**Mother’s Day – 2025**

**Pray**

**Luke 1:26-38 (2:1-19)**

**Happy Mother’s Day! Blessings on you today.**

**Since it is Mother’s ay, I decided to have a look at how the Bible deals with motherhood. Well, the Bible, being the Bible, gives us more information on some people and situations, and less on others.**

**Genesis 4:1 tells us, “Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.’ Vs. 2 says, “Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.”**

**We know what Eve did before she had her first two babies. In short, she believed the serpent over God and wanted, in effect, to become a god. And “her husband was with her”. So, there was the fall, and then she had two babies and, once they grew up, one killed the other. God deals with Cain and we don’t hear about Eve again until verse 25: “Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, ‘God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.’” A child is not replaceable is all I’ll say about that for now, but I will definitely come back to it in a bit.**

**From there we go to chapter 12 (we’re still in Genesis), to Abram and Sarai, who become Abraham and Sarah, and the story we all know, from ch. 11, v. 30, that Sarai was barren. And, just to bring the truth home, in case we didn’t get it, the second part of the verse says, “she had no children”. (Sarai was barren; she had no children. – Rub it in, right?) Right after this, God tells Abram that he will make him into a great nation. In ch. 17, God tells Abram, now Abraham, that Sarai, now Sarah, will have a son. Abraham falls facedown and laughs and says to himself, “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old?” (v.17). God assures him he will have a son with Sarah. – You get that all this is a Reader’s Digest version, or Cole’s Notes. – By chapter 18, Sarah still doesn’t have any children, and when God tells Abraham again that Sarah will have a baby, as Sarah overhears she laughs to herself (Remember, Sarah is 90 yrs old!). So, the Lord asks Abraham (vs 13), “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.” Vs 15 says, Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” But the Lord said, “Yes, you did laugh.”**

**So, ch. 21 tells us that Sarah has her baby Isaac the following year and, once Isaac is weaned, Sarah, in a fit of jealousy over Hagar her servant and her son Ishmael, Sarah has Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away because she doesn’t want Isaac to share with Ishmael the inheritance promised by God. Never mind that it was Sarah’s idea that Abraham have a child by Hagar because she, Sarah, was barren. So, Abraham has to “get rid of that slave woman and ‘her’ son”. Have you ever noticed how pronouns that denote ownership often change in the Bible?, like Hagar becomes “that” slave woman, not “my” slave woman; and Ishmael becomes ‘her’, Hagar’s, son, not Abraham’s son. This kind of thing started with Adam: the woman ‘you’ (God) put here… not ‘my wife’. But God doesn’t get side-tracked by our pettiness. For example, He goes to Hagar and ‘her’ son Ishmael when they are about to die of thirst and provides for them and not only says ‘don’t be afraid’; God adds, “I will make him into a great nation.”**

**So, that’s a very quick recap on the first two mothers in the Bible. And we’re still in the beginning and middle of Genesis. There are many other mothers in the Bible, many of whom were really good mothers, I’m sure; but I just wanted to give a brief look at these two. BTW, between Adam and Eve and Abraham and Sarah, there were hundreds of years.**

**Years later, in 1 Samuel 1, we meet Hannah, another woman who had no children. In vs. 9, we find Hannah pleading with God for a son, promising God she will dedicate this son to Him. Eli the priest accuses her of being drunk but, after Hannah explains her situation to him, Eli blesses her and says (vs. 17), “Go in peace and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him.” The following year, Samuel is born and Hannah remains true to her vow and brings him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh once he is weaned. We can’t know or imagine how difficult that would have been for her but we do know that Eli prayed that the Lord would give her children to ‘take the place’ of the one she gave to the Lord. The Lord did bless Hannah with three sons and two daughters and, I’m sure she loved them – but, they couldn’t take the place of the one she gave to the Lord.**

**Which brings me back to Luke. In chapter 2, Jesus has been born and there have been angels and shepherds who have visited and worshiped the Baby Jesus. Then vs 19 tells us, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” This young mother, who could have been as young as 12 or as “old” as 15-16, when she was visited by the angel Gabriel according to the custom of the day, is now pondering in her heart all that has happened. This is the same teenager who responded to Gabriel (vs 38), “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.**

 **Do you think in today’s teenager might’ve said something like, “Whoa! What are you saying? Don’t freak me out like that!” But her response is very ‘practical’. She asks the angel, (34) “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel responds, (35) “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” Then he tells her that her cousin Elizabeth is also pregnant.**

