

Mothers

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[0 : 00] It's my pleasure today to be able to introduce our guest speaker, which is actually a team, a husband and wife team.

! I would say that I've known these folks for at least 30 years, maybe a little longer from the time that Becky and I first came to Samford. It's been about 35 years, I guess, and they are really and have been for a long time pillars at First Baptist Church.

And during the time that I served there, they were, especially Cindy, who was on the staff there, she was always a go-to person. No matter what came up, needed to be done, I needed help with, I didn't understand, I could go to her and she would explain it.

But I'm going to take a minute to introduce her husband, and then he's going to introduce his wife.

And so, you know that our church has been supporting from time to time Dr. Bill Hall and his medical ministry to the homeless and the poor around Lee County.

And Bill Hall, our good friend, served as a family physician for many, many years in Samford. And then after retiring, just kept on serving the Lord with that education and that gift.

[1 : 20] And so he now has a sort of an RV, traveling clinic, doctor's office. And they set up here and there where the homeless people are, and they'll help them out.

And so just really fine people. And another thing about Bill, he's not only a medical doctor, but he's really a classical musician, orchestra quality.

And at the very end, he's going to bless us with a cello piece. So we're going to be high church before it's all over. So at this time, I'd like to ask Bill, he's just going to stand where he is and introduce his wife, Cindy.

Happy Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day. When Cindy said that I get to introduce her, I go, yes. I thought I couldn't say anything about it. And I said, well, I can, no you can't. Well, you have a habit. No, can't do that. Nope. Don't even think about it.

[2 : 24] Well, there are a couple of things that she didn't tell me. Number one, we met in fifth grade. Number two, we've been married almost 57 years. And more germane to the subject here is that she's a professional mother and grandmother, having done both for either one for 50 years plus.

For those of you who say, well, gee, you know, my mothering is when I'm at home and, boy, I can't wait for my kids to be successful and move out, et cetera, et cetera.

Let me tell you something. It doesn't end there. Every single day, at least two or three of our kids, we have four, call Cindy and about the chaotic event of the day or whatever.

If she didn't have or hadn't taken any psychological training, it would have been a mess. She's a wonderful lady, so. I think he made an obstacle course for me to go around.

So I, too, want to wish you all a happy Mother's Day.

[3 : 49] And I do want to say one thing that doesn't let you guys off the hook or all the kids here. Because every time we read God's Word, he promises it won't return void.

So there's something here for everybody, even if you're not a mom today. So with that, I want to tell you a little story first. There was a mother that put her son to bed the night before his fifth birthday. And she was trying to tell him that he was used to holding up four fingers like this. And so she said, tomorrow, you get to hold up five. And they practiced that and practiced that.

And in the evening, when she put him to bed, she said, Do you know now, in the morning, you're going to be able to hold up all five fingers? She said, Do you understand how old you're going to be?

And the little boy answered excitedly, Yes, tomorrow I'm going to be a handful. So for all the mothers and grandmothers that have their hands full, Happy Mother's Day to you.

[5 : 00] As we celebrate today, we're mindful that not everybody is a happy mother. There are some situations that come into our lives that make things difficult.

And I think everybody sitting here can say that they have experienced some difficult times as a mother. So we're going to look at some mothers in the church. And Matt Garrett was able to find these for me. And I was so impressed because we could just say this and go home. They are awesome mothers. So I asked him to find me three mothers. One with a young child. One with children that are still in the home that are a little older. And maybe a mother that's been through many years of mothering. And so this is who he found. And he did specifically ask me if they had to come up and say anything. And I said, No. I will read their responses. But I would like the first mother to come up.

[6 : 03] And that is Gretchen. Gretchen, would you come on up? And like I said, they all have wonderful answers.

So I'm going to read Gretchen's first. And after I read these answers, I was so excited to meet you. And how do you say your last name? Capity. Capity. Capity. Capity. Okay, that's how I thought it would be. So she said, I'm writing as the mother of a young child who's going to be one at the end of May. Bless you. She also has a seven-year-old. Is the seven-year-old here today? Ah. You want to come up and stand with mom? You can. First question I asked her, what's your favorite part of being a mother? And she said, seeing the joy and excitement my kids experience.

