



Mother's Day

by Scott Huckaby

key verse: Luke 1:46-55

Note: The Scripture references in these Sermon Notes are taken from the New King James Version.

Today is Mother's Day. We have picked a day to pay special attention to mothers because all moms are handicapped... They only have two hands.

Before we get into our message for today, I have a couple of points of wisdom you moms can apply: Mothers can have a few minutes to themselves at the end of the day by doing the dishes. Also, the quickest way for a mother to get her children's attention is to sit down and look comfortable.

Since it is Mother's Day, I thought it would be appropriate to take a closer look at the most prominent mother in all of history. Who do you think that that is?

A case can be made that the most prominent mother in history was Eve because she was the first mother and thus the mother of us all per Genesis 3:20. Also Eve was the first to receive the promise of the Messiah... The Lord spoke to Satan in the presence of Eve whom he had tempted:

Genesis 3:15 - I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

The seed of Satan are those who follow Satan in rejecting God. The seed of Satan will be enemies of the Seed of the woman. The Seed of the woman will have is heel bruised by Satan but will bruise Satan's head. In other words, the Satan will inflict a non-fatal wound to the Seed of the woman but the Seed of the woman would give Satan a death-blow.

I'm sure you've already figured out who the Seed of the woman is. Who are we talking about here? Jesus, the Christ! This is the first prophecy of the Messiah. This is also a prophecy of a supernatural birth because it is talking about the Seed of the woman rather than the seed of the man. The usual usage of the word translated seed here is that it refers to a man's contribution to conception. But here it is applied to the woman. Since the coming of Jesus, we know that this is a reference to His virgin birth.

We also know that this prophecy is speaking in a spiritual sense. Satan bruised the heel of Jesus by the death of His mortal body. But this was not a fatal wound because God resurrected the body of Jesus. But the Lord Himself paid the penalty for the sins of those who trust in Him when His mortal body died on the cross. Satan is still engaged in

battling the Lord and has not accepted the fact that he is defeated. But Scripture is clear that Satan will come to an end that the Bible calls the second death which is separation from God for eternity:

Revelation 20:10 - The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

In Old Testament times, people recognized this prophecy as foretelling the coming of the one who would deliver them from the enemy of God. Eve certainly expected to be the woman who would deliver the promised Messiah. And you can imagine when she first became pregnant and delivered Cain. This was an entirely new experience for her and she certainly considered it to be a miracle:

Genesis 4:1 - Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

Eve initially thought Cain was the promised Seed because she said that he came from God. Certainly Cain was created by God but God used natural means to bring him into the world. I'm sure Eve soon figured this out because it wasn't long before she bore Abel and there were other brothers and sisters per Genesis 5:4. And since we know that Cain slew his brother Abel, I'm sure there was other evidence of his fallen nature even before this that Eve recognized all too well...

Nothing illustrates the fallen nature of mankind more than pointing out the selfish nature of children. No parent trains their children to be selfish and engage in bad behavior. This is not an acquired trait, we are born this way. That is why we all need a Savior.

Getting back to my original question, if Eve was not the most prominent mother of history, who was? Some of you have probably already figured out that I'm talking about Mary, the mother of Jesus. Eve wasn't the only woman who wanted to be the mother of the Messiah, this has been a common desire of Hebrew women throughout history. But Mary was the Hebrew woman who God gave the special privilege to be the mother of the Messiah.

It is interesting to note that God used certain moms to serve His purposes in a special ways throughout Scripture. In the midst of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, four women are given special mention: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. All four were Gentiles, and three of the four had even been

either prostitutes or adulterers. In prompting Matthew to mention these three, it's as if the Holy Spirit wanted to emphasize that the Messiah came to save sinners among both Jews and Gentiles. Paul expressed this in:

Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

I pick Mary over Eve to have the distinction of the most prominent mother in history because God considered His work of redemption to be greater than the original creation. David characterized God's work of creation as something He did with His fingers...

