

Grace Tidings



A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church

May - June 2024

Mother's Day - A Time to Reflect

There is something wonderful about the relationship of a mother and her child and the love, honor, bond, and respect between them. While the celebration of Mother's Day is a traditional holiday to honor our mothers, if you think about it, there are several circumstances to consider about the women in our lives and how each woman is uniquely special and how the Scriptures magnify her special place in our hearts. Here are just a few:

FOR BIRTH MOTHERS

Paul, in reflecting on the Genesis account of creation, remarks how 'woman came from man' (Eve from Adam's rib), but for the rest of history 'man comes from woman.' "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord; for as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God" (1 Corinthians 11:11-12 KJV). God places enormous dignity and honor on the role of women who become mothers and physically give birth to the next generation!

FOR ADOPTIVE MOTHERS

Scripture also presents us with a wonderful theology of *adoption*. Indeed, it is one of the foundational ways we should understand our relationship with God: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15). There is also special attention given to becoming an adoptive parent, such as the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh as heirs by Jacob: "And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine." (Genesis 48:5).

Most distinctly, Stephen, referring to Exodus 2, gives high praise to Pharaoh's daughter, who adopted Moses and brought him up as her own son: "And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel" (Acts 7:21-23). The relationship between a mother and her adopted child is a precious gift of God and mirrors our adoption as children of God and joint heirs with Christ.

(Continued on Page 2)



AVALON GRACE CHURCH

3801 GUILFORD ROAD

NAPLES, FLORIDA 34112

(239) 774-4214

avalongracechurchofnaples@gmail.com

www.avalongracechurch.com

Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.

Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims

Kathleen Smith, Editor

All Are Welcome!

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM

(Sunday Messages available on website:

www.avalongracechurch.com)

Children's Sunday School 10:45 AM

**"And to make all men see
what is the fellowship of the mystery,
which from the beginning of the world
hath been hid in God, who created
all things by Jesus Christ: . . ."**

- Ephesians 3:9

Mother's Day - A Time to Reflect

(Continued from Page 1)



FOR GRANDMOTHERS

Mother's Day is also a special time to celebrate those who are multi-generational mothers. There is often a special bond and spiritual relationship that is formed between a grandmother and her grandchildren. Paul writes about this: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." (2 Timothy 1:5). Please also see (Titus 1:1-5). And the Psalmist declares, "One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts" (Psalms 145:4). Grandmothers and Great-Grandmothers are the matriarchs of the family and blessed are the children and grandchildren who delight in their love, encouragement, joy, and wisdom.

FOR MOTHERS-IN-LAW

Mother's Day is also a special time for many to honor the women who become a mother through the marriage bond. Though jokes and eye-rolls about "in-laws" abound, Scripture attributes importance to these unique inter-family relationships forged by marriage.

Peter's mother-in-law is identified specifically in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as a specific recipient of a miraculous healing by Jesus (see Matthew 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38). Moreover, Jesus identifies the importance of the "in-law" relationship when he describes how his ministry will at times be a divisive force within families (Luke 12:53).

The story of Naomi and Ruth is the most famous and touching story of the mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relationship. Though often read at weddings and applied to *married couples*, the famous lines—"Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16)—are actually spoken by *Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi*. The rest of the narrative plays out the depths of their loving bond and bestows tremendous dignity of the role of mother-in-law.

FOR BEREAVED MOTHERS

There can be no greater pain on earth than the death of one's child. All death is an encroachment on God's original plan, but the breaking of the pattern that a child dies *before* his/her parent is particularly tragic and unnatural. For these mothers in particular, "Mother's Day" is a garment that fits; somewhat like sackcloth (sackcloth and ashes were indications of intense grief in the Bible).

Scripture describes a variety of women who mourn the death of their child. The first mother, Eve, lost her son Abel in the most

terrible of circumstances. Bathsheba's first child by David died after a few short days of life. Naomi endured the death of both her sons, leaving her childless and widowed. The story of these women is the story of many women all over the world.

Perhaps the most poignant picture of the bereaved mother is that of Mary, the mother of Jesus. From the time of his birth, God informed Mary that because of this child, "a sword will pierce through your own soul also" (Luke 2:35). And who can forget the tragic fulfillment of this prediction, when Mary witnesses her own son's death (John 19:25). But even in the midst of that sorrow we have the tender love of Jesus himself, as he commits the care of his own mother to his beloved friend, John (John 19:27).

FOR WIVES STRUGGLING TO HAVE CHILDREN

The celebration of Mother's Day can be, for women who struggle with infertility, an intensely difficult day. They desire to be a mother. It may be the foremost ache of their hearts. They cannot help but wonder why abortion is glorified and accepted like having a tooth pulled, when all they want to do is bring a new life into this world safely, lovingly, with dignity, joy, and honor.

FOR YOU AND ME

Mother's Day, when viewed with a biblical lens, is a time of great joy, sensitivity, understanding, and blessing not only for those who seem to fit the Hallmark pattern, but also the innumerable others who do not—for they all have a place in *God's pattern and purpose*.

Let us not forget Paul's teaching about how the church should honor *all women* regardless of their particular life stage: "*encourage older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity*" (1 Timothy 5:2). Here Paul describes motherhood figuratively as a way of seeing how all Christians relate *as a family* to one another. All women in the church, as they marry, give birth, age and mature, go from being mothers to spiritual "sisters" to spiritual "mothers and aunts" to spiritual "grandmothers." It's a glorious thing!

