

Mother's Day - May 7, 2017

Cornerstone EPC

By Donna Rae Alberta

The Majesty and Grandeur of Motherhood

Colossians 3: 12-17, 23-24

It's been my privilege for many years to bring the message on Mother's Day here at Cornerstone. As I looked back over the titles I've given to those messages, they proclaim what's on my heart *on this day* that we set apart to extol the role and responsibilities of motherhood. Listen to some of them:

- Five Missions of a Godly Mother (1993)
- Give Me a Break, I'm a Mother! (1994)
- Motherhood: The Ultimate Makeover (1995)
- Of Labor Pains and Stretch Marks (1996)
- Mom - The Most 'Impressive' Person of All (1997)
 - Ready, Willing...But Unable (2000)
- Maternity Clothes and Combat Boots (2002)
 - Handmade by Mom (2003)
- The Blessings of Motherhood (2003, Focus on the Family)
- Heroes of My 'Hood' - Mothers with An Attitude! (2004)
 - Rock 'n Rule (2005)
 - Red Hot Mamas (2007)
- Metaphors for Motherhood (2008)
 - Cross Trainers (2009)
- Word Pictures for Wise Moms (2010)
 - High Fives for 5 I's (2011)

- Because I'm the Mom! (2012)
- Off My Rocker & On My Mind: A Grandmother's Reflections on Marriage & Motherhood (2013)
- MOM-entous Decisions! (2014)
- Motherhood: What Doesn't Kill You Will Make You Stronger (2015)
 - Taught & Caught (2016)

And now this , my final message as we prepare for stepping down from leadership,
my swan song of Mother's Day messages,
 to encourage and exhort all mothers everywhere--

The Majesty & Grandeur of Motherhood.

To give context for that title, which may seem far too lofty and pretentious, let me bring to mind the charming story of ***My Fair Lady***. I'm sure many of you have seen the play or the later film version featuring Rex Harrison as Professor Henry Higgins, and Audrey Hepburn as Eliza Doolittle.

The gist of the story is that Henry Higgins, a linguist and phonetics expert, makes a bet that he can transform a bedraggled Cockney girl, Eliza Doolittle, to pass for a duchess at an embassy ball by teaching her to assume a veneer of gentility, the most important element of which, he believes, is impeccable speech.

In pursuit of her **dream** to learn to speak properly, Eliza is growing dreadfully **discouraged** by the **discovery** of the hard work she must do, and so Professor Higgins gives her a pep talk to fire up her **determination**. He prompts her to re-consider her objective with these elegant words:

*I know your head aches.
I know you're tired.
I know your nerves are as raw as meat in a butcher's window.
BUT ... think what you're trying to accomplish.
Just think what you're dealing with.*

*The majesty and grandeur of the English language...
It's the greatest possession we have.
The noblest thoughts that ever flowed through the hearts of men
Are contained in its extraordinary,
imaginative and musical mixtures of sounds.*

*And that's what you've set yourself out to conquer, Eliza!
And conquer it you will!
Now try it again!*

Did you hear those words ... *majesty and grandeur*? I think they are more fittingly applied to the pursuit of nurturing another human being, rather than speaking the English language with precision.

But...Higgins is insightful about what this will cost Eliza. He identifies her **dream** to become a lady and speak proper English.

He watches as she **discovers** that it's not going to be as easy as she thought.

He sees and sympathizes with her growing **discouragement**, and recognizes her need of some motivation to reignite her **determination**.

Could we perhaps borrow Higgins' speech and tailor it a bit to fit *even more appropriately* the high calling to motherhood? To that calling to grow and tend and nurture another human being?

There is NOTHING in all of creation as majestic and filled with grandeur as human beings. We are made in the very image of God himself, which is why, when God stepped back after every phase of his creative expression in forming the world and its inhabitants, he decreed everything to be good, but indeed, man and woman alone as VERY GOOD. Let's take a moment to remind ourselves of the majesty and grandeur of a human life... for this is a pro-life, pro-family, pro-marriage, pro-mothering and pro-fathering church!

VIDEO - The Miracle of Life

Yes, we do want to choose life every day as mothers! We choose life over things... daily! We want to LOVE people, and USE things... not the other way around.

Every woman, whether by biological or adoptive or foster mothering, holds the **dream** in her heart of being the BEST mother she can possibly be. To give everything in herself... her all ... and to master this art of loving well, meeting needs well, building up well, protecting well, teaching well, encouraging and cheering on well, and then anticipating receiving in return the affection and gratitude of those she cares for. She **dreams** of what it will be like. She creates a picture of it in her imagination. This is **before** the lessons begin...

But then reality sets in. She **discovers** that mothering **IS HARD WORK!** It is often endless, thankless, routine, sometimes painful, sometimes exhausting, sometimes unsatisfying, sometimes lonely, sometimes all-consuming leaving barely nothing of yourself left over at the end of each day... and she can become **discouraged**.

