

Text: 2 Thessalonians 1

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction:

1. The significance of this day in the Hamre family – Daughter Simone turns 18. Sara Lee took her mother into the birth suite to experience a modern delivery. During a short breather, Sara Lee caught sight of her mom behind the doc. with a goofy grin on her face, two thumbs up. Her support said: “I’m proud of you; you’re doing a good job.”
2. Finding the mother in Paul
 - a. Paul had birthed this church. He went through the labor of it all. His heart is tied to the church and their well-being.
 - b. Before text messages or online chats he sends a letter; about 6 months after the first one. It has a parental tone.

B. Three motherly “in your corner” qualities shown by Paul:

1. **When someone is in your corner they see what others don’t see – 2 Thes. 1:3.**
 - a. The early Christians are worried they might not be able to stand up to suffering. Paul says, don’t become disheartened. I’m proud of you and see good things in you.
 - b. This “seeing” sometimes involves alerting the loved one to things that will keep them from embarrassment or disaster – e.g. there’s lettuce caught in your teeth.
 - c. Sometimes this involves speaking in faith.
 - i. When the teacher of a disruptive student focused on his positive qualities in a phone call to his mom, the parents’ attitude toward him changed, their treatment of him changed, and he became the person his teacher described.
 - ii. Seeing the positive and speaking it aloud can change a life and set it on a new path. Moms can speak a child’s full potential into and over him/her even if they haven’t seen it yet.
 - iii. As a church we can speak to the potential of each other. Don’t focus on weakness. **Sara Lee Hamre:** “*Be a community that looks for the good and speaks loudly and freely about those things.*”
2. **When someone is in your corner they will stand by you and cheer you on through trial – 2 Thes. 1:4.**
 - a. People don’t want our pity (“It sucks to be you), or our unfeeling response (“It’s not that bad; get over it”) but our cheers (“Don’t give up; I’m proud of you, hang on, I’m rooting for you.”
 - b. Her son Joel’s harsh teacher in Grade 1 made it a difficult year for her as a mother. She couldn’t take the experience for him or make it go away, only cheer him on through it.
 - c. Remind the child / yourself of God’s promise: “He (God) will not leave you nor forsake you” – Deut. 31:6 NKJV.
3. **When someone is in your corner they pray for you – 2 Thes 1:11.**
 - a. Hoping and praying are two different things. When Paul says he prays, he is going to the source of power, releasing the Holy Spirit to accomplish what they cannot accomplish on their own.
 - b. Sara Lee’s personal experiences with prayer:
 - i. Her Grandpa Gaetz: was a praying man, she knew he was praying for her whatever she was going through.
 - ii. **Sara Lee Hamre:** “*Moms never give up until the day you are no longer able to pray for your children. Nothing, nothing will ever be as powerful and effective as a Spirit-led prayer to the all-powerful, all-knowing, all-sufficient God. This is the greatest thing you can do for your children.*”
 - iii. She told the story of their daughter Tori and her straying onto a destructive path. Sara Lee’s efforts to change her direction included a trip to Victoria and SL making Tori a photo book of the trip memories with the lyrics to the Mercy Me song “You’re Beautiful” on the cover. Tori is now engaged to a youth pastor and about to become a pastor’s wife herself.

C. Encouragement to mothers. Sara Lee says to the mothers of the church:

1. Thumbs up to you mothers. You’re doing a good job. Keep pressing on, doing what you’re doing.
2. There are people praying for you, standing with you no matter what season you’re in.
3. God is in your corner, for you, not against you. He loves you without condition and will never leave you.

MINISTRY

1. What has your experience been with others (perhaps a mother) seeing what you didn’t see in yourself? What has been your experience in this with your children? How might such encouraging words change as children mature through various stages (toddler, school, adolescence to young adult, independent adult)? How might such encouragement relate to discipling (mothering/parenting) new Christians?
2. Have you had a person who has cheered you on through trials? Who? What trials have you seen your children through? How have you handled the temptation to swoop in and rescue them? What lasting assurance can you give the person going through the trial even though you can’t make it go away. How do you handle seeing your kids through trials at various stages of maturity? How can you cheer on your spiritual children through trials?
3. What has been your experience with a parent or someone else praying for you? How is praying for someone different than hoping good things or extending good thoughts their way? When is it time to stop praying for your physical / spiritual family?

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for mothers and the qualities of motherhood shown by Paul—a reflection of You. Help us as physical mothers and spiritual parents to see the potential good in others, encourage and cheer them on, and continue to pray for them. Amen.