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The Complete Love of God

Standalone Sermon | Mother's Day, May 8th, 2016

Thesis

God loves you as a mother loves her child.

Me

A man went to the store with his 3-year-old daughter in tow. Since he was just there to grab some essentials he opted to save some time by not pushing a cart around the store.

"That's not the way Mommy does it," his daughter informed him.

"I know, dear, but Daddy's way is OK, too," he replied.

Leaving the store it began to rain and without a cart, he carried the bag of groceries, his daughter, and the milk quickly to the car. Not wanting to set anything down on the wet ground, he set the jug of milk on top of the car, efficiently whisked open the car door with his now free hand, scooted the groceries in and set his daughter into the car seat in one swift motion. Then he hopped in himself.

"That's not the way Mommy does it," his daughter informed him again.

"Honey, there's more than one way to do things," he replied patiently. "Daddy's way is OK, too."

As they pulled out and headed down the street, a loud scraping sound was heard on the roof as the jug of milk slid the length of the rooftop, bounced off the trunk of the car and exploded on the ground.

By the time he bit his lip in frustration his daughter already opened her mouth "Daddy, I told you so."

We

There are differences, aren't there, in fathers and mothers. Take a look at a few of these pictures.

[Show pictures long enough for people to get a laugh]

Oh, they are so real it hurts.

We're going to explore this concept of differences here on Mother's Day 2016.

Transition

You know, when it comes to teaching on Mother's Day, it's often we talk about Mary the Mother of Jesus, Sarah the wife of Abraham, or Hannah the Mother of Samuel. But as I was spending time with the Lord about this message, He brought me in quite a different direction. Instead of looking at earthly examples of motherly love, what could we gain by looking at God's example of motherly love?

Now that sounds kind of weird. But don't get me wrong, God has revealed Himself through the lens of Father. There is actually a cult out there I ran into in Boston, who professes a fourth member of the Godhead they called the "mother god" That isn't what I'm getting at. What I'm talking about has its roots in Genesis 1:27.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

The inference is clear. Male AND female represent together the whole character of God. We don't often talk about God in these terms, but it is absolutely true. God is revealed as Father, but He embodies the best of both fathers and mothers.

For the most part, when you scraped your knee as a child, where did you go? Mom for comfort and healing. Likewise we go to God for comfort and healing.

When you were hungry, it's most likely you wanted Mom to make you a sandwich. Maybe if Dad were to offer you might say, "Nah, I'm not so hungry after all" You also go to God when you are hungering for an encouraging word for your soul.

On the other hand if you needed some money growing up, many of you probably went to Dad. Likewise, we go to the Father who knows our needs even before we ask (Matthew 6:8).

Throughout this message I will use such generalized anecdotes about fathers and mothers, men and women. Please don't take them too seriously, they are meant to be helpful, not absolute. Many fathers are doing the same things as moms and vice versa. But if you stay with me, by the end this message you will see the complete love of God—that He loves for you not only as a father loves his child, but as a mother loves her child.

Truth

Being Mother's Day today, how many of you men are making lunch for your wife or mother today? Go ahead and raise your hand.

I don't see a lot of hands. How many of you men are going to take your wife or mother out to eat?

Ah, a lot more. I won't ask for a show of who isn't doing either of those things. This illustrates the first point I'd like to make of how God loves us as a mother loves her child: **Provision vs Preparation.**

You see, men do not thrive on detail. Say "amen" When it comes to food for instance. A man would like to go out, kill something, and drag it home. It is satisfying. It is complete. "I have provided". The same goes with the paycheck. Men like to go work and bring home the proverbial bacon. But a woman does something much different. Instead of thriving in the simple provision of the food, women thrive on the complexity of *preparing it*. That's why so many of you men aren't cooking today... and maybe why some of you mothers still are cooking today!

