



GROW. PRAY. STUDY.

The Church of the Resurrection – Weekly Guide

What Would Jesus Say...On Mother's Day?

SUNDAY 5.13.18

Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When he was 12 years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to their custom. After the festival was over, they were returning home, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't know it. Supposing that he was among their band of travelers, they journeyed on for a full day while looking for him among their family and friends. When they didn't find Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple... When his parents saw him, they were shocked. His mother said, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Listen! Your father and I have been worried. We've been looking for you!" Jesus replied, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?" But they didn't understand what he said to them. Jesus went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. His mother cherished every word in her heart. Jesus matured in wisdom and years, and in favor with God and with people.

Luke 2:41-51, selected verses

A glimpse of Jesus as a maturing child

MONDAY 5.14.18 Luke 2:41-52

Long before the cross, Jesus' mother Mary lived through a time of deep distress. During the three days of searching Luke reported, she surely must have feared that something bad had happened to Jesus. This story (the only one we have from Jesus' boyhood) gave a glimpse of Jesus' maturing process. Already he realized that the Temple, even more than Mary and Joseph's home, was his Father's house. And yet verse 51 also said he returned to Nazareth with his earthly parents and "was obedient to them."

- ✚ It's clear that Jesus' parents didn't just make a beeline for the Temple. Luke said they were shocked when they found Jesus there. What might Jesus' precocious fascination with the Temple teachers have said about him? When he began to preach publicly, he said, "Happy are people who are hungry and thirsty for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6). How much of an appetite do you usually have for God? How can you maintain and increase that inner hunger and thirst?
- ✚ Jesus' parents lost Jesus for a day—and spent three days finding him. Luke didn't write anything about what that experience felt like to Jesus. Have you ever made a mistake with a child, or did your parents ever make a serious mistake with you? If so, have you as a parent or child been able, like Jesus and Mary, to move on with your relationship without letting the mistake(s) haunt and poison the relationship?

Prayer: Loving Lord, I can only imagine the inner sense of recognition, of belonging, you must have experienced on that first visit to the Temple. In the light of your love, help me to feel more and more "at home" when I am in your presence. Amen.

Jesus welcomed children and their parents

TUESDAY 5.15.18 Mark 10:13-16

Clearly, Jesus loved children, and children loved him. That was unusual in his time—most rabbis had no interest in speaking to children. Jesus' disciples were more typical, saying, in effect, take these children away; the Master has important things to do. "The disciples rebuked the parents. Jesus rebuked the disciples." * Mark added the lovely eyewitness detail that Jesus "hugged the children and blessed them."

- ✚ Jesus' words and actions said children were more likely to find favor with God than self-satisfied Pharisees or materialistic rulers. *The Message* rendered his forceful words in Mark 10:14-15 as: "Don't push these children away. Don't ever get between them and me. These children are at the very center of life in the kingdom. Mark this: Unless you accept God's kingdom in the simplicity of a child, you'll never get in." ** What can you learn from the simplicity of children that will deepen and enrich your relationship with God?
- ✚ "People were bringing children to Jesus so that he would bless them." When you were a child, did your parents or other adults bring you to Jesus for his blessing and guidance for life? If you are a parent, grandparent or have another connection with one or more children, how can you bring them to Jesus so that he can bless them?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, please keep me from ever growing too old inside to join the joyous, trusting circle of children you welcomed. Keep my heart fresh, flexible and smiling as I follow you. Amen.

* John Ortberg, *Who Is This Man? The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012, p. 29.

** From Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message*. NavPress, 1993-2002.

Jesus reunited mothers and children

WEDNESDAY 5.16.18 Luke 7:11-17, 8:51

"To lose a child is among the most painful of human experiences.... [As] the woman Jesus encountered in Nain...walked with her community in sorrow, Jesus had compassion for her. When he told her not to cry (7:13), he was not chastising her emotion but extending comfort and preparing her for the resurrection to come." * Again, in chapter 8, Luke said as Jesus raised a dead child, he made sure the child's mother as well as her father were present.

- ✚ In Jesus' day, losing an only son was a terrible disaster for a widow. Under Jewish law, only through a male relative did she have legal standing to own property or sustain herself. Jesus saved the widow in Nain from emotional loss, but also from likely poverty and marginalization. What has Jesus saved you from? In what ways does a sense of his loving power at work with and through you give you strength and comfort for each day?
- ✚ Luke recorded the response of those who saw Jesus' action: "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said [cf. [1 Kings 17:21-23](#); [2 Kings 4:32-36](#)]. "God has come to help his people." In what ways was their reaction accurate, and a first step toward accepting Jesus' lordship over their own lives? In what ways did it fall short of fully understanding the reach and significance of Jesus' ministry?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you said one aspect of your earthly life was to give us a preview of your eternal kingdom. How I look forward to the day when you will restore all lost children to their mothers' loving arms, as you did in these stories! Amen.

* Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, "Portrait" note on "Widow from Nain" in *The CEB Women's Bible*. Nashville: Common English Bible, 2016, p. 1300.

