

John 19:25-27 “What Jesus Did for His Mother” \*\*

Main Idea: In John 19:25-27 we see a moving demonstration of the compassion of Jesus. He did something for His mother and for all who would follow Him.

I. Jesus comforted His mother (26).

A. He fulfilled His duty as a Son.

P“Mary saw Jesus when He took His first breath and now would see Him take His last.”

P“Remember, there were no social security checks in those days!”

B. He established His dominion as the Savior.

P“He speaks as Lord. He issues commands to Mary and to John, as if He were a king on His throne. He makes assignments, affecting position and responsibility, to His mother and His disciple and Himself.” (Russell Jones)

II. Jesus commissioned John (27).

A. He gave him a new responsibility.

P“John was to care for Mary. He was to be a substitute son. It was his task to protect Mary, to care for her physical and emotional needs.”

B. He introduced a new relationship.

P“Our bond in Christ is stronger than blood ties. We are part of an eternal family, the family of God.”

Make It Personal: Allow me to highlight two implications...

1. We must respond to Jesus' care.
2. He calls us to care for one another, to follow in His selfless steps.

How much is a mother worth? According to the compensation firm Salary.com, stay-at-home moms, if they were paid, would command salaries of more than \$134,000 a year, putting them in the same pay grade as law school professors and pediatricians. As for working moms, they deserve to be paid nearly \$86,000 a year just for their household duties, including those of chef, accountant, teacher, chauffeur, and nurse.[\[2\]](#)

Thank the Lord for mothers! The Scriptural command is clear. “Honor your father and mother (Exodus 20:12).” It’s not an option, but a privileged obligation. We are to give honor to our parents.

But what does that look like in real life? How do you honor a parent?

We find no clearer answer than the one presented for us in the life of Jesus Christ. He fulfilled the Law of God, including this command from the Decalogue. He lived a perfect life. Consequently, we can be sure that His treatment of His mother models for us perfectly what it’s involved in *giving honor* to one’s mother.

On this Mother’s Day, I’d like to take a close look at what Jesus did for His mother in the event recorded in John 19. “John 19?” you say. “That’s the crucifixion account, isn’t it?” Yes, it is. As you may recall, Jesus’ mother was actually at the scene of the cross. There Jesus did something very significant for her, something that teaches us some powerful lessons about how to honor a parent. Of course, Jesus didn’t die on the cross merely to give us an

example—as sinners we need more than an example; we need salvation, and that’s what Jesus provided by shedding His precious blood. For sure, Jesus didn’t go to the cross merely to give us an example. But…He did give us an example, and we can learn much from Him by pondering His perfect pattern.

What do we see when we look at Jesus on the tree? Simply stated, we see One who cares. Indeed, no one has ever demonstrated such care. As the songwriter reflects…

*He cares, He cares, I know He cares.*

*His heart is touched with my grief.*

*When the days are dreary, the long night's weary,*

*I know that Jesus cares.*

Yes, Jesus cares. Yet if we are honest, we may at times wonder. We doubt doubt. It doesn’t always *feel like* He cares, especially when the storm rages in life. It’s then we need a fresh reminder of His care. Jesus gave us such a display of His care, at the cross.

As you may recall, on the cross while being executed as a hardened criminal, Jesus uttered seven sayings that are recorded in the pages of holy Scripture.

His first words: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34).” On the cross, Jesus prayed to His Father requesting forgiveness for those who put Him there. In His first saying from the cross, Jesus was announcing He had secured our pardon.

His second saying, recorded in Luke 23:43, reveal the words the Savior spoke to the repentant thief, “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” That’s what the cross is all about, not merely an example for this life, but the means to experience eternal life in paradise.

Each of Jesus’ seven sayings is worthy of careful consideration, but it’s the third saying to which we will devote our attention this morning, the one involving Jesus’ mother. To find Jesus’ third statement, we must turn to John’s gospel. Luke is the only gospel writer to record Jesus’ first two declarations. John alone records the third.

A word of caution is in order. When studying the Scriptures, we must always be faithful to the author’s intent. Our first question must be, not, “What does this verse mean to ME?” but, “What does this verse MEAN?” In this case, the apostle John recorded Jesus’ third saying. Matthew did not. Mark did not. Luke did not. So why did John?

First, because it fit with His purpose. He tells us in John 20:30-31, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Each writer was selective. John admits in John 21:25, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.” So John wrote to fulfill a purpose.

Second, John’s gospel was the last of the four to be written. John penned this biography of Jesus some sixty years after Jesus returned to heaven. He often fills in some details about Jesus not recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

There’s a third reason why John recorded Jesus’ third saying. It involved him! Jesus spoke it directly to Mary *and to John*. And having heard it, John was reminded of the incredible care of His Savior.

How do we know that Jesus cares? Jesus’ third saying on the cross, as recorded in John 19:25-27, shows in a very practical way that He cares for the needs of His own.

Let's travel to the cross with John. Remember, John wrote after Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He didn't repeat the same details. He didn't need to. Yet keep this in mind. John was there. Luke was not—he got his information from talking to eyewitnesses. But John saw the blood stained earth beneath the cross. He heard the heart-wrenching groans of His Master.

Notice what caught John's eye as he reflected on the scene of the cross. There was the sign nailed above the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews (19:19)." It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. How ironic that when Jesus' first presentation to the world as king was in jest and mockery! John alone records that this sign incensed the Jewish leaders. Yet Pilate said it would stay!

John then tells us that four soldiers passed out his clothes, and gambled for His coat (19:23), this in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy (Ps 22:18).