**I’m not sure how today’s teenager might answer that angel, but the teenager of over 2000 years ago said, (38) “I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her. – Hello? “The angel left her.” We could spend a lot of time discussing that response. Let’s just say Mary was obviously a girl of profound faith to be able to respond in the way she did. And I think that’s why we read in ch.2:19 “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” She knew big things were going to happen, she just didn’t know what, or how, or when.**

**We don’t read much about Mary after that. There’s the time when 12-yr-old Jesus stays behind in Jerusalem after the Feast of the Passover and it takes Mary and Joseph three days to find him. It was her first experience of ‘losing’ Jesus, and for three days. Hmm…More pondering? Then we come to the wedding feast at Cana when they run out of wine. Mary involves Jesus, and he doesn’t seem thrilled. But she just tells the servants (Jn 2:5), “Do whatever he tells you.” And, of course, what Jesus does is make the best wine ever.**

**In Mark 3:21 we hear about Mary, that she and Jesus’ brothers want to speak to Jesus about what he’s doing because they think “he is out of his mind”. Then, of course, there’s the scene at the cross in John 19:26, 27 when Jesus says to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple (John), “Here is your mother.” I can’t imagine what Mary went through watching her beaten and tortured son die on a cross. Nor does Scripture tell us how she reacted when she heard Jesus was resurrected. Ever wonder why? Maybe because, in the end, it wasn’t about Mary, but about Jesus. For us as Christians, it should always be about Jesus. As Mary pondered, so should we ponder about our decisions, and include Jesus in them, i.e., ask Him what we should do.**

**I can’t say that about myself. Not as a woman, and certainly not as a mother. The old saying, “If I had known then what I know now…” is so true for me. I’m not sure I did a lot of ‘pondering’. I went with what I knew; and, what I knew was what I grew up with.**

**Here’s the caution I give with every talk/sermon: I am NOT blaming; I am naming.**

**I grew up believing that you didn’t ‘handle’ a baby much. My mother firmly believed that if you picked up a baby every time it cried you were going to spoil it. Feed, burp, change, wash pretty much summed up what you were supposed to do with a baby. Separation anxiety wasn’t something that was known or talked about. Well, my kids know what it is because they all have it to one degree or another.**

**There are many, many things I would do differently now. You might say, “Well, you did the best you could.” Yes, but I have regrets. And I find it hard to believe it when people say they have no regrets, because, to me that means they believe they did everything right, and therefore didn’t have anything to learn. Well, maybe you didn’t have to, but I did. Unfortunately, a lot of it was too late, although Jesus can “undo” my mistakes: He can rule and over-rule, heal, restore and transform – but that’s my children’s work to do with Jesus.**

**So, what do I do with my regrets? I might ponder about them. Pondering, by the way, means to think about something carefully, especially before making a decision or reaching a conclusion. I won’t dwell on my regrets, because dwelling on something means I would think or talk about them for a long time. Not good, because there’s no resolution. I can’t change what is done. So, what I do with my regrets, when faced with them and I’ve pondered them? What I do is, I take them to Jesus and confess them and ask forgiveness. And, where and when possible, I do the same with my children, or, with anyone, really. What they do in return is their business.**

**Just as an aside, I would NOT have wanted to be a smothering mother (for some people mother equals smother), or a guilt tripping mother, or a hovering mother, or a helicopter mother. And there’s just not enough time to get into any of that!**

**A bit of background on my mother. I’ve already told you she was not a spoiler of babies. And, yet, I think she was a closet baby spoiler. She always said she loved babies.**

**Mom’s father died when she was fourteen. They’d lived in the country until then but the family had to move to Moncton to live with Mom’s oldest brother who was married and starting his own family. The family included my grandmother, my mother, and at least four other younger siblings, and possibly an older sister. When Mom got to school in Moncton, she was put back three grades because she had no English, and maybe her math wasn’t up to standard. You can imagine that that didn’t last too long. She was embarrassed, at the very least, to be put in a class of 11-yr-olds. So, she quit school and went to work as a housekeeper. There would be a number of these jobs, some better than others. With her meager earnings, after she paid whatever bills she had, like room and board and clothing, there was always a little bit left over, which she spent on her nephews (there were only boys in this family, ever). Of course, she was the favourite aunt, not only in that family but in her other siblings’ families.**