[7 : 02] The way my baby lights up with a big grin when my husband gets home. Or how proud he is of himself pushing his walker. There's a redemptive quality to motherhood, trying to provide my children with the childhood I wish I had in a stable home with loving parents.

It has brought a lot of restoration and healing to my life. I love that you put that in there. That's so neat. There's nothing like the magic of watching your children experience something for the first time, like walking or riding a bike.

I also love seeing the joy my kids bring to others. Our church family loves my children and my baby brings so much joy to those around him.

I love it. So that was what she loved the best about being a mother. Now, the next question I asked her, and you can switch to the next slide too. Oh, you did it right. Oh, you're so smart back there. What's the most difficult part of being a mother? Of course, I could talk about the lack of sleep I'm currently experiencing. But at the end of the day, that's not it.

[8 : 17] He's okay. I love kids, so it's okay. I've told students who ask me what it's like being a mom that it is equally the best and the hardest thing I've ever done.

Everyone in the family always seems to need help with something at the same time. Is that true? Huh? Yeah. Seeing your children experience grief and loss is so hard.

Bigger than that though is trying not to let the fear creep in. I heard somewhere you can't protect your kids from their testimony. Ouch. It hurts just to say that.

That is scary as a mom. But I try to cover my kids in prayer. Does your mom pray for you every day? You think? Yeah. You don't know? You better watch her.

Maybe she's praised when you're at school. My prayer for my children is that they would know God, love Him, seek Him, and serve Him. All right.

[9 : 19] Next question was a little harder. If you could give your younger self advice, what would you say? Whoa. That's a hard one, isn't it? When I had another child, I took better care of myself.

With my first, I really struggled with my mental health and I did not sleep when the baby slept. I tried to do it all. That's this guy she's talking about here. So to my pre-mom self, I would say sleep when the baby sleeps, read your Bible more, and pray diligently.

Take care of yourself physically and spiritually. It is so easy to put all that on the back burner and I still do. It is impossible to do everything well when you're a working mom.

Pick your battles and don't let the rest get to you. Do what you can and know that what you can do in your current capacity is enough. Amen.

Amen. And then the last question I asked them was, what is your favorite Bible verse? One of the verses that stuck with me before I became a Christian is still one of my favorites.

[10 : 26] My life verse, Psalm 91 too. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortage, my God in whom I trust. This chapter is so beautiful and comforting to me and throughout my walk I have looked back to it as a source of strength and comfort.

Didn't you give great answers? Let's give her a hand. And young Ben, will you come here for just a minute? Can you come here for just a sec?

We have some flowers as a thank you for your mom. Will you do that for her? Next we have Jordan. Jordan about fainted when I told her she might have to come up here. You can bring your kids too, Jordan, if you want. And I actually knew Jordan when she was growing up, so it's pretty special to have her.

Jordan is Matt's daughter-in-law. You all know that. Mother of four. They're all here today. Two in elementary school and two in middle school.

[11 : 43] All right, so let's see if you guys like your mom's answers, okay? What is your favorite part of being a mother? The unconditional love for your child that you have as soon as it's born is such a blessing and an amazing glimpse of the Father's love for us.

Yes, I agree. What's the most difficult part of being a mother? It's a tie. Between disciplining in a godly way without losing it and not being able to control things for your child like sickness, anxiety, and bullies, etc.

Three, that question is what would you tell your younger self, okay? I would stress to myself the importance of finding quiet time with Jesus every day and finding joy in motherhood instead of living in survival mode.

I absolutely love that, Jordan. That's such a great answer. And her favorite verse is Philippians 4, 6 through 7. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your request to God.

And the peace of God, which trans all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Didn't she do a great job?

[13 : 15] Amen. Did you like to give them on the flowers? And I was hoping these flowers would be a little bit more. I went to Lowe's and told them what I was doing, and that's what they gave me. So they're so small.

I really should give you this whole thing. All right, our last mother is Renee. Renee, you got any kids or grandkids here with you today?

You had them all yesterday, right? I had them all yesterday. Well, we could bring up your husband, but you could just come up here, so. Yeah. You already bragged about him, right?

