



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
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<https://aulc.us>

Title: **Behold, Your Mother!**

Sermon Text: **John 19:25-26**

I want to start off by saying, “Happy Mother’s Day” to all the mothers and mothers to be out there today!

Mother’s Day, of course, was created in the United States in 1914 as an official holiday, by President Woodrow Wilson. This holiday has its roots dating back to the 1850’s when mother’s were celebrated by festivals and clubs.

In the Bible, mothers are celebrated too! Not by official holidays or festivals, but celebrated nonetheless by Jesus, as we will talk about in our message today.

Our scripture lesson comes from the Gospel of John, chapter nineteen, verses twenty five and twenty six.

Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple He loved standing there, He said to His mother, “Woman, here is your son.”

May the Lord add His blessing on the reading of His Word!

I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries with our message this week.

I am happy that you can take a few minutes out of your busy week to be with us this week!

In celebration of Mother's Day, I'd like to focus on the relationship of Jesus and his mother, Mary. I think you'll agree, Mary exemplifies virtues common to mothers of every age; more importantly, Mary gives us a glimpse of this mysterious, marvelous and challenging role we call motherhood.

What we know about Mary, the mother of Jesus, is found in several brief vignettes. The first is from Luke's gospel. It comes months before Jesus was born.

According to Luke, the angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that God had found favor with her and that she was to bear a son and call him Jesus. (as we see in Luke chapter one verses thirty and thirty one)

Mary reacted as you might expect. She exclaimed,

"How can this be, seeing I am a virgin?"
The angel answered her, 'The Holy Spirit will come on you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore also the holy one who is born from you
will be called the Son of God ...'
Mary said, 'Behold, the servant of the Lord;
let it be done to me according to your word.'
(Luke chapter one verses thirty four to thirty eight)

Long before Jesus ever took his first breath, and long before she had any idea what was in store for her, Mary began preparing a place for him in her heart.

A child once asked his mother, "Mommy, where was I before I was born?" She said, "Sweetheart, you were a thought in the mind of God." She might well have added, "... and a prayer in my heart, as well."

What's it like to have new life come into being within your body? Some of us will never know. As a man, I can only marvel at what a woman must experience as she feels the baby come to life in her womb, drawing its strength from her very own life's blood.

Many of us will never have that experience, yet all of us came to life in just that way. What we do well to remember is that, just as our bodies were being nourished in the waters of the womb, so also were our souls being nurtured by the loving thoughts and prayers of our mothers. When it's all said and done, that's what mothers do best.

The next vignette comes twelve years later. It's also found in Luke's gospel. Jesus and his family had made the long pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. They traveled in caravan with friends and family. When they got there, the city was crowded.

When they got ready to go home, Jesus was busy making mischief with the other boys ... or so they thought. They traveled all day, but when they set up camp for the night, Jesus was nowhere to be found.

Have you ever had a child get lost? This happened to my family many years ago. It was just before Christmas. We all went to the mall to do some last minute shopping. The mall was packed.

My parents and I, along with two younger sisters, were in J C Penney. In those days, in the early 1970's, you could let your children roam around, pretty much unsupervised and know that you could always find them easily.

We turned to leave and go to another store, when we realized that my youngest sister was nowhere to be found! We panicked and started looking around the store for her and several minutes later, as we were leaving to go look at other stores, an announcement came over the Mall's P A system.

It said, "We have a little three year old girl named Renee in our office and she is looking for her Mom and Dad."

We all immediately went to the Mall Office and was reunited with my sister and our day went on as planned!

According to Luke, Mary and Joseph traveled a full day's journey before they realized Jesus was missing.

When they got back to Jerusalem they found him in the Temple talking with the elders. They breathed a sigh of relief, then Mary did what any mother would have done: She hugged her son and kissed him – and then gave him a proper scolding! She screamed,

"Son, why have you treated us this way?
Behold, your father and I were anxiously looking for you."
(Luke chapter two verse forty eight)

Frankly, I've never understood this capacity mothers have to reassure and reprimand their children in the same breath. I tell you, there are contradictory forces at work here! But, for a mother they go hand-in-hand: She wants to expose her children to the possibilities of the world while, at the same time, protect them from its dangers. I don't quite know how to explain it other than saying mothers are like that.

Mary appears next in Jesus' life at the scene of his first miracle. Ironically, it's Mary who prompts Jesus to perform his first miracle. The setting is a wedding party in the little village of Cana of Galilee. As John tells the story, the wine failed, and the party was about to come to a screeching halt when Mary stepped in. "Don't just stand there, do something!" she said to Jesus. And he said, "MOTHER!" (John chapter two verses three and four)

O.K., so that's not a strict translation, but you get the point: Jesus did not want to get involved. He didn't think it wasn't any of their business; besides, he said, "**My hour has not yet come.**" (John chapter two verse four)

But Mary insisted. So, Jesus told the stewards to fill the purification jars to the brim, then he transformed the water into the most robust, sparkling wine you've ever tasted.

As I said, this was his first miracle. It's fair to say that, up to this point, no one knew he had the power ... except his mother. She knew what her son was capable of, perhaps better than he knew himself, and when the time was ripe, she provoked him to act in order to unleash the potential within. The rest is history. This would be the first of many, many miracles to come.