Psalm 8:3 - When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

Yet His coming into our world to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins was a greater work on His part and characterized by the work of His Arm...

Psalm 77:15 - You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

While this verse is talking about the people of Israel, the relationship between God and the nation of Israel is a type of the relationship between God and believers. The creation was a mighty work of God but was mere finger-work for Him. In the work of redemption that Jesus accomplished on the cross, God got down to business rolling up His sleeve and baring His arm.

Psalm 98:1 - Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; his right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.

Now before I say much more about Mary, I need to get all the disclaimers taken care of up-front here. I believe we Baptists generally try to compensate for the Catholic Church's over emphasis of the importance of Mary by ignoring her. This is too bad because we are missing out on some great truths about God when we ignore Mary.

But since the Catholic Church teaches false doctrines about Mary, let me address these before we go any further...

The false doctrines of Mary

(1) Mary as co-redemptrix – Some in the Catholic Church elevate the role of Mary to be on par with Jesus as our redeemer implying there is more than one way to get to heaven. But...

John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

To think that you can get to heaven by appealing to Mary, makes her deity. This is deadly wrong and contrary to Scripture...

Acts 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

(2) Prayers made through Mary – The Catholic Church teaches that prayers must be made through Mary. Jesus said...

John 15:16 - I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

Since we are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, I guess they consider it is more humble to bring yet another subordinate party into the process of prayer. I've heard Catholics explain that Mary speaks to Jesus about our prayers who in turn speaks to the Father. For Mary to even know our prayers attributes omniscience to her, a characteristic that only God has. And Mary being our advocate usurps the role of Christ...

I John 2:1 - if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

The Bible says that based on our position in Christ, we may go directly to God himself, we don't need Mary or anyone else to serve as mediator for us...

1 Timothy 2:5 - For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

(3) Mary as "Mother of God" – Certainly Mary was the mother of Jesus but saying that she is the "Mother of God" makes her God and the Holy Trinity a Holy Quartet. The doctrine of the Triune nature of God is clear in Scripture, to think this extends to a fourth person in the Godhead is the worst kind of spiritualization...

Matt 28:19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

(4) Mary as a perpetual virgin – The Catholic teaching that Mary continued to be a virgin even after the birth of Jesus is disputed in Scripture...

Mark 6:3 - "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.

We can see from this that Jesus had at least 4 half-brothers and 2 half-sisters. I say they were half-brothers and sisters because they shared a common mother in Mary but had different fathers. Joseph was the father of the siblings of Jesus while God Himself was the Father of Jesus.

(5) Mary being preserved from original sin – The Catholic teaching that as Jesus lived a sinless life, so did Mary is something they want you to take on blind faith. Multiple verses proclaim the sinlessness of Jesus, for example...

1 Peter 2:21-22 - For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"

Scripture is also clear all others have been subject to sin:

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Mary herself addressed the Roman Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception, which holds that from the moment of her conception she was by God's grace 'kept free from all taint of Original Sin:

Luke 1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. Only sinners need a Savior.

For Mary to be free from sin, she would have to be God which is what the official Catholic doctrine about her teaches. Consider...

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--

I believe this verse is consistent with the idea that the sin nature is passed on to us by the seed of the man. This would explain why Jesus as the only begotten Seed of the woman could be sinless and the rest of us are subject to sin.

Alright, now that we have dealt with the false doctrines about Mary, let's find out what we can learn from her.

Mary was a virgin when the angel Gabriel announced to her that she would give birth to the Messiah (Luke 1:26-38). She figures prominently into the birth narrative of Jesus. There are only a few other occasions where she is mentioned. She is at the wedding of Cana of Galilee when Jesus turns the water into wine (John 2:1-5). Mary is also with Jesus' brothers and sisters when they wish to speak with Him apart from the crowd (Mark 3:31-34). She was there at His crucifixion (John 20:25-27). She was taken into the home of the Apostle John after the death of Jesus. The last mention of her in the New Testament is before Pentecost where she is together with the other disciples (Acts 1:14).

