This is a Mothers’ Day sermon. I’m preaching without apology and with appreciation for that time—honored institution without the benefit of which we wouldn’t be here!

Every Mother’s Day sermon I’ve run across starts with an explanation — this one’s no exception. As ministers, we’re reminded not to get too sentimental about motherhood because:

(a) for some, motherhood is an accident, and not always a welcome one;
(b) for some, biological motherhood isn’t possible;
(c) for some, mothers weren’t all that nice;
(d) for some, motherhood under the very best of circumstances is still less than a bed of roses and a primrose path.

If I can take some liberties with poet Wilhelm Busch’s words, I’d have to say: “(Mutter) werden ist nitch schwer; (Mutter) sein dagegen sehr.” (To become a (mother) is not so difficult; on the other hand, be-ing a (mother) is very much so!)

So, with all those qualifications, why bother with Mothers’ Day at all? I’ll tell you why — because for all its stumbling blocks, pitfalls and broken dreams, for all the soiled diapers, soiled wallpaper and spoiled plans, we’re talking about a beautiful ideal, a natural part of God’s creative plan to bring love and caring to light. Motherhood is a constant demand for the gift of love and caring.

In today’s world, we encounter all sorts of things that undermine God-given roles for men and women. We strip the power of grace and nurturing from moms, and say that strong women are the ones who…are like men in their careers and lifestyle choices. What? That’s like saying my favorite cat is the one that acts like a dog. It’s dumb, and it’s not the way God designed things.

I have a very conservative view of this, I know. I just think that there’s a lot of power in being a mom – even if your mom drives you up the wall. As a kid, I remember thinking my mom was irrational about many things. I am a grown up, and now I know for sure that she wasn’t rational…but, I’m also realizing that it’s not her job! My mom told me that mothers knew everything, and I knew it wasn’t true. She also told me that she loved me, and I knew that it was true. There is so much power in knowing that when I got knocked over at school, with friends, or by life in general…the cushion of grace that my mom gave me…was just what I needed to get back up again.

I can say confidently that I learned a lot from my mom. Some of those things are good, and some…are not. I was taught right from wrong, and disciplined when I disobeyed. I hate the taste of soap – I refuse to eat it even today! My parents took their job seriously – following Scripture to “teach the commands God has given to your children.”

Even if the Bible doesn’t command parents to do anything in a text like 1 John…I have learned that we are to follow it through anyway…what I do, my kids will do. There’s a commercial on TV right now that shows a mom taking a break from working with her daughter on her math. She goes outside and tries to light her cigarette…and, her son comes along and lights it for her, sits down next to her, and they have a smoke together. The mom is visibly bothered by her son’s habit…and, realizes that she taught him simply by her actions.
I’d like to think that all moms take a good look at what they do, and realize that they are sooo powerful in shaping their children…that they do two things: take personal responsibility for teaching your kids about Jesus Christ – opening the Scriptures to them. And, secondly, living what you teach. Some people send their kids to Confirmation classes…but, undermine everything taught there by what goes on at home. Whereas, your obedience to God’s Word is the strongest teaching tool that exists.

See, even God’s Word isn’t just a bunch of words. The Word tells us what God has DONE, and what He DOES out of His divine Grace, Mercy, and Love. The Word tells us of a God whose greatest action isn’t to speak…but, to be the Words He spoke. Jesus Christ is the Light of the World. Jesus Christ’s blood is the Covenant of grace God made with sinners. Jesus Christ – sent, is how God showed His love to the fullest – laying down His life...

And, we are connected to this powerful demonstration of love by our faith – believing that God loves with an everlasting love…and loving others as He first loved us.

I’m suggesting that the most powerful way a mom can show love…is by teaming up with dad…to teach their children. I do look back and wonder sometimes…why didn’t my mom tell me this…or, why didn’t dad teach me THAT? I had some e-mail exchange with my pastor from my home church in St. Paul…and, I’ve heard him say several times how his greatest error in the time he was a pastor…was how little he was at home with his family. He didn’t make time to teach them…but…he was taking the time now…to teach me. Don’t let the days you have to love and teach your children pass you by…God has given you the capacity to do it. Obey His commands, moms…dads…parents.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the loving God, who was born of the promise to a virgin named Mary.

I believe in the love Mary gave her son, that caused her to follow him in his ministry and stand by his cross as he died.

I believe in the love of all mothers, and its importance in the lives of the children, they bear. It is stronger than steel, softer than down, and more resilient than a green sapling on the hillside. It closes wounds, melts disappointments, and enables the weakest child to stand tall and straight in the fields of adversity.

I believe that this love, even at its best, is only a shadow of the love of God, a dark reflection of all that we can expect of him, both in this life and the next.

And I believe that one of the most beautiful sights in the world is a mother who lets this greater love flow through her to her child, blessing the world with the tenderness of her gracious touch and the tears of her joy.

- John Killinger

In the name of Jesus, Amen.