

steady peace regarding my own salvation...but...I felt tremendous anxiety about my...family and the sorrow that would transform their lives [if I died].... This spiritual schizophrenia has often plagued me. How can I have such assured faith in Christ's salvation, and yet doubt His providence? How can I rest my soul entirely upon Him, yet think I need to carry my family myself? At times...I was able to leave my family in the Lord's hands, but mostly I felt deep concern for them..."

What mother or father hasn't thought like this? What is going to happen to my children? How will they possibly turn out well considering my own failures and shortcomings? Jesus died on the cross to give us new life. The Apostle Peter reminds us that "the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38). God accomplished the salvation of his people through the treacherous acts of wicked men (Acts 4:27-28). God can bless our children through even our worst shortcomings. He can raise up children of faith from the stones of the earth (Luke 3:8). He doesn't need our help.

Mary and John and the other believers followed Jesus to Golgotha and watched him to his death because they believed he went there to lay down his life for them. Through this experience they came to trust in Jesus for all their needs. For less than perfect mothers and Fathers with less than perfect kids, that's the only message that can give us real comfort.

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Carbondale, PA  
Permit No. 25

A PUBLICATION OF:  
COVENANT REFORMED CHURCH  
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# PROCLAMATION

Promoting robust, religious thought in the tradition of orthodox, historic Christianity  
May 2012, Issue 35

## BEHOLD YOUR MOTHER!

### THE LEGACY OF JESUS' LOVE FOR MOMS

BY WILLIAM BOEKESTEIN

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a perfect child? Can you imagine a child who never threw selfish tantrums or scowled at the meal you set before him? Can you conceive of a kid who never left his room trashed after he was told to pick it up or who never spent his allowance irresponsibly and then whined for more money?

Here's a reality check: If you *did* have a perfect child, life as a mother in this world would still be hard.

Mary had a perfect Son but her life as a mother was not easy. Like every mother, she still needed a Savior to rescue her from the demands, guilt and worries of motherhood. In her case, her Savior was her Son.

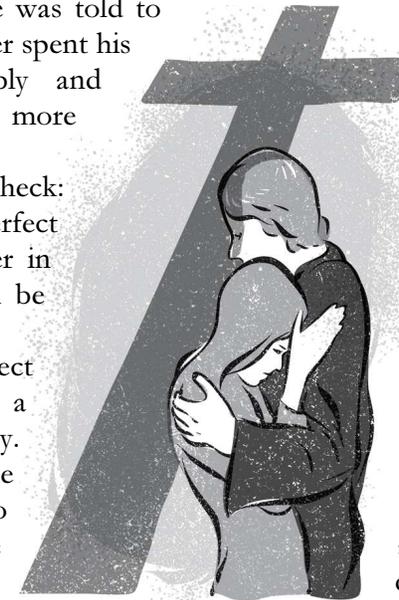
I cannot think of scene in Scripture that speaks more affectionately to a mother's heart than when Jesus ut-

tered those few words from his pain-parched lips, "Woman, behold your son!" (John 19:25-27). Whether you are a mother or not, this text unveils to us the love, lessons and legacy of Jesus' last interaction with his mother before his death.

#### The Love of a Son

Our dear Lord Jesus approached the moment of his death. After hanging on the cross for several hours his strength drained, his senses numbed, his sight blurred. Not only was Jesus enduring great physical torment, he was also suffering from a sense of spiritual desertion as he drank to the bottom the cup of

God's wrath. Yet he keeps a compassionate eye upon the crowd that called for, and with calloused poise, lingered to witness his death. His pitying eye falls on his own mother.



### *A Hurting Mother*

It's hard to imagine the mixture of love and loss with which Mary's heart throbbled. This dear woman had labored for Jesus' birth. She had worried about him (Luke 2:48), prayed for him, loved him, followed him during his ministry, and supported him through severe opposition. No doubt, she felt the guilt that resulted from her shortcomings in dealing with him and her other children. She knew the burden of motherhood even as it related to the Son of God.