Something about me you may not know is that I am obsessed with efficiency. The simpler, the faster, the better. So when it comes to food, there are times when I have opened the refrigerator and thought to myself: "I need a little protein, a little complex carbohydrates, vitamins, a few simple sugars... yadda yadda..." So I'll just grab a piece of multi-grain bread and eat it, some cold chicken from a leftover, swig some V8, and eat a cookie. There. Done.

But my bachelor days are over now. I'm married. And women prepare. My wife knows how to make the most mundane meal into an exciting entrée. I have come home at lunch to burritos as big as my head, stuffed with marinated chicken hot off the grill, bursting with fresh vegetables. I am more than blessed by my wife. I mean, until I got married I had never heard of turning on the oven, letting it heat up, and waiting ten minutes for leftover pizza to be magically restored its glory. Now it's like I live at a five-star restaurant. And it's not just the extravagance that gets me about my wife's cooking, it's the personalization. She knows what I love and she enjoys putting time and thought into preparing it.

Maybe you got money in the mail during college or at your wedding from your parents, but it was Mom who wrote the card that went with it, wasn't it? Maybe Dad told you not to forget your lunch on your way to school, but Mom snuck a treat in the bag for you to find when you got there. Maybe Dad got you one big gift you really needed for Christmas—like a tool set, laptop, or hunting jacket, but Mom got you that exact gift she noticed you desiring over the past months—along with some needed underwear. Fathers provide, but mothers *prepare*.

Do you realize this is true of God as well?

Peter said ...you are a chosen race... a people for his own possession... ([1 Peter 2:9](#)) Think

about that. You aren't just one of God's many humans. If you are in Christ, you have been chosen to be a part of His own possession. And more than just part of a chosen group of people, John and Paul explain that you are His child (John 1:12, Galatians 3:26) and that He knows you.

As David said,

O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Psalm 139:1-3

I believe God not only cares that you get a job, but that you get *that job*. I believe God not only wants you to serve Him, but serve Him by doing what you love. The complete love of God doesn't want you to bootstrap through life because it is more efficient, He wants you to smell the flowers, pick a few, put one in your hair, enjoy.

One of my favorite verses is Genesis 1:9:

And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up **potatoes** for food.

Wait what? This isn't the movie *The Martian*. God didn't just give us the basics to survive. No, Genesis 1:9 reads,

And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up ***every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good*** for food.

How over-the-top! God gave every single tree that is beautiful and can be eaten to Adam and Eve. It isn't about fiber, it's about fun! God loves you as a mother loves her child. So reach into the bottom of your paper bag lunch. There is more in there than a bologna sandwich.

The second way God loves us as a mother I call **Diplomacy vs Defense**.

I had a rough time in elementary and middle school. It wasn't the work, though, it was my attitude. My fifth grade teacher told me I would make an excellent lawyer as I attempted to convince him that I enjoyed writing sentences and therefore the punishment of writing "I will not talk in class" 500 times would be an exercise in futility. He didn't buy it.

Eventually my attitude landed me in a tough spot of almost failing seventh-grade English. That is of course, until my mother drove an hour and a half to meet with my teacher. I certainly put myself in that position, but do you think my Mother was going to accept that there was literally

no possible way of making up the grade to passing? Not a chance. My Mom fought for me to have an opportunity, and I actually took it and passed the class by the skin of my teeth.

But here is what I find interesting. How would a Dad have handled the situation? My guess is that it would have gone something like this:

"Well, I can't ask you to do anything special for Brian. I know you've got to set an example for the rest of the students."

Great diplomacy. That's a guy thing, a father thing. We are always looking at the big picture. But my Mom? I'm pretty sure it was more like,

"Well, I am going to ask you to make an exception for Brian. I don't care about any of the other kids. Give him some extra credit and trust me, I will make sure he works so hard it will outshine a Pulitzer Prize Winner."

