A TALE OF TWO MOTHERS

A. Today is “the Lord's Day”, but since 1914 this Sunday in May has a secondary significance.

1. This is a day to honor our FIRST “primary care giver”, which we should be doing often.

B. Mother's Day is not a religious holiday, but there is “religion” in Motherhood (1 Tim 5:14; Titus 2:4-5).

1. God designed motherhood & His word teaches us how it should be carried out.

2. But His word also illustrates how it should not be carried out, which we’ll notice in just a moment.

C. Solomon wisely counseled his son using a form of writing common in his time, which we call Hebrew parallelism.

Prov 1:8-9 – My son, hear the INSTRUCTION of your father, & do not forsake the LAW of your mother; 9 For they will be a graceful ornament [wreath] on your head, & chains about your neck.

Prov 6:20-22 – My son, keep your father's COMMAND, & do not forsake the LAW of your mother. 21 Bind them continually upon your heart; tie them around your neck. 22 When you roam, they will lead you; when you sleep, they will keep you; and when you awake, they will speak with you.

1. Mothers were not to have separate set of laws for their children from their father’s laws, but rather her laws echoed the father’s instructions & commands.

2. However, we often read quickly past the fact that Solomon said children should respect their mother’s laws as much as they do their fathers.

3. Solomon showed us two symbols of parental instruction: the “wreath”, …of honor, & “chains”, …of ownership (not of slavery, but as a gift given to a child as a reminder to whom he or she belongs.)

D. Mothers CAN have an enormous influence over their children.
A mother who has a strong moral character & a gentle demeanor can communicate with a child better than just about anyone.

a. That’s why the athletes, when given the chance, will say “Hi mom” during a televised sporting event.

[Today we want to view two cases of motherhood. The first resulted in shame. The second resulted in honor.]

I. HERODIAS, A WICKED MOTHER (Matt 14:1-12)

Herodias had been the wife of Herod Philip. But he was excluded from ever receiving anything from his father (Herod the Great). So Herodias took up with another king, Philip’s younger step-brother Herod Antipas. John the baptizer spoke up about the unlawfulness of that relationship. Herodias then prompted her daughter to use her beauty as a power of persuasion over Herod. When Herod succumbed to his lusts he honored her request for the head of John on a platter.

[THE LESSONS HERODIAS TAUGHT HER DAUGHTER – resulted in bringing shame to both of them.]
B. **Beauty is a tool to get what you want:** “Use your great looks & talents to take advantage of (exploit, overpower) the weaknesses of others in order to gain the greatest opportunities for yourself.”

1. Herodias might as well have said, “God has made you into a beautiful woman & an excellent dancer. Now let’s use that to our advantage.”

2. I wonder how many mothers secretly wish their daughters were on “Dancing with the Stars”, or the winner of a beauty pageant, or selected to be the “queen” of something.

3. Mothers, like Herodias, often use their daughters’ beauty & abilities to live out their own fantasies?

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4. This may be hard for most people to accept, but God did not create a woman’s charm & beauty to be paraded before the lustful & admiring eyes of the world, but for her husband alone.

5. And until she is with him, alone, she is to be clothed in such a manner as to demonstrate that she has a sense of shame & self-control.

6. Herodias had the same idea about beauty, as the people who work in fashion design, marketing & advertizing today – who attempt to clothe young people in a manner that would stoke the fire of sexual passion.

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C. **A moral code** (like John’s) **must not be allowed to interfere with your ambitions:** “Wait until after you achieve your goals, then you can pay more attention to a sense of right & wrong.”

1. Most people who have lived by this rule end up living out their days with a heavy conscience of guilt for the way they have treated others.

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_Prov 31:30 – Charm is deceitful & beauty is passing_, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.

_1 Tim 2:9-10 – Women adorn themselves in modest apparel_, with propriety & moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, 10 but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works._
2. A Christian mother must teach her children that there are no ambitions worth having & no goals worth achieving that require you to set aside God’s moral code.

a. The moment you set aside God’s standard of right & wrong, there is no turning back.

Heb 12:14-17 – Pursue peace with all people, & holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, & by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

3. A Christian mother must teach her children that their purpose in life is not to satisfy all their ambitions nor to achieve all their goals for life, but simply to glorify God in their conduct.

