

"A Caring Son's Love"—John 19:25-27

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, "A Caring Son's Love", is John 19:25-27 → *Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

*Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord* (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

In the 1970's a Mother's Day commercial appeared on TV which had this jingle connected with it:

You didn't tell the best jokes in the world,

But, hey mom, you never failed me.

I got your nose and your hair that won't curl

But mother you never failed me.

You took the time to care, You made the time to share,

You were the best you could be.

And I know you gave up a lot but look at the kids you got,

Mother, you never failed me.

I know you didn't play ball very well,

But mother you never failed me.

When we had a secret you never would tell,

Mother, you never failed me.

You gave me the best you had, Why did you feel bad,

Missing your master's degree.

Well, I hope that you know, at least, Though I'm no masterpiece,

Mother, you never failed me.

Mother, you never ever failed me.

While the song is meant to show appreciation to your mother the words can be rather convicting in many respects. "Never ever" is a pretty absolute phrase. Is it possible for one to be so perfect that she can never ever fail another person? Even the mother who would appreciate the kudos expressed in this song would feel unworthy of such praise, unless she's a mother who thinks she's owed such kudos simply because she birthed a child.

While perfection amongst sinners in families is impossible, forgiveness isn't. There was only one mother in the world who had the perfect child, not by her own doing but by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 1:35). She had to watch Him hang on a cross, crucified because of

the sin of every living being in the world. Because Jesus was the sinless Son of God Mary did not have to wonder where she had failed that her Son was convicted and sentenced to death.

Aside from the events leading to and including the birth of Jesus, we encounter His mother only five other times in the Scriptures: when He was twelve years old in the temple (cf. Luke 2:46-51); at the wedding in Cana where He turned water into wine (cf. John 2:1-11); gathered with the disciples after His ascension into heaven (cf. Acts 1:14); trying to visit Him at one point during His earthly ministry (cf. Matthew 12:46); and here at His crucifixion. Verse 25 of our text says that *standing by the cross of Jesus were the three Marys—His mother and her sister . . . and Mary Magdalene*, out of whom Jesus had driven seven demons (cf. Luke 8:2).

Naturally, it is a different mother who stood at the foot of this cross than the mother we encountered receiving the news of Jesus' birth. At the news of Jesus' birth she sang for joy in the song we sing in our liturgy tonight, the Magnificat. She rejoiced that, with the coming of Jesus, God had *helped His servant Israel*, remembering to be merciful according to His age-old promise. Yet, one specific event in connection to His birth which could have possibly been running through her mind was her visit to the temple for her purification rites after His birth. An old man serving at the temple took Jesus in his arms, praised God (i.e. the Nunc Dimittis) and told Mary that *a sword would pierce through her own*

*soul* (cf. Luke 2:35), picturing this moment at the cross. Her soul was pierced with the death of her Son, knowing there was nothing she could do to save Him, no matter how much her motherly love wanted to do so.

While Jesus was undergoing such suffering and agony on the cross He was still able out of selfless love to focus on His mother's well-being. Notice His concern for both her physical **and** spiritual well-being in His actions while on the cross. Verses 26-27 tell us that when He saw *His mother and the disciple whom He loved* (probably John, the one who wrote this Gospel) *standing nearby, He entrusted His mother* into that disciple's care. *From that hour the disciple took her to his own home.*

Because we do not encounter Mary's husband, Joseph, in the Biblical narrative of Jesus' adult life, it is very probable that Joseph had passed away. This action of Jesus entrusting His mother into the care of one of His disciples would seem to reinforce that opinion. While children were to care for their widowed mother (cf. 1 Timothy 5:4), the primary responsibility usually fell on the oldest son. It is interesting that Jesus did not entrust her to the care of His brothers. John 7:5 says that at this time *not even His brothers believed in Him*. This action is true to Jesus' concern primarily for the our spiritual well-being. Jesus was able out of selfless love to focus on doing His Father's Will, taking care of the physical responsibilities while taking care of the spiritual responsibilities. He made sure she was entrusted to a believer. Thus, while Jesus was

on the cross His mother's well-being was on His mind.

It is usually the nature of people suffering severe pain to focus on themselves rather than on the well-being of others. Suffering and trials provide people with reason to live like a victim with a "woes me" attitude. The pain heightens a perspective of thinking that everyone else around you has it so easy and good. It can even provide the devil opportunity to get a foothold, tempting you to hold contempt for others because they don't understand your pain or they don't feel sorry for you according to your expectations. He tempts you to blame God for your struggles with pain and turn away from Him rather than to Him. The narcissistic unholy trinity of "me, myself and I" can really begin to shine in the midst of severe suffering with pain.

While it is natural to turn to the LORD for help in such times of pain and trouble, such painful situations make it very difficult to focus on God's Will for continued service to Him even while suffering. Faith calls upon the LORD *in the day of trouble* (cf. Psalm 50:15), looking for Jesus to accompany us through the suffering and empowering us for service despite the suffering. Faith confesses in the words of Philippians 4:13  
→ *I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me.*

This is the nature of Jesus' Person & Work. The whole time He suffered He was **totally** concerned about you and your eternal well-being. Thus, while Jesus was on the cross you were also on His mind.

What was on the minds of those around Him? The mocking crowd demanded proof that He was the Son of God so they could be convinced (cf. Matthew 27:39-42). The mocking thief was concerned about saving his own skin (cf. Luke 23:39). The Jews and His disciples were still looking for a physical king and kingdom to deliver them from national oppression (cf. Acts 1:6). At His arrest Peter was still looking for a fight (cf. John 18:10-11).

The cross is the place where Christ is concerned about your life, even in the face of His death. Jesus does not only make provisions for his mother's future at the cross, but also for yours. For He knows the depth of your sin. He knows the wrath of God that you deserve because of it. He also knows that there is nothing you can do to save yourself. With a caring Son's love as the Son of God, He goes to the cross for you. He endures the punishment which your sins deserve and dies your eternal death. He suffers the damning wrath of God so you don't have to. That is what **your forgiveness** looks like.

By faith in His atoning work on that cross for you, you get to see life in the face of death. You can experience peace in the midst of pain. You have forgiveness, hope, and salvation. Because of His suffering and sacrificial death, Jesus can present you to God and say, "Behold, Your son." In the words of 1 John 3:1 → *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.* It is because of Jesus' perfect obedience, even in the midst of His hellish

suffering on the cross, that we experience the caring love of the Son of God for our well-being, both now and into eternity. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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