

"MOTHER SUPERIOR"



Luke 1:26-28 *And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

THESIS: To extol the virtues of motherhood as portrayed in Mary the mother of Jesus.

INTRO.: A. Today we honor mothers & motherhood. But God honored one woman above all other mothers in that He chose her to be the mother of Jesus, our Savior. It is in this sense that we refer to Mary as **"MOTHER SUPERIOR."**

ILLUS.: She has been called by many names & titles which are unscriptural. She is not "the Mother of God," "Queen of Heaven," "Queen of the Universe," "Queen of the Angels," "Virgin Bride of the Lord," "Virgin Most Glorious... Most Renowned,...Most Venerable," etc. She was not Immaculately Conceived nor Perpetually Virgin. Her superiority lies in the fact that God chose her to bear His Son in the flesh.

- B. Mary is certainly "superior" in her human purity, moral chastity, meekness, humility & in her willingness to suffer misunderstanding & verbal abuse for the role God chose for her. It is these "superior" qualities we want to emphasize & set forth as examples for all mothers & all believers to emulate...

I. A VIRGIN MOTHER?!

Lk.1:34 *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?*

NOTE: It was Mary, not the skeptics of her day nor the liberals of our day, who first raised the issue of the biological impossibility of a virgin bearing a child. But of course God is not limited by His own laws of reproduction.

Today a "virgin birth" may be possible w/artificial insemination or *in vitro* fertilization, but these technologies were not known or available in Mary's day. But even with these technologies there must always be a human male involved!

A. Virtuous:

1. Mary was clean & chaste, but nonetheless a sinner.
2. Mary did not merit the honor of being the mother of Jesus, it was all of God's grace (no doubt many other young girls were still virgins).

B. Vilified:

1. The name Mary means "bitterness."
2. Surely there was hurt as tongues wagged over her alleged indiscretion during her courtship & engagement to Joseph.
3. When she presented Jesus for dedication at the Temple, Simeon prophesied of Mary **"yea a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also."** **Lk.2:35**

ILLUS.: This prophecy came true & Mary suffered that "sword" all her life.

1. At age 12 Jesus rebuked Mary saying **"wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"** In other words, "My first allegiance is to my heavenly Father!"
2. At the beginning of His public ministry he rebuked her again saying: **"Woman, what have I to do with thee?"** (The harshness is not in the word "woman" – that is a proper address in the East.) But the statement suggests "What do you & I have in common? Now that I have begun my ministry, it is time you learned your place & My place."
3. Another occasion was when Mary was worrying about Him & the press of endless crowds & she came to take Him away. The word came: **"...thy mother & thy brethren ...seek for thee."** He replied: **"...whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother."** **Lk.2:32,35** He did not recognize special interest groups nor pressure groups...even family.

4. Finally on the cross came the final piercing blow of that "sword." There He severed all human ties to Mary & placed John in charge of her as her **"son."**

NOTE: Never once did Jesus refer to Mary as "mother" in the Scriptures. She was a wonderful woman, but only a woman...not a god or goddess! Never prayed to! Never became the Mediatrix! Christ alone is the Mediator!

II. A VINDICATED MOTHER:

A. Mary: Highly Favored

Lk.1:28 *And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*

NOTE: **"Highly favored"** means literally "one who has received an abundance of grace." She was a recipient of grace not the source of grace! Only sinners need grace. Grace is only bestowed on one who is undeserving.

But God did choose her based on her virginity, purity & chastity. God uses clean & unclean vessels, but he uses clean vessels to a greater extent! Are you clean?!

1. Mary's character was in question, but the life & miracles & crucifixion & resurrection of her Son would vindicate her character!
2. Then it would become known that the Holy Ghost had overshadowed Mary & her Son was unique.
3. The Scriptures would likewise authenticate & verify Mary's character.
 - a. Gone would be the suspicion of premarital unchastity.
 - b. Gone would be the scandal around Nazareth, her hometown.
 - c. Gone would be the supposition that Jesus was the illegitimate son of Joseph.

Lk.3:23 *And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,*

ILLUS.: Nowhere do we read in the sacred record that Mary herself doubted the Lord after the explanation by the Angel. Surely the prophecies of Scripture helped sustain her.

How should we as believers handle gossip & slander of another believer? Love should cover them. Unsubstantiated reports should be rejected.

1 Cor.13: 5-7 *Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

Prov.17:9 *He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.*

B. Mary: Saved Sinner:

Lk.1:47 *And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

1. Mary was a sinner just like everyone else, not Immaculately Conceived nor Perpetually Virgin (she had other children).

Mark 6:3 *Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.*

2. Mary had to get saved just like everyone else, she wasn't automatically accepted by God based on her goodness or moral purity.

III. A VICTORIOUS MOTHER:

A. Because Obedient:

1. In spite of what she knew would be said & the hardships she would have to endure, she was humbly obedient.
2. In spite of the seeming impossibility of the angelic announcement, she was simply obedient.

B. Because Available:

1. Suppose Mary had been living a sinful life, or had disqualified herself because of an attitude of rebellion...???!!!
2. Suppose Mary had not been where she should have been or had not been a virgin....???!!!

ILLUS.: Mother: is the reason God is not using you because of a lack of availability or stubbornness or disobedience or...? Dad: is the reason God is not using you because you are involved w/friends you should not be, or involved in sinful practices you should not be, or simply because you are not doing what you should be doing?!

Teen or young person...can God use you? (The Scriptures suggest & Jewish practices at the time suggest that Mary was a teen when these events happened.)

C. Because Qualified:

1. Mary was clean & virtuous.
2. Mary was consecrated & virgin.
3. Mary was spiritual & knew the Scriptures.

ILLUS.: This is obvious for when she came to Elizabeth's home, she began to sing a song of praise which was saturated w/God's Word. Here was a young girl who was spiritual & who studied the Scriptures (when that was not easy...there were no Bibles as we know them (i.e., in book form), readily available (they were in the Temple or synagogues & could not be removed, so had to be memorized!)

CONCL.: Mary should be an example to every mother here, & every Christian here! How do we respond when God speaks to us? Are we obedient, available & qualified? Are we virtuous? Are we victorious? Do we know His Word & His will?

Mary may be viewed as a **"MOTHER SUPERIOR"** because of God's call, but more importantly she was a **"SUPERIOR MOTHER"** because of her character. What kind of mother or Christian are you?!