While no woman is a perfect person, we seek those qualities we are missing in our own lives.

As I think about the women surrounding Jesus and Christian women throughout history, I heard the qualities of a mother: compassion, healing, and caring for the sick, cleansing those who have a disease, driving out demons. Women of courage, passion, servant leader. If you think about it, mothers have healing, teaching, leadership ministries.

When I heard Proverbs 31 speaking of a virtuous woman characterized as faithful, confident, industrious, welcoming, thrifty, hospitality respective, an inner beauty that reflects Christ, I think what B. J Hoff said about a mother figure:

Her heart is our companion all through life. Her faith, our quiet partner in success. Her strength, our constant anchor in the storm. Her love, our greatest joy throughout the years."

My mother was like Sarah in a way. She had her good and bad days. She had her ups and downs, but she always kept her sense of humor. She said, might as well laugh as cry.

When I reflect upon my mother, she taught me many lessons about life and faith. Without realizing it, she taught me those qualities and characteristics I still look for in my adopted mothers.

I believe God's and a mother's grace and love are similar. Growing up, I was like kind of bad apples, some would say rebellious, perhaps possessed. I like to think I was more adventurous and risk-taker. But more times than I can count, my mother and grandmother would watch me go astray. At the end of every day, the bad I did, they would wipe the slate clean. They both prayed for me, asking God to work within my heart.

As I grow up, God put other women in my life I call "mother" and grandmother because they taught me lessons about life and faith.

On Mother's Day, I think of Rita from Will Roger's United Methodist Church, Tulsa, OK. She taught me faithfulness. I think of Viola at Fairview, a baker of bread with a sweet spirit. I think about Mae at Cid UMC, who asked Cindy if she could take me home with her. Cindy reply, if you want him, you can have him. Dana, motherless yet a mother to many needy children. Loris, who shared my sense of humor. Doris in Weaverville never married but had a tireless work ethic. Whether you are aware of it or not, many here today have been like mothers to me. Thank you. Of course, husbands, we are thankful for that special woman God has put in our lives.

There is an old saying, "Action speaks louder than words." So, I am inviting you to take a moment and remember those women who have given and taught you the gifts of life and faith through their hidden gifts of love, grace, and prayer. Let us honor them, all the women who were and are like a mother to us.

I ask you now to gather their names in your heart. I encourage you now to stand. As you stand, you are saying, I remember, I want to thank you, I want to say in my heart the words I cannot express the gift of your character you give me. Please say, if you are able.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, these are the women, past, present, and future who are and will be like mothers to us as they give their gifts to us about life, about our faith in Christ.