

Mother's Day Talk

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Date: 10 May 2026

Preacher: Pat

[0 : 00] Okay. Well, welcome. And the first thing I would like to do, my great niece and my great nephew, Caitlin and Ian, are here today.

! I had invited them. I wasn't sure if they were to be here. They're like my grandchildren. I helped raise them, and I'm so blessed to have them in my life. Caitlin is going to be graduating, getting her RN this week, and Ian is graduating high school, headed to NC State.

This is our son. I know that y'all, well, many of you have never met him. He's been here a couple of times. The middle picture and the lower picture, those are his two sons, Nathan and Daniel, and his wife, Heather.

They live in Worcester, Ohio. And Drew has two master's degrees, and he also has a doctoral degree in applied math.

He's been a math teacher at the College of Worcester in Ohio since 2008, and he is the math and computer science professor there.

[1 : 16] My daughter-in-law is well-educated, too. She has a master's degree from Campbell University in arts and Christian music, and she graduated from Meredith College with a degree in music.

She's currently the director of choral ministries at her church and also the group's coordinator at Worcester Grace Church. They're both very active, and our grandsons, up until one of them, went away to college this year, the older one, the tall one there with a mustache now.

He's majoring in engineering. He's at the Ohio State University, and he just finished his first year there.

And our younger grandson is a rising sophomore at Worcester High School, and he also plays sports. He plays in the marching band, and he's also on the golf team, and he plays lacrosse.

So very sweet family. Wish they lived closer, but, you know, God's got a plan for all our kids. Okay, I'm going to tell you my story this morning.

[2 : 30] It starts a very long time ago, actually before I was born. I was born and raised in a small town in central Florida called Martin.

I have two brothers and three sisters. I was the sixth and the youngest child out of all. My sister Ruth Ann and I are the only two that remain, my brothers and my sisters, my other sisters have gone on to heaven.

My mother was extremely young when she married my father. You may be shocked. My father most likely would have probably ended up in jail if it happened today.

My mother was only 14 years old when she got married. My father was 27 years old. Huge difference.

My father's first wife died in childbirth. Both the mother and the child died. And he had a two-year-old daughter, so he needed a mother for his daughter.

[3 : 35] So my mother became an instant mother at the age of 14. So if you do the math, pretty easy. My mother and my oldest sister are only 12 years apart.

Pretty shocking. Their marriage license stated that my mother was 18, so somebody fudged something somewhere. I don't know how they met.

I don't know how long they knew each other. Those kind of things were never asked or really ever discussed in our home. When Ruthann and I were much older, our mother told us that after her third child was born, she really should not have any more children.

Well, I guess my father didn't get that message. Because Ruthann was born two years later, and I was born three years after that.

So at the very young age of 25, my mother was raising six children. Very tough times. Very tough times.

[4 : 43] When I was about two years old, my mother took a job as the postmaster of the little small community where we lived. She had only completed the eighth grade, so she went back to school and got her GED.

Back then, the only salary for a postmaster was commission on the stamps that they sold. So her salary was very minimal. We lived in a big rock building. Half of it was the post office, and then it was divided off.

And the back half, my parents and six children lived in the back half of that building. It was one big room. It was our kitchen, our living room, our dining room, our bedroom.

It was just one big room, and it wasn't that big. And off in the corner was a tiny little bathroom with only a curtain for a door.

[5 : 50] So after a few years, my father left home. He left my mother, and he left his six children. I was too young to remember my father really living at home.

I have little snippets here and there that I remember, but not much. My father had no grounds for divorce at that time because divorce was very strict during the 40s, 50s, and 60s.

So he lived with another woman during that time. Many years passed before my mother finally granted my father a divorce.

In the 50s and 60s, there was no welfare. There was no food stamps, and there was no aid for dependent children. So my mother worked all the time to raise those children.

She had little resources, and my siblings and I have always wondered how in the world my mother ever did everything she did, how she got by.

