

**May 8, 2016**  
**An Attitude of Gratitude**  
**Luke 17:11-19 (NIV)**

<sup>11</sup> Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee.

<sup>12</sup> As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance

<sup>13</sup> and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

<sup>14</sup> When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

<sup>15</sup> One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice.

<sup>16</sup> He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

<sup>17</sup> Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

<sup>18</sup> Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?"

<sup>19</sup> Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

Good Morning, My Sisters, and Brothers in Christ! Welcome to our 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Friends and Family month.

**I greet you this morning in the name of the one who created mothers:**

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful and increase in number;** fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV)

**I greet you in the name of the One who choose a mother for us only Son:**

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. Luke 1:31

**I greet you in the name of the Son** who as he hung from the cross stopped to teach us that Mothers were important and should be cared for:

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," John 19:26

Mothers must be important to God the Father for He created them **and** choose one for His Son. Mothers must be important to Jesus the Son for He made provisions for His mother, before He returned to the Father. Mothers must be important in the Divine Order, for each of us was brought to this world by a mother.

But what is a mother?

Is it the one who **gives you birth** and suffers with you as you bear your cross like Mary? Is it the one who **takes you home and cares for you like her own** as Pharaoh's daughter cared for Moses. Is a mother one **who prays for you and then gives you to the Lord** like Hannah did for Samuel?

What is a mother? I would like for you to consider with me that a mother **is all of that**, sometimes **only a part of that**, and sometimes **more than that**. A mother is a birth mother, a play mother, a godmother, a spiritual mother, a teacher who takes a special interest, an aunt, older cousin, grandmother, babysitter, or the neighbor across the street. A mother is one who knows there is no downsizing, quitting or retirement from the job. A mother is one who cares, cries, and

comforts. A mother is one who prays, praises, and punishes. A mother can be a father, uncle, or brother, who steps in when a mother cannot. To each of you who find yourself within my description **HAPPY MOTHERS DAY!**

I begin to think about today's sermon very early last week and I posed some of my ideas to a friend and my husband. But the sermon did not begin to come together until very late last night. But that is okay, because that is when God and I do our best work.

So as we consider the very familiar story of the 10 lepers healed by Jesus, I ask you to pray over this theme:

### **One Remembered the Teaching of His Mother!**

#### **SHALL WE PRAY?**

**Father God we come this morning to honor one of your creations. We come to honor Mothers. Yet as we honor them we still need to hear a Word from heaven. Please send that Word to each person who hears my voice and reads this message on line. Let the words of my mouth and meditations of my heart be acceptable to You. For you are my Rock, my Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer. In the matchless name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen and Amen.**

### **One Remembered the Teaching of His Mother!**

I have a new sister in the ministry who was sharing the story of her son. As she told of the first 10 years of his life spent in foster care I just wanted to weep. No one had loved him enough to get him the medical attention he needed and so when she brought him home at age 10 he was taking 21 pills a day for illness he did not and does not have; and lived his life in a stupor. Now 8 years later he is med free, making friends, and on a path to graduate from high school. When she talks about her son her face lights up and she just beams as she shares his accomplishments in learning to help with errands, go to the store alone, and find his place in the world. Some might call it a miracle, but I want to call it the

results of a mother's love.

I walked into a salon to get a manicure and pedicure, and friend was sitting waiting for her nails to dry. We spoke briefly, in that way you do when you don't want to include everyone in your business, but you still want to connect. She thanked me for the time I have spent over the years with her children. I responded that they were easy to love. As she left the salon she paid my bill and called "Happy Mother's Day." She loved me, because I have and continue to love her children.

I got a call from a colleague in the ministry and she shared with me in great detail how a friend we have in common had been treated by an adult child she helped to raise. This adult child who will call Shelia, had opened accounts in her godmother name; taken money out of the godmother's account to pay the bills she created; and even linked the godmother's checking account to on line bill pay for her own rent. The colleague who shared the story repeated over and over; how can you treat someone that way? Someone who raised you and nurtured you and loved you?

Each of the above illustration share one thing in common they share that mothers are teachers. They teach by observing and getting care for their children. They teach by showing their gratitude. They teach by loving us in such a way that years and years later we are still concerned about what happens to them and others we meet along the way.

As children both young and old of loving mothers there are some things we have learned that are just essential to good home training. Song lyrics from the 70's say it well:

*A mother's love is so special - It's something that you can't describe  
It's the kind of love that stays with you - Until the day you die  
She taught me little things like "Say Hello and Thank you, please"  
While scrubbing those floors on her bended knees<sup>1</sup> (1973 The Intruders)*

Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem on the road between Samaria and Galilee. I need you to consider that Jesus was on the road because He knew that He needed to do two things: 1) heal 10 lepers and 2) provide a lesson for us.

Use your religious imagination so you might see these 10 lepers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are ten young men sitting and standing outside in the uniform of the homeless. Perhaps in a once white tee shirt; pants that have not been laundered in a while, shoes that don't match without socks and laces and one of the tools of the homeless: a paper cup to hold whatever coins are tossed in his direction; a cardboard sign proclaiming his status; maybe even sticks and an empty paint can on which to make a beat and draw attention to his blight.

Each of them is some mother's son. Each of them has had someone along the way who has cared for them, loved them, and possibly even prayed for them. But along the way, along the journey of life they contracted the leprosy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

Addiction,

Abuse,

Inability to get medical care,

Posttraumatic stress disorder,

Un/under employment

Living while being black, brown, and/or poor.

And so they stand outside on the frontage roads of our roadways and Expressways; so they stand waiting for someone to come and offer assistance;

---

<sup>1</sup><http://www.bing.com/search?q=Lyrics%20%27I%20Always%20Love%20my%20Mama&pc=cosp&ptag=C96N0013D011014A316A5D3C6E&form=CONBDF&conlogo=CT3210127>

So they stand with yellowed teeth, jaundiced eyes, cracked hands and feet  
and

Wait for someone to see them and have mercy on them;

So they stand made in the image of God and just as you and I and they ask for help.

All ten of them are some mother's son. All ten of them desire the same thing. And so we offer what we have. Nine of them take what we offer and walk away. We don't know if it was used in a way that would please us; we don't know if we just contributed to continued addiction or a step toward healing; we don't know. But the 10<sup>th</sup> man – the 10<sup>th</sup> mother's son – looks at what we have given and he comes back.

He comes back to us to be his mother's son. He says thank you!

I want to suggest this morning that that is all any Mother wants this Mother's Day is to hear the one she has loved, cared for and prayed for say thank you.

I want to suggest that is all that God wants from us this Mother's Day and every day is to turn around and say thank you.

Excuse me for just a moment while I thank Him

*Thank you for saving me from my personal leprosy*

*Thank you for using another of your children to help me, teach me and guide me*

*Thank you for always taking me back when I stray, turn down the wrong path, let my ego get in the way of brain*

*Thank you Lord for making a way out of no way*

*Thank you Lord for Martha Ann, Mama Nora, Aunt Parthenia, Alfrances, and the others who stopped on the frontage roads of my life because you let them see me and love me in spite of – not because of*

Thank you that when I wanted to yell unclean you declared I had been washed in the blood

Thank you when I thought myself unworthy of your amazing grace you reminded me that you granted grace and mercy for the asking

Thank you that in the midnight hour when I doubted you lift me up on the wings of the eagles

Thank you that you have been, are, and will be all that I will ever need and all you ask is that I say THANK YOU!