

Buy the truth and do not sell it; get wisdom, discipline and understanding. The father of a righteous man has great joy; he who has a wise son delights in him. May your father and mother be glad; may she who gave you birth rejoice! Prov 23:23-25"



The family rejoices after our dear sister comes out of the “watery grave” of her baptism!

One of the most profound things I was taught when growing up by my mother was a love and respect for the truth. I recall that she’d discipline me sternly if I was deceitful and that if I was honest, even about poor decisions, she’d respect the trust given. Of course, being honest did not always mean I would not get disciplined! This respect of the truth is one of the core convictions that helped me both become a disciple of Jesus and stay a disciple of Jesus.

I recall one of my favorite memories of my mom was when I was around 9 years old. I’d taken to watching MTV (“Music Television”) quite a bit and had seen a music video by the blues/rock band “The Fabulous Thunderbirds” for their song “How Do You Spell Love?” The song’s chorus is laced with worldly cynicism, asking the rhetorical question “How do you spell love?” followed by the godless answer “M-O-N-E-Y!” Nonetheless, I walked around the house that day repeating that “catchy” but dark chorus. I’ve never forgotten my mother hearing me singing this song around the house and then interrupting me, interjecting and saying something to the effect of, “no, it’s G-O-D.” This moment shaped me more than she realized and it got me thinking differently about letting cynical, negative, thinking shape my outlook...even if it’s from a catchy chorus.

“For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.” - Matt 12:34-36



Christine Melgar with her family, children, and the sisters who studied the bible with her after her baptism!

One of the reasons the memory of this interaction was so profound is that my mother was not

a deeply religious woman at the time. She'd been brought up in religious traditions and had gone to a catholic school, yet became a single mother at just 17 years old. Due to very intense challenges at home, she'd moved out with me and moved to live with her aunt and uncle. She had married her first husband when I was 5 and by the time I was 9, she was not going to church anywhere. She did introduce me to the bible and encourage me when I'd went to church with the neighborhood kids and their families. But I know in her heart there is respect for God and truth - and a deep, devoted love for her children that I can't ever be thankful enough for. It's this memory, and others like it, that remind me the powerful good that is in a mother's heart despite the fact we don't always agree on all matters spiritually.

Jesus and Mary did not always agree either. In fact at one point Mary, along with Jesus' brothers, actively *opposed* Jesus *publicly*. The Gospel of Mark in chapter 3 clearly records this shocking interaction between Jesus and his mother and brothers driven by their conviction that Jesus was "**out of his mind.**" Because of this perspective, his mother and brothers "**went to take charge of him**" at the house where a "**crowd gathered**" which was so large "**[Jesus'] disciples were not even able to eat.**" (Mark 3:20-21) It is in this very public setting that "**Jesus' mother and brothers arrived.**" (Mark 3:31). "**Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."**" (Mark 3:31-31) This would inadvertently be a very embarrassing moment, as Jesus is surrounded by a crowd as well as his disciples and is teaching them about the Kingdom of God, Satan (and his Kingdom being divided), and the Holy Spirit. (Mark 3:23-30) It's akin to being heckled/interrupted by your very own mother and brothers! Recall from **Mark 3:21** that the disagreement with what Jesus has decided to do with "*his life*" is so staunch that it is the intent of Jesus' mother and brothers "**to take charge of him,**" as they believe that "**he is out of his mind.**"



The brothers praying over Brice Williams to set all their minds and heart's on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and Brice's participation in it through his faith at this very moment! (Rom 6:2-4, Col 2:14)

As heartbreaking as this kind of opposition from Jesus' beloved mother and his brothers must

have been for the Lord, Jesus did not stop doing God's will to please them or compromise his convictions to appease them *"in the moment."* Jesus' public response to this public opposition by his physical family helps us understand the priorities we must have as followers of Jesus Christ:

"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother." - Mark 3:33-35

This must have been very tough for Mary to hear and even embarrassing for her and for her sons. We are reminded of one of Jesus' most poignant and controversial teachings from **Luke 14:26**, ***"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple."*** Jesus did not fail to practice what he preached here! We are called to imitate Jesus by this and other scriptures if we are to be his disciples (**John 8:30-32**), putting our spiritual family (those who do the will of God) even above our physical family - just like Jesus. We can't expect the results, the impact, of Jesus if we water-down his standard—refusing to accept and imitate his example.

Despite how hard this conflict must have been, Jesus *never stopped loving Mary or his brothers!* In fact, we are reminded yet of another one of Jesus' most controversial teachings he iterated numerous times and numerous ways: ***"But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you."*** (**Luke 6:27-28**) Jesus' mother was not necessarily an enemy in her feelings towards her son, but in her and her sons' actions she was opposing the will of God and trying to ***"take charge"*** of the Lord, hindering his teaching and ministry. In believing that he was ***"out of his mind"*** and going to ***"take charge"*** of him she put herself against God's will and God's perspective of Jesus and his ministry, his efforts, for the lost world.

The amazing proof of this love for his mother is shown when Jesus is literally dying on the cross. As Jesus is hanging there, bleeding and torn, he sees his grief-stricken mother at the foot of the cross with John, the adolescent disciple, next to her. Jesus then musters the strength to tell his mother ***"Dear woman, here is your son,"*** and to the disciple, ***"Here***

is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” (John 19:26-27). Even in the midst of his immense suffering, when he had an opportunity to show love to his mother, he took it. Jesus may not have agreed with his mother earlier much to her chagrin and embarrassment, but he certainly **never stopped loving** his mother.



Tim, Marvell, Brice (of course!), Gerald, Javier, Rico, and Jeremy are all fired up that there is another soldier and brother in the family of our awesome God!

We see the eventual impact of Jesus’ uncompromising commitment as well as his thoughtful love in the face of his own immense suffering on the cross in Acts 1:14. Here the scriptures show us that Jesus’ mother and brothers eventually became disciples of Jesus themselves! **“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” (Acts 1:14).** Not only did Jesus’ brothers become disciples, they actually became leaders in the church and even authored the New Testament books of James and Jude! If we imitate Jesus’ convictions and life, we have the greatest chance of seeing our families impacted like Jesus’ family was impacted.

It’s Jesus’ heart that we who have faith in him **“will do what [he] has been doing”** and **“even greater things than these” John 5:12.** Our God **“wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth” 1 Tim 2:4.** Certainly that includes our mothers and brothers, all those who are our extended family, and those around whose lives we brush up against every single day. We should not expect to have impact if we compromise though, for it is written - **“Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.” (1 Tim 4:16)**

Many brothers and sisters came out the morning of Saturday May 3rd to show their zeal for Special Missions Contribution! It was a great time and a lot of fun together as the family of God—looking forward to see what our God will do as we rally together to “build the wall” and do our best to do our part!

Prayerfully today you can make it a point to honor your mother or her memory, lifting her up, praying for her, reminding her of her loving kindness, and all the good that she has brought

to you. Know with certainty that ***“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (James 1:17-18)*** I’m deeply grateful at the good gifts that are my mother’s kindness, her love and respect for truth, and our shared memories which shaped me for the better as a man. These good things in our relationship are most certainly from God. It’s to God’s glory and to his honor, that we honor our ***“father and mother, so that [we] may live long in the land the LORD [our] God is giving [us]!” (Exodus 20:12)*** May our God get all the glory this Mother’s Day!



Jeremy Mark Ciaramella