In that spirit, may we see Mother's Day as a blessing for each of our families, celebrate the day with joy and thanksgiving with the entire body of Christ here at Avalon Grace Church! We thank God for all the women in our lives!

Happy Mother's Day, (and Father's Day too!)

Pastor Phil

Welcome New Members

On Sunday, March 3, 2024 Pastor Phil welcomed Victor and Barbara Ramirez as new members of Avalon Grace Church and presented them with Certificates of Membership documenting this special occasion.



Barbara, Pastor Phil, and Victor Ramirez



Pastor Art & Judy Sims, and
Barbara Ramirez

Victor and Barb originally immigrants from Cuba, became American citizens and settled in Chicago, Illinois in the mid 1970's. They moved to Naples, Florida in 2014 to escape the winter cold and to be closer to family, particularly their parents and grandchildren.

After searching several years for a church, they first visited Avalon Grace Church on September 19, 2021 and immediately knew they found the church they had been praying for! Praise the Lord! Welcome!

National Day of Prayer - May 2, 2024

The National Day of Prayer is an annual day of observance designated by the United States Congress and held on the first Thursday of May, when people are asked "to turn to God in prayer and meditation". The president is required by law to sign a proclamation each year, encouraging all Americans to pray on this day.



The theme of this year's National Day of Prayer is 'Lift Up the WORD, Light Up the World':

"For thou art my lamp, O LORD: And the LORD will lighten my darkness. For by thee I have run through a troop: By my God have I leaped over a wall. As for God, his way is perfect; The word of the LORD is tried: He is a buckler to all them that trust in him." - 2 Samuel 22: 29-31 KJV

As a Nation, presidents and government officials have called for national days of prayer or thanks intermittently since before the country's existence.

- July 20, 1775 – The Continental Congress issued a proclamation recommending "a day of public humiliation, fasting, and prayer" be observed.
- In 1795 – George Washington proclaimed a day of public thanksgiving and prayer.
- May 9, 1798 – John Adams declared this day as "a day of solemn humility, fasting, and prayer."
- March 1863 – On March 3, Abraham Lincoln signed a Congressional resolution, during the Civil War, which called for April 30, 1863, as a day of fasting and prayer.

For more information on National Day of Prayer visit the website www.nationaldayofprayer.org

Memorial Day - Celebrate - Remember - Honor

In Flanders' Fields, was written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, M.D. while serving on the Flanders front line in the Spring of 1915. Its inspiration is thus explained by Sergeant Charles E Bisset, of the 19th Battalion, 1st Brigade, Canadian Infantry:



"On the Flanders front in the early Spring of 1915, when the war had settled down to trench fighting, two of the most noticeable features of the field were, first, the luxuriant growth of red poppies appearing among the graves of the fallen soldiers, and second, that only one species of bird the larks remained on the field during the fighting. As soon as the cannonading ceased, they would rise in the air, singing."

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead.
Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.



"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for His friends." John 15:13(KJV)

Quotes for the Wise & Young at Heart

"Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall; a mother's secret hope outlives them all."
- Oliver Wendell Holmes

"O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave/
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?" - Francis Scott Key's "The Star Spangled Banner"

"A mother is the truest friend we have, when trials heavy and sudden fall upon us; when adversity takes the place of prosperity; when friends desert us; when trouble thickens around us, still will she cling to us, and endeavor by her kind precepts and counsels to dissipate the clouds of darkness, and cause peace to return to our hearts." - Washington Irving

"Our flag does not fly because the wind moves it. It flies with the last breath of each soldier who died protecting it." - Unknown

"A little girl giggles when she is denied an ice-cream by her mother. She knows daddy will get her some later." - Unknown

"It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather we should thank God such men lived."
- George S. Patton

"For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory."
- I Thessalonians 2: 11-12

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
- Proverbs 22:6



THE PERFECT FATHER – PSALM 27

By: Xochitl Dixon, Our Daily Bread Ministries

“When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.” - Psalm 27:10

Standing in the crowded store aisle, I struggled to find the perfect Father’s Day card. Although we had reconciled after years of a strained connection, I had never felt close to my dad.

The woman next to me groaned and shoved the card she’d been reading back into the display. “Why can’t they make cards for people who don’t have good relationships with their fathers, but are trying to do the right thing?”

She stormed off before I could respond, so I prayed for her. Thanking God for affirming only He could be a perfect Father, I asked Him to strengthen my relationship with my dad.

I long for deeper intimacy with my heavenly Father too. I want David’s confidence in God’s constant presence, power, and protection:

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that

will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.” – Psalm 27: 1-6

When David cried out for help, he expected God’s answers (vv. 7–9). Though earthly parents could reject, abandon, or neglect their children, David declared God’s unconditional acceptance (v. 10). He lived with assurance in the Lord’s goodness (vv. 11–13). Like most of us, David sometimes struggled, but the Holy Spirit helped him persevere in trust and dependence on the Lord (v. 14).

We will encounter difficult relationships on this side of eternity. But even when people fall short, fail us, or hurt us, we’re still completely loved and protected by the only Perfect Father.

Lord, thank You for being a Father we can always count on.

God—the Perfect Father—will never let us down, leave us, or stop loving us.



2-1
© 2013 Ed Keane, Inc.
Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com
By artist JEFF KEANE

“Daddy doesn’t have to go to the gym as long as he has us.”

BE COURAGEOUS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. — DEUTERONOMY 31:6 KJV

Coloring for Jesus

Honor your father and your mother,
so that you may live long in the land
the Lord your God is giving you.

Exodus 20:12



Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) - Ephesians 6:1-2 KJV

