

Always on the second Sunday in May
we take time in church and in our homes to honor our MOTHERS.

There may be a corsage. Or a dinner out. Or even a poem like this one,
written by Mary Hull:

**What are the songs the mother sings?
Of birds and flowers and pretty things;
Baby lies in her arms and spies
All his world in the mother's eyes.**

**What are the tales the mother tells?
Of gems and jewels and silver bells;
Baby lies in her arms and spies
All his wealth in the mother's eyes.**

**What are the thoughts in the mother's mind?
Of the gentle Savior, loving and kind;
Baby lies in her arms and spies
All his heaven in the mother's eyes.**

Mother's Day as an American holiday is fairly recent, the invention of Anna Jarvis
back in 1912.

But the command to honor our mothers is an ancient one.
It goes back all the way to Moses on Mt. Sinai,
and to the Fourth Commandment God gave him there.

You know the commandment as well as I do.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER!

More than one writer has observed that
the hardest place to live like a Christian is AT HOME!

Home is where the masks come off, and the truth comes out.
Home is the place where SIN is the most obvious, and daily
GRACE the most necessary.

It doesn't take a genius to see that this commandment is very frequently broken...
there has been a frightful erosion of basic respect for any kind of authority
in our society – whether it's the authority of
parents... or teachers...or the church...or the government.

Sometimes the headlines are shocking:

I read in the newspaper the story of an old man in Florida...
while walking on the beach, he was attacked by a gang of youths
who doused him with gasoline and set him on fire.

That kind of thing, thank God, is rare...

But not so rare are the lonely cries of the elderly who are abandoned by their
children...or even abused by them

or

the groans of parents whose children use them only as human vending machines.
One mother lamented:

“The only way we know she’s still alive and carries our name
is by the bills we get from her credit card.”

This isn’t something new!

SIN has been around since the beginning,
and the home has always been one of the main targets.

The Bible is full of stories of disrespect and open rebellion...

The children of Eli, of Samuel, and of David
all brought heartache to their parents.

And which of us sitting here

doesn’t carry with us the memories of our own homes, our own parents
and painful times when we wounded our mothers with our words and actions?

Didn’t we join the griping when mom told us to make the bed
before we went out to play?

Didn’t we chafe at their curfew times...or bad mouth our folks in
front of our friends?

Even now some of us are still experiencing friction with our elderly
parents – friction that has gone on for years!

So on this Mother’s Day we take another look at this commandment.

WHY IS IT that God calls us to honor our parents?

The Bible gives us two reasons...

FIRST, in order that we may live a LONG LIFE.

That's the promise hidden underneath the commandment:

**Honor your father and your mother,
that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth,**
writes Paul in Ephesians 6.

It isn't hard to see the truth in that.

Mother tells little Jimmy not to run into the street...
or play with matches...
or climb into a car with a stranger.

If Jimmy disobeys, we all know what could happen next –
he could be hit by a car,
or burn his fingers,
or be kidnapped.

Mothers and fathers are wise!

They have something children don't have – EXPERIENCE in life.
Sometimes we can't see it till later on.

Mark Twain once wrote that when he was a 14-year-old boy,
his father was “the stupidest man in the world.”

“But,” Twin continued, “when I got to be 21, I was amazed how much
my old man had learned in 7 years!”

There's a second reason for honoring our PARENTS
which has nothing to do with their goodness or experience.

We are to honor them because they REPRESENT GOD TO US.

The word that begins this commandment, you'll note, is not LOVE, but “HONOR”
To “HONOR” someone is a greater thing than merely to love them.

Martin Luther wrote that to honor someone
is to acknowledge that he or she has a “hidden majesty”
and holds a special office.

When I say “Office,” you may think of the President, or the Mayor,
or perhaps of me as your Pastor.

Here at church on a Sunday morning, I am not just another person.

Most of you do not call me by my first name, Mike...