**In August, 1942 Mom and Dad were married. The following June, they had a baby boy. Then in June 1946, when Mom was 30 (show slide), they had twin girls. About a week after this photo was taken, my sister Bernice got sick and was taken to hospital. A few days later, my sister Dorice also got sick, and was also taken to hospital, and died. I can’t imagine what my mother went through. It all happened over a weekend, including the funeral, and, on Monday, Dad went back to work. There was no time to grieve; and, in case Mom didn’t understand that, when her doctor saw her crying, he actually said to her, “What are you crying about? You’ve got another one!”**

**I arrived a year and a half later. Among the many things I heard as a child was, “Oh, you’re the one who replaced the one who died.” Yeah! I didn’t like it. I was ‘me’, not a replacement for somebody else. And, instinctively, I knew it dishonoured my dead sister, too. Years later, Bernice told me how she had hated it when she heard someone refer to me as the one who replaced Dorice. She was surprised and hopefully a little consoled when I said I did, too.**

**There are so many stories I could tell you about my mother and me, especially when I was waiting to go to school. I was angry because I couldn’t go to school with the other kids, and I was bored. So, Mom gave me chores to do. – Wouldn’t you? By this time, Mom also had a two-year-old to contend with and, by Winter, she was pregnant with her second set of twins (boys this time), and she had terrible morning sickness, that possibly lasted all day. So, that school year, I helped with things where she could keep an eye on me, like laundry and, my favourite, making cakes. When I was around nine, I surprised Mom with a birthday cake.**

**Mom was a great mother. Not perfect. Very human, with human failings. For instance, she thought my sister and I would be protected from the child molester as long as she and Dad were in his house, too. We weren’t. She might have dwelled on that one when she found out, I don’t know. But, when the molester died when I was 13 or 14, I refused to go to his funeral. I didn’t care that he was a relative and “how it would look” if I didn’t go. It was the first time I sassed my mother. I said, “I’m glad the old (insert “B” word) is dead and I’m NOT going to his funeral. I don’t care what anybody says or thinks.” And, I didn’t go. It was years later before I forgave him. I came to understand that it was his shame, not mine. I determined that I didn’t want to be a ‘victim’ anymore, but someone who had been victimized. There’s a big difference. So, I forgave him so I could be free of him and freed from him.**

**Move forward a few years and I’m getting married. A French catholic girl getting married in an English protestant church. As you may gather, that caused a few “discussions”. Things were a bit different 59 years ago. But, in the end, it was accepted and my parents came. And, Mom came and helped when I had my kids, and on many other occasions. I know for certain that at least one of my kids loved it when Mémére came because that meant she was going to make bread and, especially, rolls, the 3-bump kind.**

**What I can also say about my mother is that we had a real relationship, which started with the foundation of my childhood. There was none of this, “My mother is my best friend” when I was a child or teenager. She was my mother. There’s no time to be your child’s friend when you’re parenting them. When I became an adult, then we became friends, too, because we could transition to that relationship.**

 **One last thing, and I have to bring my father into this one. I think the best gift I ever gave my parents, aside from three terrific grandchildren, was freedom from fear. During the years I was going to university when we lived in Montreal, I’d go to Mom & Dad’s for a break at the end of the school year. We had great visits. They always had lobster for me, and Mom would bake. Dad especially loved that. He said it was the only time she baked anymore. Then he laughed. Well, one evening, the conversation rolled around to church. I knew they still feared that I, and they, might go to hell because I had left the Catholic Church. I knew this was something they, at the very least, pondered about. That was the teaching, after all. I know for sure it was the Holy Spirit who guided me that evening when I asked Mom & Dad, “You believe that Jesus saves you, right?” And they said, “Yes.” Then I asked, “Does the Catholic Church still teach that, if you leave the Church, you’ll lose your salvation?” They said “Yes”. Then I asked, “So, who saves us…, Jesus, or the Church?” They didn’t have to ponder that one!**

**So simple, so clear, isn’t it? You have my permission to use if you ever have need of it.**

**Because, in the end, it’s all about Jesus, you see. We’re all human. Mary was very human. And Mary had faith in God. I believe it led her to ‘ponder things in her heart’. I think she might have been running things by God, her heavenly Father, for advice. Not a bad habit. It certainly could have saved me a lot of trouble over the years if I’d done it, I know that, now.**

**The best ‘gift’ I can give any mother or father, or any ‘human’ today, is to have faith in God and His Son, Jesus. Ponder in His presence. I promise you, He’ll never lead you astray.**

**To the moms here today, have a blessed Mother’s Day.**

**Let’s ‘ponder’ for a moment or two; and, if anyone has a question, comment, or something they’d like to share, please feel free to do so.**