So Renee and her husband have been leaders at MomCure for at least 30 years, Matt said. In fact, they may have been at the church longer than anybody else. Wow.

Mm-hmm. She was once the director of Reach Out Crisis Pregnancy Center. I remember that. She's the mother of two adult children and has two grandsons. The oldest grandson is graduating soon.

[14 : 15] Yes. So here is hers. She said, I'm a mother with some years of mothering experience. We won't ask you how many.

What is your favorite part of mothering? My favorite part of mothering is seeing the joy on my children's face when they achieve their goals and realize their potential.

That's beautiful. Love it. What's the most difficult part of being a mother? The most difficult part of being a mom is watching your child suffer the consequences of their bad decisions.

Hey, we've all been there. Yeah. And if you could give your younger self advice, what would it be? The best advice I could give my younger self is to be patient, more loving, and make your yes be yes and your no be no.

All the mothers are shaking their heads out there. Her favorite Bible verse is Romans 8, 26. In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness.

[15 : 23] We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And boy, I use that verse a lot sometimes, you know, when you're trying to pray.

Yes, you must do. And I'm so glad you wore yellow today. Oh, you're going to give that to a cloud? Okay. That doesn't count.

I was glad. There wasn't anything bad in there about me. Yeah, kind of nervous, right? So we've really heard some very wise advice, and we can go home now.

But I've got a few more things I wanted to share with you. So if we could have the next slide, please. We're going to look at one of the most famous mothers in the Bible.

And that's Mary, the mother of Jesus. So if you have your Bible, you can turn to Luke 1. And you might say, well, Miss Cindy, this is Christmas. But we're going to look at it today.

[16:29] Because it gives us a hint of what Mary was like. So, and it will also be on the screen if you don't have your Bibles here today. So Luke 1, we're going to read verse 26 through 38.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, greetings, you are highly favored. The Lord is with you.

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of a greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God.

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the son of the most high.

[17:37] The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end.

How will this be, Mary asked the angel, since I am a virgin? The angel answered, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the most high will overshadow you.

The Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth, your relative, is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible with God.

I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May it be as you have said. And then the angel left her. All right. That's easy to read, but I want to see.

Have we got any teenage girls here? Raise your hand if you're a teenager. You're all hiding back there. There's a second. Ah, over there. Okay. Can you imagine Mary's response?

[18:43] Let's read verse 38 again. It says, I am the Lord's servant, Mary answered. May it be to me as you have said. What?

You know any teenagers like that, parents? Mary had just heard the most disturbing news of her whole life.

And she was a young teenager. I don't know a single teenager that would say, oh, okay. And then go home and try to explain it to their parents. That part isn't in this particular version, but I wonder what Mary's parents said.

Yeah, right. Yeah, right. You know. But, it's amazing. Mary must have had amazing faith to be able to respond like that.

She had to know God in a personal way to be able to say such a thing. She didn't argue. She didn't complain. She didn't question or say, no way.

[19:46] What did she answer after the most devastating news of her life? Look at that verse again. I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.

If you'll do the next slide. We can learn some lessons from Mary. And the first lesson that we're going to learn. So next slide, please. Thank you.

Is that even when things don't make sense in our lives, we can still trust God. Mary just heard the most devastating news in her whole life.

But she trusted God. We can trust Him completely too without knowing what's going to happen. Was Mary nervous? Yes. Was she anxious?

Absolutely. She could have used that verse that one of the moms had. Scared? Of course. She knew that what was going to happen was going to be impossible with men.

[20:44] But she could trust God. And she knew that God was going to take care of her through this whole thing. So she could trust God with all the details.

So I want to ask you, as moms sitting here, are there things that don't make sense in your life? Are there situations that you never expected to come into your life?

That are there now or have been in the past? Do you worry about that child that seems to want to go his own way? That won't listen to you?

That is doing things that you don't agree with? You might be very discouraged today. Remember this promise. God chose you for a special job to be the mother of the child that he gave to you.

And so you can trust him to bring you through this, even when it doesn't make sense. You've been called by God to do this. So if you trust him, he's going to bring you through these very, very difficult times in your life.