What I'd like to focus on is her inspired testimony about God when she visited her cousin Elizabeth. Mary went to see her cousin Elizabeth after learning from the angel Gabriel that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah.

I should point out that Gabriel was no ordinary angel. The fact that his name is recorded in Scripture makes him significant. The angel Michael is the only other angel named in Scripture besides Satan. Gabriel told Elizabeth's husband Zacharias that he "*stands in the presence of God*" per Luke 1:19. This implies that Gabriel is of the highest rank of angels.

Mary and Elizabeth had more in common than their kinship, Elizabeth was going to have a miraculous birth as well. Speaking of Zacharias and Elizabeth...

Luke 1:7 - they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

The angel Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth as proof to her that his testimony about Mary being the mother of the mother of the Messiah was true...

Luke 1:36 - "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

So when Mary visited Elizabeth, both expectant moms had a spiritual experience...

Luke 1:41 - And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The babe that Elizabeth carried was John the Baptist who was to prepare the people of Israel for the coming of the Messiah by calling them to repentance. John leapt in the womb because he was filled with the Holy Spirit himself and recognized the presence of His Lord in Mary's womb when she came near. Indeed, Gabriel told Zecharias that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit even while in the womb:

Luke 1:15 - For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

We can learn at least a couple important things from the fact that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from before he was born:

(1) It is God who saves us. John the Baptist was not even born yet and yet God blessed him with the presence of the Holy Spirit. John could do nothing the merit God's favor, it was out of God's sovereign grace that he was saved...

Romans 8:14 - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

(2) This should tell you that abortion is killing a person. If the unborn have the capacity to be spiritually born to eternal life before they are physically born, then mankind has no right to cut those lives short.

Elizabeth being filled in the Holy Spirit resulted in her verifying what the angel Gabriel had told Mary:

Luke 1:42-43 - Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Elizabeth could only know that her cousin Mary was even pregnant much less carrying the Messiah in her womb by the Holy Spirit convicting her of this.

So we have the unborn John the Baptist filled with the Holy Spirit, and his mom Elizabeth filled with the Spirit and we find that Mary too is filled with the Spirit. Mary being filled with the Spirit resulted in her praising God. Let's take a closer look at Mary's song of praise...

Key Reference:

Luke 1:46-55

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.
50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with His arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly.
53 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.
54 He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy,
55 As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever."

The first thing we might note about Mary's song of praise to the Lord is that it has striking resemblance to Hannah's song in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. You may recall that Hannah had been barren and God blessing her with a son had been an answer to prayer.

In verse 47 of this song, Mary recognizes that the baby she is carrying is God, her Savior. The angel Gabriel had told Mary in Luke 1:32 that her baby was to be named Jesus which Means Savior, the angel went on to say:

Luke 1:32 - He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest;

The Son of the Highest means that He is the Son of God. The Jews understood that the term "Son of God" meant the same as God. You can see this in John 10:33-36 where the Jewish religious leaders were preparing to stone Jesus for blasphemy. Jesus acknowledged He was the Son of God but these Jews did not believe Him.

Since Mary acknowledged God to be her Savior, she as a humble teenage gal under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit knows more about how a person gets saved than most of the learned Pharisees on the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees thought that people earn salvation through obedience to God's Law. The religion of the Pharisees continues to this day in Judaism. In fact, all the world's religions have salvation-by-works in common. This is what distinguishes biblical

Christianity from what mankind considers religion. True biblical Christianity is unique of all the world's religions in that there is nothing you can do to earn God's favor. If we are to be saved, it is the work of God that saves us...

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

God saves those he will by giving us the faith to be saved. All we can do is respond to the faith He gives us. There is nothing we do in the process of being saved that we can boast about.

By Mary acknowledging that it is God who is her Savior, she knew what the Pharisees didn't, that the purpose of the Law is to bring us to God for salvation.