She needs someone, *anyone*, to re-ignite her **determination** to press on at those times. She needs a *spiritual* Professor Henry Higgins to come alongside her and say:

I know your head aches.

I know you are tired.

I know your nerves are as raw as the fish on a sushi platter.

But... think what you're trying to accomplish!

Just think what you're dealing with ...

The majesty and grandeur of a human life...

**It's the greatest privilege we have ...to steward this possession of God
loaned to us for a short time!**

The noblest acts of self-denying love that ever flowed from the human heart are contained in the extraordinary, imaginative and Christ-serving work of motherhood!

And that's what you've set yourself out to attain to!

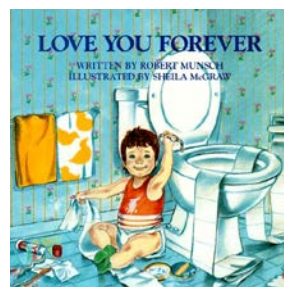
And attain to it you will!

Now try it again...

Of course, there are many high spots along the way in mothering too. I don't want to paint a bleak picture that it's all discouragement and fatigue.

I have delighted in mothering our four sons, now all responsible adults and gainfully employed, with children of their own to nurture and love and protect. And I'm over the moon about my grandkids. By the way, have I shown you my grandkids??

And it's a curious thing about motherhood -- when you're in the thick of it you sometimes are way too zoomed in on the micro tasks of daily life and forget to zoom out and look at the big picture. So you can easily miss the majesty, you can innocently ignore the grandeur. That's when you need to sit down and read this wonderful little book – to remind yourself of who you are and what you are doing.



This marvelous story is a classic portrait of the enduring nature of a mother's love for her child, while capturing the stages of growth the child passes through and the frustrations they can bring. It talks of how we mothers (and fathers) can pass on to the next generation the majesty and grandeur of loving the children God gives us.

One thing is for sure, however -- our culture is not *truly* a culture that is pro-life, pro-family, pro-marriage, or pro-perseverance. Ours is a culture of self-fulfillment, rather than a reflection of the Biblical call to self-denial. And when the going gets rough, it's a culture that says 'through it away' or 'walk away.' Increasingly, it's a culture that says in subtle ways 'why get married, why have children?'

In fact, a recent US Census Bureau report (*The Changing Economics and Demographics of Young Adulthood: 1975-2016*) shows that we are delaying marriage and parenthood. According to BreakPoint's recent commentary, the delays referred to by this study are not only those involving marriage and child-rearing, but also other hallmarks of what we used to call 'growing up.' More and more, young people of post-high school age are staying in what demographers are now calling a stage of "*emerging adulthood*."

As the report says, "In prior generations, young adults were expected to have finished school, found a job, and set up their own households during their 20's—most often with their spouse and with a child soon to follow."

Not anymore. Today only 27 percent of that 20-something age group live with their spouses; 31 percent live with their parents. What's more, they don't seem to be in any sort of hurry to establish their own households.

While more than 95 % of those surveyed rated completing their education and getting a job as "extremely or somewhat important", **less than half** said the same thing about getting married and having a child, and three-quarters of these only rated marriage and child-rearing as "somewhat important."

So to Moms everywhere, the bottom line is this: God has granted us an **extraordinary** privilege. Our bodies and our hearts are equipped to serve God's majestic (his royal, impressive, magnificent, splendid, impressive) command to be fruitful, and to experience the grandeur (magnificence, amazement, dignity) of loving, and shaping and nurturing and guiding another human being in the process of growing toward maturity and coming to know their Creator personally.

To close then, a short video to affirm that this task of mothering is anything BUT ordinary.

VIDEO – "MIGHTY"

There are those who say that this is ordinary. But don't let that fool you.

“Mother” will always be the bravest, least ordinary, most difficult and utterly challenging career that anyone ever hopes to lay claim to.

While others might hear, “diaper-changer, food-maker, car-pooler, bottle-washer, laundry-doer, sweat pants-wearer, life-on-hold” wanna be doing anything else woman, the Truth, whether it feels like it some days or not, is that you are in fact a shelter from the storm. You are a Cape of Good Hope.

You are a warrior who will battle for your children's hearts, souls, attention, innocence, education and memories. Go to battle my friends. This is your time.

We will hold strong on either side of you. We will pray over those bottles, through the dark watches of the night, when doubt comes and children break, when adults fail them, when they push and push as hard against us as that day we delivered them into the world we. will. not. be broken.

We may ache and see cracks tear through our hearts, but we will get up again tomorrow and load the clothes and the words that need to be said. Again and again and again.

And when the world tries to claw at them, to break them, to smash the beauty in them, may our walls hold true. May the lessons we've told, the truths we've lived, the life we've spoken into them come back easily, predictably, with wash and repeat ease.

Kingdom business. Jesus work. This shaping of souls. This raising tiny humans.

There are those that say that this is ordinary. Don't buy that for a second.

Mighty. You are mighty, because you mother.

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That is the majesty and grandeur of Motherhood! Let's pray together.