[7 : 01] And I forgot to tell you, we didn't have a car. We rode the school bus every day to and from school.

Both my brothers, one of them being Caitlin and Ian's grandfather, worked at a dairy barn. They got off the school bus every afternoon at the dairy, and they worked until after dark.

They came home. They did their homework. They ate supper. They went to bed, and they got up, and they did the same thing the next morning. They drove an old, beat-up pickup truck on the back dirt roads that belonged.

The truck belonged to the farmer because neither one of them were old enough to have a driver's license. They brought home raw milk from the dairy. My mother strained the cow hair out of the milk, which many of you, if you've ever lived on a farm or had the opportunity to experience raw milk, it's pretty nasty.

And she would strain it. She made her own butter, and she made buttermilk from a hand churn. Like I said, my mother worked all the time. My mother was an excellent cook.

[8 : 20] We never, ever went hungry. She made homemade biscuits every day. Roger Pastore can tell you they were probably the best biscuits he ever ate.

We raised chickens. We had pigs. And we had a vegetable garden, summer and winter. And we canned everything that we grew, either in jars or we put it in the freezer.

We worked all summer, and we worked every summer. My mother was strict. She didn't tolerate disrespect.

You always said, yes, ma'am, and no, ma'am. You didn't slam the screen door on the house.

Because if you did, you found yourself opening and closing it about 100 times until you learned that you didn't slam the screen door.

So, when we did get in trouble, which was probably often, she sent us out the back door to a peach tree, and we had to get our own little switch and bring it in.

[9 : 24] Well, if you thought you were being cute, and you brought in a tiny little switch, you would regret it because my mother would go outside, and she would get a good-sized one, and you'd be wishing you brought in a bigger switch.

My mother loved each one of us deeply. She was an awesome mother. Every one of us had chores, from the oldest to the youngest. My mother worked all the time, and she taught us a great work ethic.

My mother did not raise any lazy children. We had a ringer washing machine, and some of you young people probably don't even know what that is.

But when they said wash day, it was wash day. It was usually an 8- to 10-hour day of washing those clothes, hanging them out. And there was nothing that was permanent press back then.

Most everything was starched, and it had to be ironed. Some of you remember that. I was probably 7 or 8 years old when I was ironing my own clothes because, like I said, we each had chores.

[10 : 35] Ruth Ann and I were in high school when we received a gift of an electric washing machine. We really were amazed at how quickly you could do laundry.

We never had a dryer, but we hung the clothes out on the line every day. And in Florida, it rains every five minutes in the summer. So you were constantly going out and getting clothes off the line and putting them back on the line and back and forth.

When I was about 5 or 6 years old, my father built a small house directly behind the rock building where we were living.

It was wood frame. It had no insulation. There were three tiny bedrooms and a small bathroom with a real door, which was a blessing.

Our kitchen remained in that rock building, and there was a breezeway that connected the kitchen to the little house.

[11 : 36] And a breezeway is a passageway that's maybe 8 foot wide, and it connected the two buildings, and it had windows on each side.

It was actually the coolest place in the house. We spent most of our time in that breezeway. In the summers, we shelled what felt like to be a million bushels of peas and beans every summer because they had to go in the freezer so that we would have food to eat over the winter.

My grandfather, my mother's father, lived with us many summers. He was in charge of heating up the cast iron pot outside with wood, and we put those jars in there and boiled them, and that's how we canned.

Now, my father-in-law, excuse me, my grandfather did not talk a lot. He was a very quiet man. Most of the time, he sat around rolling his own cigarettes with Prince Albert tobacco in the can, and he smoked continuously.

He suffered from emphysema, as you could imagine. He hardly ever talked to us kids. He really didn't have much to say to anyone. We had a telephone, believe it or not, and that phone could ring and ring and ring, and my grandfather would not even look at it, much less pick it up and answer it.

[13 : 04] He didn't even like to talk on the telephone. He always wore coveralls all the time, and my mother made him take a bath, even though he was not very happy about it.