Mary is the only woman in the world who has ever raised a son who never sinned against her. Although she had sinned against him, he had never talked back, never disobeyed, never dishonored her. I love my children dearly, and you love yours. But they are hardly perfect children! Our love for our children is hindered not only by our sins against them but by theirs against us. Imagine the love she must have had for *this* Son.

Now she watches as her precious boy bleeds away for the sins of his people. Thirty years earlier, as the prophet Simeon held Mary's new baby he soberly told her, "A sword will pierce through your own soul also..." (Luke 2:35). Now it has.

### *No Greater Love*

With a quick glance toward John, his apostle, Jesus spoke to his mother. "Woman, behold your son" (v. 26). To John: "Behold your mother." From that hour that disciple took her to his own home. Jesus is giving a new son to his mother to replace himself. And he gives her the best son

she could expect, the disciple Jesus loved. The fact that he of all the disciples was there now, indicates his loyalty, courage, and faith.

Jesus' love toward his own mother proves his love for us, his believing brothers and sisters. When you and I are in trouble our thoughts tend to turn inward. But Jesus came not to be served but to serve. Jesus directs his thoughts toward those whom he loves. He is mindful of our needs just as he was mindful of his mother's needs. Still, he takes his own time in meeting our needs; he could have made this arrangement at a more "convenient" time. But he waits until she needed to hear it most.

### **Three Lessons from the Cross**

From the cross Christ grandly demonstrates three lessons.

#### *The Church is God's Family*

Mary had other children who could have met her physical needs after Jesus' death. But Mary needed the kind of spiritual companionship found only in the family of God. Jesus had early said that his mother and brother and sister are those who do the will of God (Mark 3:35). In the church believers treat older men as fathers, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity (1 Tim. 5:1-2). We have no lasting ties to anyone on earth who isn't united to Christ by a living faith. God's people are our family. When it comes to caring for our families, it really does take a village, or at least a covenantal community.

### *Children Must Care for Their Mothers*

Jesus had to honor his parents, being born under the law (Gal. 4:4). How perfectly he fulfilled that law, providing for his mother even on his deathbed. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for not honoring their fathers and mothers (Mark 7:8-13). Here is another example of Jesus practicing what he preached. The same John to whom Jesus speaks here later wrote: "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6). Do we follow Jesus in looking after the interests of our mothers? Or, do we rather, see them as our servants, to make our meals, clean our rooms, and drive us everywhere we want? Mothers may do these things in service to Christ but their children must not treat her as a servant. Jesus honored his mom. He came to serve her not to be served.

#### *Mother's Must Love Their Children*

Although she could do nothing for him, Mary shows the commitment of a caring mother. She was there for him in his darkest moment. She grieved with him. She cried with him. If she could have embraced him she would have. Mothers miss the point if they see themselves strictly as disciplinarians and rule enforcers. Mothers are called to share their hearts with their kids. The swords that pierce your kids' hearts must pierce yours as well.

### **The Legacy of Jesus' Actions**

The Bible was written for every child of God. That's true of this text as well. But certain texts are written to a

particular type or group of people. In this verse, Jesus provided for his own mother. But as he hung and died on the cross, he is providing for every believing mother and woman (and man and child).

*Jesus Provides Pity for Motherhood's Demands*  
Motherhood can be a great burden. It places great demands on the emotional and physical resources of mothers. Jesus bore the heavy burden of the cross so that he could give us the light burden of the Christian life. Jesus said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Everything that is demanded of mothers Christ supplies through his life. We experience the comfort of his provision through faith and an intimate walk with him.

*Jesus Provides Pardon from Motherhood's Guilt*  
What mother can live up to the expectations placed upon her? Because of its demands motherhood can produce much guilt. This guilt can be crippling, spiritually, emotionally, relationally and even physically. In his death Jesus graciously tells women (and men), "You don't measure up. You can't measure up. That's why I died for you!" Only Christ can measure up to the demands of the law of motherhood. When we take hold of Christ by faith ALL of our guilt is banished to the grave. Believers are no longer guilty in God's eyes.

*Jesus Grants Peace for Motherhood's Concerns*  
A friend of mine writes about a recent brush with death: "I experienced