[21 : 51] So when life doesn't make sense, we can trust God's plans and not our own. There's a verse that I love in Isaiah 55, 8 and 9.

So next slide, please. It says, my thoughts are not your thoughts. My ways are not your ways, declares the Lord. Do you trust him with your life?

Even when these details are in there that don't make any sense? Just like Mary, she said, okay, Lord, it's as you wish. She didn't understand it, but she knew God and she knew she could trust God.

I think as mothers, we are the same. There are always going to be things that come into our lives that we go, what? I don't understand this. I'm scared to death. But we can trust God with our child and the fact that he made us the mother.

All right. The second lesson is found in Luke 1, 46 through 53. So we're going to go back to Luke 1 here and read that.

[22 : 58] And I want you to look at Mary's response to what God had just told her. And Mary said, my soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.

For he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm.

He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones and lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, but has sent the rich away empty.

All right. All right. So this is the second part of Mary's response. And Mary has just received words that have rocked her world.

[24 : 05] And she should be crying and fearful, scared to death. But what's she doing instead? She's praising God and rejoicing in what's going to happen.

And then she goes on to remember the past and what God has done in the past. So next slide, please. How about you? What do you do when you get news that shakes your world, that makes you so upset?

Do you remember the past, what God has done for you in the past? Is it instinct for you to praise God when things happen that shake your world?

It's not mine. I want to get on my knees and complain. But God says, it's okay. It's okay. I'm going to take care of you. I'm going to bring you through this, even though you don't understand.

So remembering what God has done in the past is a really good lesson for us. And not just for mothers, but for all of you. An example would be when the Israelites crossed the Jordan River.

[25 : 16] They were all happy and glad that they had finally gotten to the Promised Land. And God said something to them. He said, I want you to take 12 stones and build them up into a tower.

And then when your children say, well, what's that for? You can tell them what God has done for you in the past. Do you have stones in your life of things that God has done for you?

When you're going through hard times, this is a time to remember and look back at the way God has taken care of you in the past. And I think Mary did this.

It doesn't say so in the scripture. But I'll bet she looked back and she thought, I can trust God with this because he's taken care of me in the past.

So number one lesson, remember, is when things don't make sense in our lives, we can trust God. And two, we can praise him and remember what he's done in the past.

[26 : 19] All right. Our third lesson, we've got to turn in our scripture to John to read this part. It's John 19. If you have your Bibles and want to turn to that, that's fine.

Or you can just look up on the screen. But I'm going to turn in mine, so you'll have to wait a minute. John 19, starting at verse 25 and looking through verse 27.

All right. This is a completely different part of the scripture. We're seeing the end of Jesus' life and we're seeing Mary, his mother, standing at the cross.

All right. So let's read this scripture to John 19, verse 25. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Copas, and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother there and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Dear woman, here is your son. And to the disciple, here is your mother.

[27 : 26] And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home. And then we have a third lesson and I'm glad he got it up there. It says, lesson three, once you're a mother, you never, ever, ever stop being a mother.

Like my husband says, I get calls all the time for crises in my children's lives. You're always going to be a mother. So Mary's standing at the cross.

I'm sure this is the last place she ever wanted to be. But she was there. She was faithful even to the end. You know, each of us have hard times in our lives as moms and dads and grandparents and kids.

But God is with us even in the most difficult time. He will give us the strength to stand there as a mother when we would much rather be somewhere else.

Mary didn't stand quietly at the cross. She fell down crying and moaning, as it says in another chapter. Despite the pain though, she was there.

[28 : 36] She was standing there. Do you know that today there are mothers like Mary that are standing in children's hospitals, watching their children in the beds?

There are mothers like Mary in the school offices, listening to something their child has done. There are even mothers at grave sites praying for their lost children.

Although they are grieving, they are there because they are mothers and they need to be there.

Although they would rather be elsewhere, they are still standing there because being a mother is a lifetime calling.

But it's not a calling you have to do all by yourself. God has promised in Deuteronomy 31.8, The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you.

He will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid. Do not be discouraged. Aren't you glad today that being a mother means walking with God and allowing him to provide what you need?