[The daughter of Herodias was a chip off the ol’ block – of Herodias.

Her style of motherhood resulted in the death of an innocent prophet of God, & the perversion of what was once an innocent child.

Now, let’s turn our attention to a godly example of motherhood.]

II. EUNICE; A GODLY MOTHER

Acts 16:1 – [Paul] came to Derbe & Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, BUT HIS FATHER WAS A GREEK.

2 Tim 1:5; 3:14-15 – when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois & your mother Eunice….3:14 – But you must continue in the things which you have learned & been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet 2:11-12 – Beloved, I beg you as sojourners & pilgrims, abstain from fleshy lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

A. In Eunice we see just how powerful & effective motherhood can be when it is carried out as God designed it.
1. God intends mothers to raise children who will acknowledge & obey God in all their ways.

2. Eunice was that kind of mother, she laid the groundwork for Timothy to obey the gospel & become a Christian.

3. So when Paul came a callin’, Timothy was ready to drop all his ambitions & plans to GO (Mk 16:15)!

B. Eunice taught her son that motherhood is more than just bearing children & making sure they are fed, clothed & have a roof over their heads.

1. She taught him that motherhood is an honorable & divine calling (God’s career choice for the woman).

a. And evidently, it’s an occupation she keeps throughout her life, for even Lois (Timothy’s grandmother) was still active in his training.

2. Eunice set before Timothy a great example of motherhood, so that when he was ready to marry he would know the kind of woman that would make both him happy & God pleased.

[THE LESSONS EUNICE TAUGHT TIMOTHY – resulted in bringing the honor of God to both of them.]

A. God’s word MUST be imparted to every generation, & that work begins at home: “Timothy, crawl up here on this cushion & let’s read God’s word together.”

1. There is no greater gift a mother can give her children than when she imparts the wisdom of God’s word to them, as they face together the complexities of life in this fallen world.

Prov 31:26 – She opens her mouth with wisdom, & on her tongue is the law of kindness.

Abraham’s Lincoln’s mother said that she would rather her son learn to read the Bible than own his own farm. She died at an early age, & Lincoln’s stepmother took over & nurtured a love for God’s Word in him. Mr. Lincoln said of his mother, “All that I am or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother.”
B. **Motherhood is the highest earthly privilege that God can grant to a woman**: “Timothy, God gave you to me, & He wants me to give you back to Him.”

**Gen 4:1** – Now Adam knew Eve his wife, & she conceived & bore Cain, & said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.”

**Psa 127:3** – Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, & the fruit of the womb is a reward.

1. Hannah, mother of Samuel, felt that privilege stronger than most women (1 Sam 1, 2).
   a. She could not have a child for the longest time, but she prayed to the LORD for a male child, with the promise of giving him away in his youth to live with Eli the High Priest.
   b. Her prayer was granted, & she kept her promise to the LORD.
   c. And over time, God showed Hannah that motherhood was truly a privilege?

2. She watched her son grow to be the most important prophet in Israel.
   She conceived & bore three more sons & two daughters.

2. These & similar events in the OT were examples for Eunice & her mother, as well as faith building lessons for Timothy.

C. **The kingdom of God must be your aim in life; God must come first** (Matt 6:33). “Timothy, as you leave home to go with brother Paul, you keep in mind that all I have done for you I’ve really done for God.”

1. Mothers who want faithful children must themselves be wholly dedicated to the Lord.
2. Eunice inspired faithfulness to the Lord in her son by her own faithfulness.
3. She knew what Timothy was about to face as he went to work with Paul, & yet she never stood in the way; she must have said to herself, “Well now I see what I’ve trained him for.” (Phil 2:19-22).

[In Eunice we see a mother who is not concerned with the worldly achievements of her son. Her fervent desire was that he be faithful & useful to the Lord.]

CLOSING

A little boy was asked to quote his memory verse in Bible class: John 8:12. His mother, who was teaching the group, helped him begin by forming the words silently w/her lips, but her son’s memory was blank. Finally, she leaned forward & whispered, “I am the light of the world.” Her son’s face beamed with relief & confidence while he said in a loud clear voice, “MY MOTHER IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!” While Jesus is the true light of the world, mothers can be the light that will lead their children to Christ.