Jesus related his love to a mother's love

THURSDAY 5.17.18 Matthew 23:37

Mourning over the stubborn city of Jerusalem, Jesus compared his caring for the city's people to a mother hen putting herself between her offspring and danger. There was precedent for Jesus' imagery, even in that male-dominated culture. [Psalm 131:1-3](#) and the prophet Isaiah ([Isaiah 49:13-15](#)) had used mothering images to express the yearning love of God of r people, even when they struggled to trust or respond.

- ✚ Loving, caring mothers help shape in their children an early sense of the world as a place with a reliable center of love and nurture. Are there ways in which God's steadfast love seems more real to you because of your mother, or other people who may have played a "mothering" role in your life? How can such a sense support your trust at those testing times when God's presence and power are not on obvious display?
- ✚ Jesus said this in his final week in Jerusalem, perhaps two days before his crucifixion. How could a man who knew he was on his way to a cross (cf. [Matthew 20:17-19](#)) speak so securely about being able to shelter those he cared about from danger? How can you incorporate Jesus' eternal perspective into your own thinking and feelings about life in this time-bounded, sometimes dangerous world?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you mourned like a bereaved mother because the people of Jerusalem would not accept the shelter you offered under your "wings." Make me willing to accept and find safety in the spiritual shelter you offer me. Amen.

Jesus' allegiance to God went beyond family, if necessary

FRIDAY 5.18.18 Mark 3:20-35; Matthew 10:35-39

Jesus valued how mothers (and other family members) can encourage, support and love. In [Matthew 19:16-19](#), he quoted the [fifth commandment](#) next to "Love your neighbor as yourself." But at least once Jesus rebuffed his mother when she tried to alter his approach to his mission. And at times he reminded his hearers that loyalty to family, though important, is not as important as loyalty to God. Maybe without realizing it, some parents demand that even adult children do everything their way. Jesus would remind us that our highest loyalty is to God and the person God made us to be, even beyond our family.

- ✚ As in other ways, Jesus broke a cultural boundary in these stories. "Refusal to give higher priority to one's physical family would appear offensive in ancient Mediterranean culture." * Psychologists often say people who follow their own values, even if that upsets others, are "inner directed." In what ways was it crucial to Jesus' mission to be inner directed? Did his choice to stick to the course he knew God called him to mean he didn't care about his family?
- ✚ For what reasons, conscious or unconscious, do families at times try to claim our greatest loyalty? We tend to say, "It's for their own good," and it may be. But not always: "Relatives usually tried to hide the behavior of family members that could bring shame on the family." ** What steps can give you confidence you are acting on God's callings, not just your own impulses? How can giving your ultimate loyalty to Jesus make you, in the end, a better family member than if you ignore your true self to "get along"?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you lived through the pain of misunderstandings, and the beauty of caring and loving. Shape me into a person who maximizes the beauty of all the relationships I'm a part of. Amen.

* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, eBook: *Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Location 226141). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

** HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible*, eBook: *Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 226120-226121). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Jesus modeled lifelong concern for his mother

SATURDAY 5.19.18 John 2:12, John 19:25-27

Through occasional tensions or misunderstandings, Jesus maintained his connection with his mother. The little-noticed sentence in John 2:12 showed a brief family visit amid Jesus' busy ministry. Though most of Jesus' bragging disciples (cf. [Matthew 26:35](#)) fled when the Temple Guard arrested Jesus, his mother was lovingly, loyally at the cross. And even dying on the cross, Jesus was loyal to her. "When Jesus saw his mother, he could not but think of the days ahead. He could not commit her to the care of his brothers, for they did not believe in him yet (John 7:5)... So Jesus committed Mary to John's care and John to Mary's, so that they should comfort each other's loneliness when he was gone. There is something infinitely moving in the fact that Jesus in the agony of the Cross, when the salvation of the world hung in the balance, thought of the loneliness of his mother in the days ahead." *

- ✚ Some in Jesus' day tried to evade responsibility for helping their parents (especially mothers) by pledging to give their goods to God later. Jesus quoted the commandment about honoring parents as he sternly rebuked that kind of fake piety (cf. [Matthew 15:3-9](#)). Even in extreme pain, he made sure a man he trusted would care for his mother. We live in a different time and culture, but Jesus' example can speak to us. Few of us in our death-denying society want to think about our mortality. We often put off making a will or other end of life provisions. Are you willing to conquer your discomfort for the sake of any who depend on you, or might need to care for you if you became ill? If you haven't already, make plans that will help your family when you are going or gone. If you need help, www.caringinfo.org has quality resources.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give me the courage to prepare for whenever I face the possible end of my life so those who depend on me will have a lighter burden. Make me willing to play the role you played, or if needed the one John played. Amen.

Family Activity: Research the stories of women in the Bible. With younger children, use a Bible story book and discover how many stories of women are told. With older kids, use a concordance or the Internet to explore the stories of women. You may also want to discover how many names of women are mentioned whose stories are not told. Read a few of the stories and describe the qualities of the women mentioned. Discuss what their stories teach us about God. Think of the women in your life today and compare Biblical women with them. Write a note to a woman who displays God-like qualities. Thank her for sharing her faith. As a family, commit to praying for the special women in your life.

* William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of John—Volume 2 Chapters 8–21 (Revised Edition)*. Louisville,