This is a quality mothers have that's hard to explain. Like a mother bird who knows her chicks can fly. But they won't unless they have to. And so, with great courage, she pushes them over the edge, lest they become too comfortable in the security of her nest. How does she know they're strong enough to fly? Mothers just know.

One of the most difficult moments for Mary comes later. It was when she got wind of the gossip going around that her son was acting irrationally. "He is insane," the people were saying. (Mark chapter three verse twenty one). His friends thought he was possessed by a demon. They sought to reason with him, but when it became obvious that he wouldn't listen, they sent for his mother and brothers to come and take him back to Nazareth.

According to Mark, Jesus was in a house teaching when he got word that his mother and brothers were outside. Here's what he said:

"Who are my mother and my brothers?"

Looking around at those who sat around him, he said,

**'Behold, my mother and my brothers!
For whoever does the will of God, the same is my brother,
and my sister, and mother.'**

(Mark chapter three verses thirty three to thirty five)

Just so we're clear, Jesus didn't say that Mary wasn't his mother. Instead, he pointed to a bigger picture. The family circle includes all who belong to God – brothers and sisters through faith.

He didn't deny his relationship to his mother, but he did set the limits of her authority. He made it clear he was accountable only to God. It was up to Mary to step aside.

This is one of the the hardest things any mother has to do: Relinquish control; let the child make his/her decisions, make his/her own mistakes; entrust the child to the world – which is to say, to God – and be brave enough not to stand in the way.

Frankly, some mothers let go more gracefully than others, and some never let go at all. Those who do, do so in faith – and with every hope that in giving up the parental role they may become friends.

Mary had the courage to let go. She took a back seat. After this episode – which seems to have occurred early on in his ministry – we don't hear another word about Mary until the day Jesus was crucified. That's not to say Jesus never saw her again; it is to say that her role was to become one his many followers.

At the appropriate time, Mary stepped aside. She allowed her little boy to become a man. After all, she was his mother, not his God. And it's for mothers to know the difference.

The final scene in Jesus' relationship to Mary comes on the hill of Golgotha. Mary was there, of course, standing at the foot of the cross. You can imagine the anguish she felt watching the suffering and death of her son, unable to lift a finger to help him.

Standing beside her was his beloved disciple, John. In his last moments, Jesus called to her and said, **"Woman, behold your son."** Then he called to John and said, **"Behold, your mother!"** (John chapter

nineteen verses twenty six and twenty seven)

It was his final act of devotion, to entrust the care of his mother to his closest friend. He knew that John would provide for her and protect her in his absence. In turn, Mary would become as a mother to John. Sure enough, she went with him to Ephesus, where she lived a long life and served as a model of faith and devotion to Jesus in the development of the early church.

Well, that's the end of my Mother's Day sermon. I want to close with a little article from Erma Bombeck.

She writes,

"While the Good Lord was creating mothers, he was into his sixth day of overtime when the angel appeared and said, 'You're doing a lot of fiddling around on this one.' The Lord said, 'Have you read the specs on this order? She has to be completely washable, but not plastic, have 180 movable parts – all replaceable – run on black coffee and leftovers, have a lap that disappears when she stands up, have kisses that can cure anything from a broken leg to a disappointed love affair and have six pairs of hands.'

The angel shook her head slowly and said, 'Six pairs of hands ... not possible.'

'It's not the hands that are causing my problems,' said the Lord. 'It's the three pairs of eyes that mothers have to have.' 'That's on the standard model?' asked the angel. The Lord nodded. 'One pair that sees through closed doors when she asks, "What are you kids doing in there?" when she already knows. Another here in the back of her head that sees what she shouldn't, but what she has to know; and, of course, the ones here in front that can look at a child when he goofs up and reflect, "I understand and I love you," without so much as uttering a word.'

'Lord,' said the angel, touching his sleeve gently, 'come to bed, perhaps tomorrow ...' 'I can't,' said the Lord, 'I'm so close to creating something like myself. Already I have one who heals herself when she is sick, can feed a family of six on one pound of hamburger and can get a nine-year-old to stand under a shower.'

The angel circled the model of The Mother very slowly. 'It's too soft,' she sighed. 'But tough!' said the Lord excitedly. 'You cannot imagine what this Mother can do or endure.' 'Can it think?' asked the angel. 'Not only think, it can reason and compromise,' said the Creator.

Finally, the angel bent over and ran her fingers across the cheek. 'There's a leak,' she said. 'I told you that you were trying to put too much into this model. You can't ignore the stress factor.' The Lord moved in for a closer look and gently lifted the drop of moisture to his finger where it glistened and sparkled in the light.

'It's not a leak,' he said, 'It's a tear.'

'A tear?' asked the angel. 'What's it for?' 'It's for joy, sadness, disappointment, compassion, pain, loneliness and pride,' the Lord replied.

'You're a genius,' said the angel. The Lord looked somber and whispered. 'But I didn't put it there.'"

That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed! For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

Happy Mother's Day! Thank you all for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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