God, too is more than a diplomat. On one hand Christ "is the propitiation... for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2 but on the other hand Jesus said He came to the defense of those who didn't deserve it—to you and I. Like Paul said, "...God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." And not only did He pay the penalty for our sins, but He sets us free. In His own words Jesus said He came to "...proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed..." (Luke 4:18), and later promises we "... will never perish, and no one will snatch [us] out of [his] hand. (John 10:28).

Romans 8:34 asks "Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us." (Romans 8:34).

Jesus is interceding for *you*. Yes you. He is in the conference room pleading your case and making a way.

If you're struggling to make it in life, don't think God is just there to "take care of that sin problem" Don't think you're just one of many and that God looks over you. No, Jesus lived, died, and lives again to fight for your freedom and give you an opportunity to succeed. That is how God loves you like a mother loves her child.

And finally, I'd like you to consider **Counsel vs Comfort**.

The lines between mother and father become a little blurry here, but I still think there is a differentiation worth noting. When my friend Kori was killed in an accident at 17 years old I remember just utter grief. I had been on the peripheral of the death of a grandfather, as well as a classmate suicide a few years before, but this was really personal. The finality of death

gripped my heart like a white-knuckled fist refusing to let go. And I wanted my Mom. I just wanted to be held and cry. There is something so primal about crying in your mother's arms as it harkens back to our helplessness as infant children. To contrast this, I remember talking with many male leaders in my life at this time and receiving great counsel in what it means to let God weave this tragedy together for His glory and consider where my own relationship is at with Jesus Christ. But that's not what I needed in the moment. Men are wired to take action and move forward. Women are wired to slow down and stay in the pain as long as it takes to truly move to the other side of it.

In John 14, 15, and 16 Jesus references how He will provide a new way of interacting with His people—the Holy Spirit. He said

“...I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” (John 16:7)

That word *helper* is the Greek word *paraklētōs* (PER – **AH** – CLAY – TOSS), or as we often say “paraclete” and it means “one who comes alongside”, “one who comforts”, and “one who counsels” I love that as we look into the heart of God we see the best of men and women, fathers and mothers perfectly united and exemplified. God is your counselor and your comforter, knowing what you need and when you need it.

Perhaps you are in a tough spot today but you aren't ready to move forward. Maybe a forgiveness issue, an addiction issue, a loss issue. Know that God might be okay with that. I can imagine some of you have said “I know God just wants me to get over it...” Well, yes He wants you to have a life beyond your pain, but it takes time. Specifically, it takes time to grieve. A good friend of mine in his twenties called me on the phone one day and said he had been in the shower earlier and all at once the weight of his parents divorce and deceit throughout his life hit him like a ton of bricks. He told me he wept and he grieved. He cried out to the Comforter and felt held. After that, the pain was gone and the weight lifted from his shoulders. And he was guided to his next steps in healing.

God isn't just a counselor who wants to give you advice, and tell you to suck it up and move on. He is the Patient Comforter who is well acquainted with pain (Isaiah 53:3, Hebrews 2:18, 4:15). Perhaps you need to confess, to grieve, to just be held, so that you truly can move on. God loves you as a mother loves her child.

Application

[was built into each truth point]

Response

Band, if you would please come up at this time. Church, He is not “either or”. He is “both and”. He is Provider and Preparer, Diplomat and Defender, Counselor and Comforter. He is our great God who we were fashioned after in the Garden. This Mother’s Day, let’s thank God for His complete love. We’re about to sing 10,000 Reasons, a song of praise to Him who is more than worthy in every season of life. Please stand and join me in responding to God’s Word together through song.

Benediction

Amen. I am so thankful for His complete love. Do not leave this sanctuary today if you have not received the full measure of God’s love. Do not miss your chance. He loves you, He cares for you, He wants a relationship with you. As we prepare to leave, please receive this benediction from Romans 8:

If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ... I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31-32, 38)

Amen.

Our Prayer Team is up front, Please drop your Connection Cards off in the baskets as you leave, Go with God.