Galatians 3:24 - Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The law convicts us of sin and if we are honest with ourselves, we have to acknowledge that we can not perfectly follow the law without God's help. Take the first of the Ten Commandments for example:

Exodus 20:3 - You shall have no other gods before Me. Anything in our lives that we put before God is breaking that commandment. Do you have thoughts of things that God is not a part of? Those thoughts are breaking the first commandment because you are allowing other things to come before God. So the purpose of the law is to drive us to Him for salvation...

Romans 3:20 - for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Mary not only recognizes God as her Savior, she acknowledges Him as her Lord. Note that in verse 48 she refers to herself as His maidservant. This expresses her willingness to set aside her own agenda to get on-board with what God is doing. It was also her reaction when the angel Gabriel told her about God's plan for her:

Luke 1:38 - Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."

Mary also acknowledged in verse 48 that all generations would call her blessed as the angel Gabriel told her they would:

Luke 1:28 - "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

And Elizabeth reinforced this when they met...

Luke 1:42 - Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

This prophecy has certainly come to pass. Here we are over 2,000 years later and almost half-way around the world and we are talking about how blessed Mary was to be chosen as the most prominent mom in history.

In verse 49, Mary acknowledges God's omnipotence. God is Almighty enough to defy the natural course of things and

enable Mary to have a baby without a man being involved. God is able to do this because He is the Creator who has determined what is natural and what is not. Since God is Almighty, He can act outside of what we understand is natural thus authenticating who He is to us. As the angel Gabriel put it to Mary,

Luke 1:37 - "For with God nothing will be impossible."

Also in verse 49, Mary said God has done great things for her. What great things do you think she had in mind? We might be quick to say that God choosing her to be the mother of the Messiah so that generations would call her blessed was a great thing. But I expect she considered her own salvation to be a greater thing, look as verse 50...

Luke 1:50 - And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

Mary knows that God has shown her mercy in revealing Himself to her and making it possible for her to know Him in such a unique way. Imagine the privilege Mary had to know Jesus for the many years before He began His ministry.

Our own relationships with God are unique. I was sharing with Teresa how I often get inspirations from God when I exercise in the morning. This happens so frequently that I keep a notebook handy in my locker so that I can write them down before I forget them. Teresa told me that God rarely spoke to her during exercise because she had to focus so much on what she was doing. Her best time of inspiration seemed to be in the early morning immediately upon waking up. I'm convinced that we will spend eternity sharing stories with each other of our experiences getting to know God. This is what fellowship is all about, we should not wait on eternity to share these stories, God wants us to do this in the here and now.

I believe that in verse 51, Mary under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is referring to the redemptive work that God is doing by bringing the Messiah into the world. Recall that God considers His redemptive work to be the work of His arm...

Psalms 77:15 - You have with Your arm redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

At this point, Mary does not know all the details of how God will accomplish the redemption of mankind yet but takes it on faith that He will.

This is something that bothered me as a new Christian... how could people be saved before Jesus died on the cross. They had their animal sacrifices in the temple but this only applied to past sins, they had to keep coming back year after year. So it was obvious that the animal sacrifices did not save them and this was reinforced in the New Testament...

Hebrews 10:1-4 - For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the

things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

But the Lord helped me to see that before the cross, believers trusted in God for their salvation knowing it would have something to do with the work of the Messiah as Mary expresses in this passage. In Old Testament times, people were saved the same way as we are today by the grace of God through faith in Him. Today, we have the benefit of knowing the details of how God accomplished our redemption through the work of Jesus on the cross.

Next Mary expresses the futility of trusting in yourself which is pride, trusting in political power, or trusting in riches...

Most people in the world will not be saved because they insist on trusting in themselves. Those who trust in their ability to earn favor with God for their salvation are practicing salvation-by-works. This is not God's way of salvation and it will result in their spending eternity in hell.

