

5/9/2010

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you set the solitary in families. We commend to your care all the homes where your people live. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, moderation, patience, and godliness. Knit together in enduring affection those who have become one in marriage. Let children and parents have full respect for one another; and light the fire of love in your family the church, that we may show love for one another as you have loved us. Finally, Lord, as we give you thanks for your Son, we thank you today also for our mothers. We pray through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord. Amen.

**THE FIRST LESSON** Acts 16:9-15 (God's victory is realized in Philippi.)

9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. 11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. 13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. **14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.** 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** Revelation 21:9-14, 21-27

(God's victory is celebrated in the heavenly realms at the end of the age.)

9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. 14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. . .

21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. 25 On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. 26 The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. 27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** John 16:23-33

(Jesus reminds His followers that He has overcome the world.)

23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.

Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. 25 "Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

29 Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God." 31 "You believe at last!" Jesus answered. 32 "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. 33 "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

## THE SERMON      “Sharing Faith through Actions of Love”

Acts 16

Proverbs 31:30-31    **30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.** 31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

**Acts 16:14-15    14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.**

INTRO - I'm not sure I remember just one day, but I do remember a number of interactions with my parents that went like this. “Joni, (that’s what I was called.) I thought you said you were going to mow the lawn.” “Yup” I’d reply. “Well, it still isn’t mowed,” my mom would point out. “I’ll get to it later,” I’d promise. Somewhere along the line in multiple such conversations, she would finally say, “No, not later. Now. Don’t just say it, Do it!” Christian faith is like that. It is not just believed or spoken. It is lived and done.

I. This is Mother’s Day. It is a time to honor mothers. But, it is also a time to look at how God would have wives and mothers to live. God would say about Christian faith to mothers, and in fact to all Christians, “Don’t just say it, Do it!”

A. Did you hear / Have you heard the words about a believing wife and mother in Proverbs 31, (which we used in our call to worship [in late service])?

1. **30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.**

2. If you read the rest of Proverbs you will see that this faith of Proverbs 31 is shown in actions of faithfulness, actions of commitment, and actions of love.

3. Being a follower of God is not just saying it, it is doing it.

B. Did you see the example of Lydia in our first Bible reading today? Beginning with verse 14 we hear, **14 One of those listening [to Paul] was a woman named Lydia, a**

**dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.**

1. Paul and Silas preached and, according to verse 14, Lydia's heart was opened. Actually, according to this verse, the Lord opened her heart, not Lydia. That is part of the mystery of God's working in our lives.

A. But, with this opened heart we are told Lydia *responded* to Paul's message.

B. Lydia and her whole household were *baptized*. Her family, her servants, the adults and children, the whole household.

C. She *invited* Paul and Silas to stay at her house. In fact, we are told she *persuaded* them.

2. Lydia explained her actions this way. **"If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house."**

C. One of the best ways to learn is not just to understand something, but to see it done. There was an old commercial, 30 years ago. A dad tells his son not to smoke, but then the son sees dad smoke. What do you think the son did? He picked up an old butt and put it in his mouth. We teach by what we *do*.

1. Lydia shared her faith by her actions; by being baptized, by hospitality, by speaking her faith.

2. When our moms have the greatest impact on the lives of their children, (and dads too), it is not because they tell their children how they should believe and live. When moms have the greatest impact on the lives of their children, it is because they share their faith in lives of godly love.

3. God wants such lives of faithfulness from all His children.

II. Recently there was a high profile crime investigation in Florida that made the national news. A woman was accused and arrested for killing her child. The authorities couldn't find the body. The mother protested she did not do it and loved her daughter. I actually believe she did love her daughter, but she may have also committed the crime.

I point to this extreme so I don't have to point to the sometimes more embarrassing examples of smaller examples where moms and the rest of us children of God don't always live they way we talk or believe.

A. Somehow this behavior has become worse in our day and our period in history.

1. I am told counselors call this "compartmentalization." My faith life is over in this area time of my life and my other life is in this time of my life. It doesn't matter if they don't match.

2. In God's sight, compartmentalization is another name for rationalization and sin.

3. God's children do not intentionally talk about faith and love in one part of their life, and live differently, in another part of their lives.

4. However, there are times we try to live our faith, and still fail. By the way that is sin too, and a bad example as well.

B. What's worse, as parents our children learn from our actions.

1. If our kids or grand kids see us saying one thing and doing another, they think it is ok.
  2. No wonder people today think Christians don't always mean what they say.
- C. Because of our sin, and failure to always do what we say, one of the best things Christian mothers, Christian fathers, and Christians can do is admit our sin. It points, not to ourselves, but to the one we trust to forgive us.

III. Now, on this Mothers' day, I want you to know we are not just talking about good moms. This is a Christian Church. We are talking about being good Christians mothers.

I think you may have heard the joke about Sunday School. The teacher asked a question, "Class, what is a small, gray animal, that climbs trees and has a bushy tail." One boy raised his hand and said, "It sounds like a squirrel, but this is Sunday School, so the answer must be Jesus."

The best advice I can give about being a good Christian mother, about being a good Christian, is look to the example of God. Look at Jesus, not just because its church, but its true.

A. Lydia's heart was opened and she responded. She was baptized. She invited Paul and Silas to her home. She lived her faith.

1. What did Paul preach about?
2. Paul preached about God who says he loves us, and gave up that which He loved most, His son. Paul preached about God who is holy, but whose son, Jesus, died so we can be holy. Paul preached about Jesus who rose and is stronger than any trial we face today, stronger than trouble, stronger than sin, stronger than death.

B. Do you want to be a good mother, a good father, a good Christian example? Look at Jesus, and as God's love opens your heart, you will respond in actions that show your faith and love.

1. If you are not, be baptized.
2. Be willing to confess your sins, so your failures point to Jesus' forgiveness.
3. Be willing to work to change your life, because God changes you with His love.
4. That is a life that doesn't just say they are a Christian, they do it.

CONCLUSION - Susan Lang, a writer, wrote, 'Women who never have children enjoy the equivalent of an extra three months a year in leisure time.'. Another way to say this is that moms show their faith in actions of love. Why would they do this. Because they love us. Why would they do this? Jesus gave His life for us, and he opens our heart to give our lives for others.

This week we are remembering Kathy's mom, who passed away a year ago yesterday. She never had much, and watched, not just her dollars or dimes, but her pennies. Yet, I remember two years that she sent a big box of gifts to her two grandsons, one for each day of Advent. For someone who watched her pennies, it seemed extravagant. But, she knew Jesus love and wanted to share the joy of that love with her grandson.

Mothers, and Christians, show their faith in actions of love, because that is what Jesus did for us.

**THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Proverbs 31:10-25-31**

Lay Minister: We begin our worship giving God praise, seeking His blessings and guidance.

**People: We begin our worship on Mother's Day, thankful for our heavenly Father, and our earthly mothers.**

Lay Minister: Remember what God tells us about faithful wives and mothers.

**People: 10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.**

Lay Minister: 25 She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

**People: 26 She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.**

Lay Minister: 27 She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

**People: 28 Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:**

Lay Minister: 29 "Many women do noble things,

**People: but you surpass them all."**

Lay Minister: 30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

**People: 31 Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.**

Lay Minister: We begin our worship on Mother's Day, thankful for our heavenly Father, and our earthly mothers.

**People: We begin in the name of God the Father, and in the name of God the Son, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**