

A MOTHER'S Love



May 10, 2020

Introduction and Welcome

Call to Worship:

Today is the day we remember the mothers or mother-figures in our lives. We honor those who have mothered us, who have loved us unconditionally, who guided us and did their best to teach us about life and the possibilities of who we are as God's children. Let us worship our God who gave us such wonderful gifts!

Reading the Word: 1 John 4:7-12, 19

Message: "A Mother's Love" Rev. Deb Hanson

Prayer:

Loving God, we are thankful for those women, and men, who have entered our lives to love us and teach us about your love because of the ways they love us. We know that those who have mothered us weren't perfect, but we also know that you loved us through them, and in them your love was perfected. We understand the love you have for us because of those who cared for us, nurtured us, and helped us to grow up. We are thankful for our biological mothers, grandmothers, aunts, surrogate mothers, adoptive mothers, teachers, scout leaders, mentors, counselors, friends, and all who have brought us closer to you. Thank you for giving them to us. Thank you for your unconditional love. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Blessing:



SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

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Reading the Word: 1 John 4:7-12, 19

God Is Love. Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Message: "A Mother's Love"

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

"No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God live in us, and his love is perfected in us. We love because God first loved us." Verses 12 & 19 (1 John 4:7-12, 19 NRSV)

This Sunday is Mother's Day, and I have chosen the scripture from 1 John, chapter 4 to help us think about God's love and how it can be reflected in a mother's love. I realize that not all of us have had a great experience with our mothers, so I invite us to think about the person who was a mother figure in our lives.

The list can be long: biological mother, grandmother, aunt, sister, Sunday school teacher, counselor, coach, neighbor, family friend, a single father who has been both father and mother, pastor, or anyone who has nurtured, supported, encouraged, and most of all, loved us. When I speak of "mother," I hope you will bring to mind whoever was the mother figure in your life.

The scripture from 1 John focuses on God's love in Christ Jesus. Often the way we begin to understand God's love in our lives is through the lives of the person or persons who mothered us (fathers will have their day in June!). These verses in 1 John remind us that God's love was embodied in Jesus who taught us about compassion, kindness, putting aside prejudices, reaching out to even those who were considered untouchable, loving those who are the unlovable.

Maybe that's what mothers do, too. When we think of the variety of personalities of the children in one family, we must realize that mothers often have to adjust their parenting to fit the situation and the temperament of the child. I know my mother had to do that with the four of us, yet she constantly told us that she loved us for who we are, even if we did things that she didn't like.

That's how God works, too. We obviously aren't perfect, and God loves us anyway. It doesn't mean that we should continue to do things that are sinful or destructive to ourselves or others, but God won't abandon us when we have strayed, and mothers who love us do the same. Think of the children who have run away from home and how the mothers agonize over where they are and whether they are all right, longing for their safe return.

We are God's beloved children. We are in relationship with God, and therefore we are together as the family of God. In order for any relationship to thrive, there needs to be love, acceptance, forgiveness, and strengthening that relationship.

When we love each other and others, God's love in Jesus is made visible in us, and God can work through us to touch other lives. The church has become a place where that can be learned, practiced, and grow. As we practice living in Jesus' teachings and example, we as a congregation send each other forth to share that love with others. That is not an easy task, especially when we are around people who are hard to love. So, we turn to Jesus who didn't set boundaries with those around him, but who welcomed, valued, and honored everyone, even those he with whom he didn't agree. He was and is our example for the ways we are to love and live with one another.

Knowing God brings us closer to the heart of God, and we learn from that relationship even as we learn from a mother's heart about love. No one is perfect, of course, but the love of a mother teaches us about God at work in our lives and the love God has for us.

I once knew a young woman who had been rejected and mistreated by her mother. To escape her home situation, she married very young, but unfortunately, she was looking for love in all the wrong places. The man she married was abusive, and when she became pregnant, he accused her of having an affair, claimed the baby wasn't his, and pushed her down the stairs. Unfortunately, she miscarried, but it opened her eyes to her situation, and she was able to escape, eventually divorcing the man.

At that point, she became a professional nanny, and she found a church where she was welcomed with open arms and loved toward wellness. At that church, she was loved by many "mothers," and she began to open herself to the care and concern her church family offered her. Yet, she struggled to believe that God could love even her. I haven't seen her for years, but I pray that she was able to find and embrace God's unconditional love for her and share it with others.

On the other hand, many of us have been blessed to have a mother figure who brought the love of God into our lives, and we may not have even realized it until we were older or even until our mother had passed away.

When my mother was in her late seventies, she showed signs of Alzheimer's Disease which gradually progressed over the next ten years, and eventually, gradually, she just disappeared as her mind was taken over by the disease. It was during that time that I began to realize how much she really had given me: the gift of music, the love she had for me (for all of us), her gentle and sensitive spirit, and her funny sense of humor that popped out when we least expected it.

More than ever, now that she is gone and has been freed from that horrible disease, I miss her terribly, but I also realize what the depth of her love for her children was and continues to be. I'm so grateful, and because she was a woman of faith, she helped to bring God's love into my life even more tangibly.

So, today, whether your mother or mother figure is alive, deceased, far away, or nearby, I hope you will reflect on her love for you and how God loved you through her. I hope you will find ways to honor her and cherish the gifts she gave you. May God, who is our heavenly Parent, continue to work through each of us as we seek to be in loving relationships with each other and others.

Prayer:

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Blessing