

WISDOM AND LOVE
Reflections on Mothers Day –May 8, 2016
Proverbs 4: 1-13 & 4: 23
The Church of the Covenant

Recently, my Mother will say to me: “My, you’ve become awfully bossy of late!” And I will look her directly in the eye and respond: “Yes, and I learned from a Master!” But we learn many things from our Mother in life; important lessons; unforgettable lessons; lessons we carry with us, always, whether she is still with us in this life or whether she watches over us in the life to come. Henry Ward Beecher, the great Protestant pulpiteer and prime promoter of the celebration of Mothers Day, once preached: “The Mother’s heart is the child’s schoolroom.” It is indeed the place where we are taught the deepest lessons of life, the lessons of WISDOM AND LOVE...

Our scripture from Proverbs notes: *“Keep your heart...for from it flow the springs of life.”* (Proverbs 4: 23) It is the lesson of “Wisdom and Love” we learn bounced on our Mother’s knee and held within her arms and rocked to sleep in our rocking chair.

Several years ago I gave my Mother a little booklet to fill out, entitled, “Reflections from a Mother’s Heart: Your Life Story in Your Own Words”. And to my Mother’s credit she took a great deal of time to fill it out, sitting on the beach in Hilton Head, and to share with her son the lessons she had learned and sought to teach with her life. I have come to treasure this little book today. And in so many ways it reveals her heart. The word “LOVE” is the most prominent word she writes in the booklet. “I LOVE this” and “I LOVE that.” It is an effusive, overflowing kind of love expressed from a Mother’s heart. Mother loves every animal and tree, she loves flowers and little children, she loves dogs (Dad says if there is reincarnation he wants to come back as one of her pets), she even loves every mangy groundhog dead by the side of the road for two weeks and frequently would cry when we drove by and she saw it. She loves church and she loves God and she loves the Bible. As a child I would open her Bible and see it well-read and well-marked. Her heart is a well-tended garden blooming with the love of God. She loves Jesus with all her heart and knows that the love in her heart comes from HIM. She loves prayer. She loves helping people –growing up I observed her with her “ministry of ham”; every person who moved into our neighborhood, every person who had surgery and came home from the hospital, every family where there was a death, Mother would prepare a ham and take it over. To those neighbors she liked and to those neighbors she didn’t, ham was a universal symbol of God’s love reaching out to them. She wrote in the booklet: “I have always believed that SOMEONE cared for me. As I matured, I realized that, in addition to my parents and family, this security came from God. Without HIM I am NOTHING! Early thoughts about God’s love and acceptance. At age 22 my Father wrote in my Bible, “Love never ends” (I Corinthians 13: 8). (She writes) I added 2 and 2 and realized that “God is love”, so it never ends. Maturity: I have been so showered with God’s love it is unbelievable!” It is wisdom and LOVE together; wisdom informs love and love informs wisdom. The two are one and inseparable.

There is a reason why the Bible counsels us to “Guard our heart” (in the New Testament it notes this in Philippians; in the Old Testament we read this admonition in Proverbs). It is because everything in life that is good and true and faithful and from God, flows out of our heart and flows out of our love. The world attempts to destroy our heart. It clogs it with the love of things and objects, not a love for people and for God. It criticizes us and seeks to tear us down. It fills it with resentments and pain. It fills it with unforgiveness and loss. It fills it with anger and frustrations. It fills it with roots of bitterness, as the Bible says, that can choke off the love we have in our heart, for God and for others. Our heart is either a well-tended garden of God’s love and the presence of God’s Spirit and the Living Presence of the reality

of God's love, the literal, living presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, or it becomes dead and weed-choked, by what we have allowed to be planted there. *"Keep your heart...for from it flow the wellsprings of life."*, counsels the wisdom of the Book of Proverbs (Proverbs 4: 23) It is Wisdom and Love. It is the lesson in life my own dear, sweet Mother has taught me.

Some people, I suppose, in the hearing of my voice, may not have this kind of experience with their own Mothers. There are people who have a bad and/or tumultuous experience with their Mothers. So some people in "preaching world" even suggest that we should never actually preach on Mothers on Mothers Day lest we offend or inadvertently cause pain. I believe that MATURITY in Christ is being able to choose the kind of person we want to be. I believe WISDOM and LOVE in the power of God's LOVE allows us to be people filled to overflow with the LOVE of GOD, for the Lord and for other people. Guard your heart. Keep your heart. Root out those things which keep you from wisdom and love. Decide today what you will plant there. Decide the kind of heart you want to have. Receive that LOVE from God, for it is God's love, from IT FLOWS the wellsprings of life...and, may I say, eternal life, as well.

My Mother's favorite Bible verses, the ones she LOVES the most, are from I Corinthians 13: 1-13, appropriately, the Apostle Paul's great poem on the power of love to abide forever. These were the Bible verses inscribed in the front of a Bible presented to my parents after they were married, by my grandfather, Stuart Deardorff, for whom I am named. Easter, April 5, 1952 he wrote: "Men and nations pass away, but love never dies." I Corinthians 13: 13 notes: *"Faith, hope, love abide; these three. But the greatest of these is love."* *"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. LOVE NEVER ENDS."*

So, on this Mothers Day, as we reflect on our own Mothers and what they have taught us with their lives. On this Mothers Day, whether we are blessed to still have her with us in this life, or whether we are blessed to know we still have her in the life to come, do we believe, "LOVE NEVER ENDS"? Do we believe it is from our heart that springs the wellsprings of life? Do we believe that LOVE never, ever, no never, ever ENDS????? Wisdom and Love –I have learned my answer from my dear, sweet Mother. And today I rise up and call her blessed! Amen and Amen.

*By: The Reverend Dr. Stuart D. Broberg, The Church of the Covenant, Washington, Pennsylvania
IF THIS HAS BLESSED YOU, PLEASE PASS IT ALONG TO A FRIEND!*