My mother was an excellent seamstress, dressmaker, and quilter. She taught us girls to sew and to make our own clothes. I was making many of my own clothes probably by the time I was about 10 years old.

We didn't have a lot of money to go shopping with, so most everything we received, we made. My sisters and I all excelled in home economics in school.

We probably could have taught the class based on my mother's teaching. We all went to Kendrick Baptist Church, a small little Baptist church in the country. We went every Sunday, every Sunday night.

We went to GAs and RAs, and we went to prayer meeting on Wednesday night. We still didn't have a car. But my mother, bless her heart, she always managed to get us to church.

[14 : 14] She got us to GAs and RAs where we, you know, had a great time with all the other kids. We were all baptized in that same small church.

Each of us grew in our knowledge of God and his saving grace. I asked Jesus into my heart when I was very young, but I didn't make a public profession of faith until I was an adult.

We kids were unaware of the foundation that our mother was building. To help each of us learn to be good adults and good mothers and fathers in the future.

My mother read the Bible. She prayed for all of us kids her entire life. By the time I was 16, I'd only seen my father maybe once a month, maybe less.

He'd come back home occasionally when it was time to butcher a hog. Well, anybody that's been around butchering a hog, it's a long day.

[15 : 17] It's a lot of work. Well, my father went down to the little hog pen where the hogs were, and he would always shoot the hog in the head because usually it would instantly kill the hog.

Well, that day he shot the hog, but the hog didn't fall. So he waited for a couple of minutes, and he shot the hog again. Well, about that time, the first hog fell, and then the second one fell too.

So instead of having one to butcher and clean up and dress, we had two, and we had a lot of pork to eat that year. My mother never missed a high school event if she could help it.

My two sisters played on the high school basketball team, and my two brothers, they played, or at least one of my brothers played on the football team.

And we still didn't have a car, but my mother always got us where we needed to be. By the time Ruthann and I were in high school, our older sisters were married, and our two brothers were in the military.

[16 : 34] Vietnam was a raging war, and both our brothers served our country. One was in the Army. That would have been Caitlin and Ian's grandfather. And my other brother was in the Navy.

We all graduated high school, amazingly. Some of us went to college, and my two brothers actually earned a degree. They went back to school on the GI Bill, so they got degrees in different areas.

Two years before I graduated high school, my mother met a gentleman, and she remarried, and she moved to another state. She gave me options about finishing high school.

I had two years left. I could go with her to another state and go to a different school, or I could remain in Florida and go to my same school and live with my sister.

So that's what I chose to do. I lived with my sister my last two years of school. In my senior year, I only needed two credits to graduate, so I decided to go to school in the morning, and I worked in the afternoon.

[17 : 40] I had a job in high school. I worked for an orange grower. I worked in the office. A lady there taught me the old-fashioned double-entry bookkeeping.

She's a sweet lady, and she was ready to retire. And we also had a small lab there where we tested the fruit, the sugar contents of the oranges and grapefruits to see if they were ready to be harvested.

So I got to learn a tiny bit of chemistry, but as I worked in that office, every Friday all the workers were paid in cash, so I learned a lot about handling money and also learned a little bit of bookkeeping and office skills, which helped me in the future to get other jobs.

So if you fast-forward a few years, I was working at a bank, and the man that I worked for at the Orange Grove owner, his name was Mr. Elton Clemons.

He also owned and operated an engineering firm, Morehead Engineering. Well, he asked me out to lunch that day, and he offered me a job at his company as a payroll clerk.

[19 : 01] So two weeks later, I changed jobs from the bank to working as a payroll clerk in his engineering firm. A man came in one day. I was working the front desk, too, by the way.

A man came in asking for supplies that they would use out in the field, surveying. I didn't know what he was talking about. But I'm going to tell you a story here, and if you hadn't heard anything else, I want you to listen up.