Most often you call me "Pastor"

because that's my OFFICE – the special JOB given me by God.

It doesn't mean I know it all. Nor that I am always good or cheerful.
Nor even that you like me personally.

Nevertheless, you respect me because I hold an office.

It is the same with our FATHERS AND MOTHERS.

Mother does not wear a special robe with a sash that says "MOM"
in gold letters!

But she surely bears a special OFFICE as surely as does a Pastor or a President.

She is God's representative. She bears His authority and His majesty.

The way you treat your MOTHER

is, in a very real sense, THE WAY YOU ARE TREATING GOD!

And since this office has nothing to do with mom's IQ or with her
personality profile, or with her ability to make cinnamon rolls,
we are to give her HONOR at all times...

even at those moments she is cranky or treats us unfairly.

Children, if you learn to respect and honor your MOTHER at home,

it will help you learn to honor OTHER PEOPLE God places over you later on...

the coach of your softball team

even when he's not the world's best coach

the boss at the restaurant where you go to work,

even if she is short on compliments

and yes, the police officer or the government representative,

even if they are dishonest or haven't learned to listen as they should.

Luther summed it up in the Catechism this way:

We should fear and love God

so that we may not despise or anger our parents or OTHERS IN AUTHORITY

but respect, obey, love, and serve them.

That's a tall order!

Impossible, in fact, unless we can come at this commandment through Jesus our Lord.

So now for a little while, think about Him...

Not Jesus the MAN, but Jesus the BOY,
the 12-year-old sitting in the Temple, asking questions of the elders.

Remember the scene?

Just when things are getting interesting, in burst His parents.
Mother launches in, as mothers do...

**Son, why have you treated us like this?
Your father and I have been looking for you everywhere!**

Think of the moments that was you, pinned by your mother's anxious, angry gaze, listening to her read you the riot act! How did you respond?

This is what Jesus said:

Mom, didn't you know I had to be about my father's business?

That's all. Moments later, he puts His hand in hers and goes with them.
The Bible tells us:

Then He went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.

For the next 18 years, little is heard from the lad in Nazareth. We call those the "SILENT YEARS."

What do you children suppose Jesus was doing all that time?

Practicing miracles? Rehearsing sermons?

NO! Something more basic. He was obeying his mother.

He was going to synagogue every Sabbath.

He was learning carpentry from Joseph.

Do you think this was a small thing?

Do you think it unworthy of the Lord of Heaven and Earth
that he should have to humble himself to obey a pair of Jewish peasants?

Ah, that OBEDIENCE was an important part of what He came to do!

For the OBEDIENCE He gave his earthly parents over those years
prepared Him for the obedience he rendered to His Heavenly Father
in the Garden of Gethsemane

And when the Cross loomed before Him, He was ready for it,
disciplined by years of practice in obeying mom and dad.

Even there, he did not forget her, his own mother, Mary.

Woman, behold your son He told her, entrusting her to the care of
his disciple John.

What we cannot do,
he has done perfectly, and now He offers it to us...

His obedience for our DISOBEDIENCE

His honoring for all the times we have DISHONORED.

He offers FORGIVENESS

for all the sins and failures of our homes – the sins that fracture our families.

On this Mother's Day, take another look at THOSE WHO SHARE A FAMILY LIFE
WITH YOU

Between ANGUISHED PARENTS and REBELLIOUS CHILDREN
Between CRUEL PARENTS and BATTERED CHILDREN
comes His Cross, calling us to PEACE.

On this special day, CHILDREN, come to Jesus.

Kneel down and thank Him for the mother he gave you.

Give Him all those things that weren't (or aren't) right so that he can
mend them.

On this you special day, Mothers, come to Jesus.

Bring Him the weaknesses and failings that burden your hearts.

Bring Him your children, and ask the help He promises.

For you are HIS. And he is YOURS!

What are the thoughts in the mother's mind?

Of the gentle Savior, loving and kind;

Baby lies in her arms and spies

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