It amazes me that so many people put so much trust in our government for so many things. Besides our security, they trust in the government for taking care of the poor, educating our children, taking care of us in our old age, and now paying for our health expenses. More people in our society trust in the government than in God. But all authorities that exist do so with the permission of God...

Romans 13:1 - For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

It is God who raises up the government that we have to serve His purpose. Trusting in government to be your savior is idolatry because it is trusting in the creation rather than the Creator.

Trusting in one's government had an additional problem for the Jews... since Israel was the nation God chose to reveal Himself to the world through, many Jews mistakenly thought they were saved by simple virtue of their heritage.

Notice in verse 53 that the hungry will be filled with good things while those who trust in riches will be sent away empty. What good things is this talking about? Certainly this is talking about eternal life...

John 6:35 - Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life.

He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

Indeed this is part of the eternal state we are promised in the book of Revelation...

Revelation 7:16 - They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore

But I believe the good things this verse is talking about also applies to the here and now. We are saved and possess eternal life the moment God opens our heart to Him...

John 5:24 - Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

This is what Jesus was talking about on one of the occasions when He told us:

John 10:10 - I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

The abundant life is more than just a long life that stretches into eternity, it is also a life that is worth living. It is quality as well as quantity.

God blesses the unsaved in this world as much as He blesses the saved...

Matthew 5:45 - He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

God blesses even the unsaved in this world out of His grace so that may come to know Him...

Psalms 145:9 - The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works.

God reveals Himself to all people through His creation...

Romans 1:20 - For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse

Those who think their good things in life are proof that they will continue to receive good things after this life will discover that they have nothing. Those who trust in their riches for their salvation will find out that this is a false hope.

Trusting in your riches is an especially dangerous sin to get caught up in this age. I'm not going to take the time here to step you through this but Daniel 11:38 is a prophecy about what people will trust in before the Lord returns. In ages past, wealthy people have always had large families. People wanted more children to be able to live a more comfortable life in their old age. The most prominent pagan gods were the fertility goddesses because large families meant prosperity. Today, this perspective has been reversed. People are not trusting in their large families any more; instead, they are trusting in their financial portfolio.

There is only one way to have eternal life and that is to trust in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross as paying for your sins in full. Trusting in your own abilities, heritage, government, or wealth have no value for salvation.

In verse 54 Mary remembers what the mercy God has shown for her nation of Israel and recognizes that this also applies to her as an individual. The relationship between the nation of Israel and God is a type of the relationship between the believer and God. As God chose Israel and showed them mercy. He too chose we who believe showing us mercy.

In verse 55, Mary recalls the promises God made to the patriarchs of Israel and how these promises apply to all who trust in God...

Romans 4:16 - Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

The church is the spiritual seed of Abraham because we have the same faith in God our Savior as Abraham demonstrated.

We've highlighted Mary as the most prominent mother in history but all moms have a special purpose with God. Mothers (and Fathers) have a great opportunity to raise up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. You have the awesome responsibility and privilege to pass on to them your faith that God can use to do great things. Jesus told His disciples that those who followed after Him would do greater works that even He did Himself...

John 14:12 - "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

This promise was made to the original disciples who would certainly perform miracles as Jesus had but the "greater works" Jesus was referring to here are those who would be saved as a result of their ministry. Scripture makes it clear that more people responded to God to be saved as a result of the ministry of the Apostles than as a direct result of Jesus' teaching ministry. This promise has an application to us today. Followers of Jesus today are also His disciples and we have the opportunity to touch people with the good news of Jesus that even the Apostles could not reach.

We all need to remember that God is in control and if God has chosen you to be a mom, He has done this for a reason. And raising your children up to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord is the most important ministry you can have. You can do great things for God through those children and there will be all eternity to call you blessed for being faithful to the role God has ordained for you.

I hope all of you realize that, whether you are a mom or not, God has a special purpose for you. But the first step in realizing God's purpose in your life is to yield your life to Him. If you have never done this, we are going to give you an opportunity in an invitation...