Okay, so this man came in asking for something that I didn't know where it was or what it was. Well, in walks this really cute guy with a big smile on his face and said, Do you need some help?

Well, little did I know, this handsome guy with long hair was my future husband, Roger Pasture. So that's where we met. We started dating.

We fell in love. We got married, and the rest is history. We've been married 53 years. We were married in 1972.

[20 : 10] We moved to Wilmington, North Carolina, where Roger took a job at the nuclear power plant for what was Carolina Power and Light. Our son Drew was born three years later, and when Drew was about two years old, my mother's second husband left her with no means of support.

So she moved in with us. Drew had a living grandmother. Although my mother had 14 grandchildren scattered all across the United States, you would have thought that Drew was her only grandchild.

Roger and I both will admit she spoiled him rotten. She loved him so much. He was an expert in sports and still is today.

My mother loved baseball and football, and they watched every game that they could on TV. She taught him all the rules, so that's where he got his love of sports.

Was it easy having our mother live with us all that time? No. But my mother sacrificed so much for us children.

[21 : 26] When I was growing up, I couldn't have been more blessed than to have my mom with us. Roger's mother passed away when she was 46, very young.

And my mother became an instant mother to Roger. She told him that she loved him as much as if he were her own son. We both have no regrets for having my mom there.

And if you have an opportunity to take care of your mom, try to remember everything that she did for you. Maybe your mom wasn't the best mom in the world, but she's still your mom.

God blessed you to have that mother. Maybe as you get older and she gets older, you can come to terms with one another. But God gave you that mom for a reason and a purpose.

Well, my mom's health was not good. She smoked probably most of her life, and it took its toll on her health.

[22 : 39] She had peripheral artery disease, high blood pressure, and poor circulation in her legs. My mother went home to Jesus at the age of 76, the same age I am right now.

My mother never complained. Not one time that I ever remember her complaining because of all the things that she had to do. In Philippians 4, 12, and 13, it says, I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well-fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. That was my mom's motto. Strong lives build strong foundations, and my mother gave each of her children a strong foundation.

She prayed for each of us. She gave us biblical wisdom. Did we always listen? Unfortunately, no. Some of us children had troubles in our lives, some in our marriages, because God allows us free will, and we sinned.

[24 : 05] God tells us in the Bible, if we confess our sins, that he's faithful and just, and he forgives us, and he purifies us from all unrighteousness. We still suffer the consequences of our sin, and it requires us to confess and stop the sin and turn and go in a new direction.

In our daily Bible reading that we've been working on this year, The Disciple Jesus Loves, Mr. Weber spoke to my heart during these passages.

He said, For many years I struggled with the knowledge that my biological father was a troubled man. My attempts to ignore or deny him, in many ways, an effort to avoid admitting that I am of his same substance.

There has never been a son or a daughter, including my own, who hasn't struggled with that. We all pass down a legacy of sin and its curses to our children and our grandchildren.

Jesus allows us to escape the heritage of sin by offering adoption. As sons and daughters of God, we all need a Savior who meets us in our dysfunction and is strong enough to carry us out of it.

[25 : 28] That's the beauty of the God-man. He knows our suffering firsthand. He inserts himself into that, and he inserts himself into that no matter who your parents are.

I urge you today, if your mother is still living, to thank her for all the sacrifices and the love and the prayers that she gave you and to thank God that he loved you enough to get his own son to die on a cross to save you.

I'm very thankful to have many children in my lives. They're not my birth children, but I love them just as much, and I love all the grandchildren.

I've been so blessed by Caitlin and Ian and Charity's children and many other children that I've had the opportunity to be a part of their lives. Beth Moore once said, if you're feeling depressed and lonely, go find yourself a baby to love on.

I thank you today for listening to me and allowing me to tell my story, and if there's someone here today who needs to come up after this service and you need to talk with someone or you need a hug or you need prayer, we ask that you would come up.

[26 : 45] I thank you for the opportunity to be here today. Thank you.