[29 : 42] I want to close with an illustration from Family Circus. The children in this comic strip are talking about babies and where they come from.

One said, I know that storks don't bring babies. They have to come from UPS. Some of the other children had other ideas about where babies came from.

But one child said, I know where babies come from. They are connected to their mothers by a biblical court. I love that.

A biblical court. How true this child's statement was. If you want to be a good mother, you had better be in God's word.

Every day. And did you hear our mothers? They all said that. This is God's instruction manual for teaching us how to do things. Every day when you read it.

[30 : 44] The Bible will give you some instructions on living your life. So lesson four is to be in God's word daily. You might say how?

With my schedule? You just haven't seen my schedule. I can't do it. It is possible. We live in an age where it's much easier for us than our grandparents or our great grandparents.

You can listen to it on your phone. You can listen to it on CD. You can listen to it on all kinds of things. Listen to God's word. This is your instruction manual.

When my husband and I had our first child, he was still in medical school or had just finished. We decided to go out for breakfast and we were real worried.

We said, what do we do if she cries? And so we went to this restaurant. We had her in this car seat. We put her in the booth. And we were so nervous because we didn't think we would know what to do if she started to cry.

[31 : 46] But you know what? This is our instruction manual. Every child comes with one. If you just open it up and read it. So don't neglect it.

Finally, you might be here saying today, those lessons are good for Mary, but they're not going to help me. I've made a big mess of my life. I will never be able to repair the mistakes that I've made. But you know what? God is the God of the impossible. You can't fix those mistakes, but God can. He will erase them.

God sent Jesus here for a special reason. To be our savior. To die on the cross and take on the cross all those sins, all those mistakes that we've made.

But he didn't stay on that cross. He was buried and he rose again. We just celebrated that and I love your banner up there. He is risen. But you have to have a personal relationship with him.

[32 : 48] You cannot just say, oh yeah, I know about God. He's got to be here. And the secret of these three mothers that were up here? They all have Jesus in their heart.

And that's why they could say the things that they said. Because they have him in their heart. You might be here and you've never made that decision to ask Jesus to come into your heart.

He's not going to just burst in and say, I'm here. He waits to be invited. And you can do that simply by saying a simple prayer, which we're going to do in just a few minutes.

But just imagine that God can be an intimate part of your whole life. That he can take your life and make something beautiful out of it.

Even with all the mistakes. Even if you think your life is a big old mess. God can take it and make something beautiful. If you'll make the next slide for me please.

[33 : 49] He is such a loving father slash mother. That he can take your life. And he will take care of you. Just imagine.

This is God. Sheltering you. Psalm 91.4 says. And one of the moms said, Psalm 91 was her favorite psalm.

And I'm going to read that to you from there. He will cover you with his feathers. And under his wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness will be your shield and your rampart.

Whether you think you've been a successful mother. Or an okay mother. Or an awful mother. God is sheltering you. He has it.

He's got your back. He's got your front. He's got your whole life. And he will take care of you. As we close in just a minute. I want you to just close your eyes.

[34 : 48] And Dr. Hall and Brenda you're going to come up. They're going to play a little music for us. And before we run to the restaurant for lunch. Think about your relationship with God.

Is he covering you? Is he your God? Is he being faithful? Is he faithful? Is he faithful? Is he faithful? What changes need to be made in your life?

Is he going to listen to this song? and I'm going to pray while they're getting ready. Don't forget to turn on your foot pedal. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for mothers. God, it is such a huge job that we cannot do it alone.

So we thank you that you remind us that you are covering us, that you are faithful, that we can find refuge in you.

So we pray for the moms that are going through hard times today, the moms that are going through times that are great, because we know that just like Mary did, we can trust you.

[35 : 56] Even when things aren't working out the way we think, you are faithful, you love us, you care for us. And God, if there's somebody here that hasn't given their heart to you, help them to know they can just pray a very simple prayer.

Like this. Dear Lord, I am a sinner. I know that I need you in my heart and my life. Please come in and make me part of your family.

Thank you for loving me. Thank you for serving. Thank you for saving me. In your name we pray.

Amen. So if you will just continue to think about your relationship with God while they play.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[37 : 41] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.