

Word 3

John 19:25-27

²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "**Dear woman, here is your son,**" ²⁷and to the disciple, "**Here is your mother.**" From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (NIV)

DRAMA

Narrator: As Jesus hangs on the cross, in the midst of the pain, you can still see his concern for others. He often looks longingly at his mother, and followers of his who pass by the cross. Finally, one of the 12 disciples, John, comes to the sad scene as well. He moves over to Mary and tries to console her.

John: Mary, this is just horrible. It pains me to see my master suffering this way.

Mary 2: It pains me too, John. Remember, I'm his mother. But you know what? From the cross I can see him still caring about others around him. You should have heard what he said to the thief on the cross with him.

Mary 1: I could see disappointment, and even love he has even for the religious leaders who scorn him and reject him.

John: Amazing! In the midst of his own suffering. He is concerned about others. What was that?

Narrator: John 19:25-27 ²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "**Dear woman, here is your son,**" ²⁷**and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."** From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (NIV)

Mary 1: He said, "**Dear Woman, here is your son. Son, here is your mother.**" He's weak. The words are coming more difficultly. Yet I think he was asking you, John, to take care of Mary.

John: (With difficulty, In a whisper)I can do no less for my Lord.

John 19:25-27 ²⁵Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "**Dear woman, here is your son,**" ²⁷and to the disciple, "**Here is your mother.**" From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (NIV)

INTRO - When I was pastor in St. Louis there was a pastor at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church a couple of miles down the road who was known to be doing an especially good job in an inner city parish, like I was. But then this effective pastor took a call to Texas. I asked him why and he said, 'My mom is not doing well and needs someone to take care of her. I'll be near her and can care for her down there.' This man's mother, his family, was a responsibility he could not ignore. He accepted that responsibility and moved to a new church.

This Lent, as we listen to the last words of Jesus from the cross, we are talking about responsibilities we have as Christians, or crosses we have in following Jesus. Tonight we consider 'The Cross of Family.'

I. Please consider Jesus on the cross.

A. He is in the midst of extreme physical suffering.

1. This is now the third word from the cross, so Jesus' loss of blood and his thirst have gotten worse.
2. Earlier in the garden of Gethsemane all the disciples have run away from their friend and Lord in fear.
3. The one disciple we know followed Jesus, Peter, has denied he even knew Jesus.

B. Amazingly, in the midst of Jesus' suffering and rejection He is concerned about . . . about others.

1. One of those who seems never to have left Jesus, though there were times she was confused, is His mother Mary. Mary and 3 other women are at the foot of the cross as Jesus is dying.
2. John, Jesus' closest disciple, even though he ran away in the Garden of Gethsemane, is now at the cross too.
3. We have not heard about Jesus' father since Jesus was 12, so in all likelihood, Joseph is dead, and there is no one to take care of Jesus' mother in her older age.
4. Even though He is dying, Jesus is concerned for his mother, and from the cross makes arrangements for her care. ²⁶**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,"** ²⁷**and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.**

II. One of the marks of God's people when they live as God calls them to live is that they care for one another in their families.

A. This responsibility is found throughout Scripture.

1. In Genesis 4, Cain rudely challenges God when asked about his brother Abel, ‘**Am I my brother’s keeper.**’ Cain thinks the answer is no, but God’s answer is ‘Yes, we are to care for family.’
 2. In 1 Timothy 5 Paul is describing the responsibility of the church to care for the needy, especially orphans and widows. But, to those who don’t care for their own family members, Paul says, **8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**
 3. It is obvious that God puts us in families and that part of His plan for His children, and that families care for one another.
- B. But, what do you do when this becomes difficult?
1. It was not easy for that St. Louis pastor to leave St. Louis and go to Texas.
 2. Sometimes a family member may have an illness.
 3. Or, what of our family member who may end up in jail? Or does not attend worship? Or does not want anything to do with us? Or . . . you fill in the blank.

III. We have God’s example and GIFT of sacrificial love.

- A. When we rebelled against God, he did not forsake us.
1. He continued to love us and call us.
 2. God sent Jesus to become a human, to become our brother, and to suffer and die in caring for us, so that if and when we turn in sorrow for our rebellion and sin and trust in God’s love in Jesus, we might have an eternal home with him in heaven.
 3. God has not abandoned us but treated us with sacrificial love and mercy.
- B. Most of us, even from somewhat troubled families, have found love from someone in our families.
1. We are blessed by the love of others, even when we don’t deserve it.
 2. In loving family members we are often returning only part of what we have received.
- C. Yes there are times that what family members seem to need is more than we seem to have in time or resources, or even love.
1. But, our Father is always there to help. Jesus calls us to ‘**love one another as He has loved us.**’ God will help us.
 2. And God has put us into a bigger family, the church. You see, that is what Jesus is doing. When our Lord himself, in His earthly life, will no longer be around to care for His mother, He turns to a member of the Christian family.
 3. When the needs of family call, but we don’t seem to have the resources, we can still give the greatest gift, the love of God found in our love for one another.

CONCLUSION - I want to end this serious discussion about the cross of family on a somewhat lighter note.

An older woman went to the funeral director. "I'd like to pre_arrange my funeral," she said. "We can do that," the director answered. "I'd like to be cremated," she said. "No problem," was the reply. "I'd like my ashes spread around the entrance of Wal_Mart." "OK," said the surprised funeral director. "But may I ask why?" "That way I know that my children will finally come to visit me."

One of the responsibilities God has given His children called to His family, is to care for one another in families. What can sometimes be very joyful can also be very difficult. But, God has adopted us into His family through the sacrificial life and death of His Son. Can we do any less?