And then John recorded what Jesus said from the cross. John actually includes three of Jesus' sayings from the cross: "*I am thirsty*" in verse 28, "*It is finished,*" in verse 30, and the saying that preceded those words, words that reveal Jesus' care and compassion for His mother and for all His followers. Jesus revealed His care in two ways in His third statement on the cross.

### I. Jesus comforted His mother (26).

John says there were women at the cross that day. Who were they? Look at verse 25, "Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene."

Some commentators have suggested that in those days women were held in such low regard that these ladies were not in danger. But remember, Jesus was a person the Roman government considered worthy of death! And the orthodox Jews considered Him a heretic. Being associated with a person like that is dangerous! But to the women, it did not matter. Perfect love casts out fear!

Who was there at the foot of the cross? First, John says, there was Jesus' mother. Have you ever envisioned Calvary from the perspective of Mary? *Mary saw Jesus when He took His first breath, and now would see Him take His last.*

Then there was Mary's sister. The punctuation in some translations makes it appear as if Mary's sister was the same person as Mary, the wife of Clopas (25). However, it's unlikely that there would be two sisters with the same name of Mary. The parallel accounts indicate the second woman's name was Salome (Matt. 27:56). Salome was Jesus' aunt.

You say, "If the second woman's name was Salome, why didn't John record her name?" It was his mother! Salome was the mother of James and John. In his gospel, John never calls himself by name, nor any of his family members.

Don't miss this. Jesus' mother Mary was likely an aunt to John the apostle.

The third woman was another Mary (the text literally says 'Mary of Clopas'). She was either the wife of, the mother of, the daughter of, or even the sister of Clopas! It probably indicates she was married to a man named Clopas.

The fourth woman was Mary Magdalene. She was the woman out of whom Jesus cast seven demons (Lk 8:2). She could never forget what Jesus had done for her!

Matthew 27:55 indicates there were "many women" (not just the four John mentions) at the cross that day, expressing their devotion to Jesus. Where were the men? They had fled. Only John was there. And John tells us about something amazing that happened next...

Verse 26—“When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Dear woman, here is your son.’”

Jesus fixed His eyes on His mother, then on John. Then He spoke to His mother and with those words the Lord accomplished two things.

### **A. He fulfilled His duty as a Son.**

Mary's heart was breaking.

Do you see the selflessness, the affection of Jesus? In His hour of greatest need, He thought of others, of *their needs*. In this case, the needs of His mother.

*“Dear woman, here is your son.”*

When Jesus spoke, He fulfilled His duty as a son. The fifth commandment stated, “Honor your father and your mother (Exod. 20:12).” True, Jesus was a grown adult. A grown adult is no longer under the authority of his parents. But the obligation to "honor" is lifelong.

*Remember, there were no social security checks in those days!* Apparently, Joseph had already died. Mary was a widow nearly fifty years of age. She was vulnerable. Who would care for her?

Just think of what Mary had already been through. She had endured the public accusation of having an "illegitimate" child and lived with that stigma all her life. She had grieved the loss of her husband. And now her firstborn was dying the most shameful death imaginable.

Yet in that moment Jesus cared for her. He fulfilled His duty to her.

One might object, “Didn't Mary have other children? Why didn't Jesus entrust Mary to their care?” Yes, Mary had other children born after Jesus (their names appear in Mark 6:3: James, Joseph, Judas, Simon, as well as sisters), but they didn't believe in Jesus (John 7:5). Though that would change later after the resurrection, at this time Jesus' siblings were befuddled by Him (Mark 3:21).

So Jesus delegated the care of His mother to John. John had a double qualification. First, not only was he part of the inner circle, he was perhaps Jesus' closest confidant. He was known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." Second, he was Jesus' cousin. Again, Mary, his mother's sister, was his aunt.

Do you see the significance of Jesus caring for His mother at the cross. He was fulfilling His duty as a son.

Is there a lesson here for us? There is. In so doing, the perfect Son of Man set an example for children of all ages. We are to honor our parents. We have a duty to care for them. Are you honoring your parents? Are you mindful of their needs and involved in their lives? More about this in a moment. Notice something else Jesus accomplished by these these words from the cross...

### **B. He established His dominion as the Savior.**

“Dear woman, here is your son,” He said. The KJV renders it, “Woman, behold thy son!” Notice how Jesus addressed Mary. Not "Mother," but "Woman." Is that significant?

The Roman Catholic church insists that Mary is the mediator of the grace of Christ. They call her the "Mother of God" and the "Queen of heaven." But you won't find that notion in the Scriptures. In fact, Jesus' words to her from the cross establish His dominion as the divine Savior.

He says, ‘Dear woman,’ a term of affection, certainly not harsh, but not ‘Mother.’ It is similar to our word ‘Lady.’

William Hendriksen comments, “It was very kind of Jesus to emphasize by the use of the word *woman* that Mary must no longer think of him as being merely her son; for, the more she conceives of him as her son, the more also will she suffer when he suffers. Mary must begin to look upon Jesus as her *Lord*.”<sup>[3]</sup>

There’s no question Mary’s heart was breaking—any loving mother’s heart would at such a time. But as great as the suffering was for Mary, Jesus was helping her grasp the purpose of what was breaking her heart. He was forcing her to look beyond their physical relationship. She must not see Jesus merely as her son, the one she bore and raised, but now as her Lord. “Yes, even then she will suffer,” writes Hendriksen, “but this suffering will be of a different nature. She will then know that though indescribably terrible, his agony is, nevertheless, glorious because of its purpose. She will then begin to concentrate on its redemptive meaning... Mary’s merely emotional suffering—as any mother would suffer for her son who was being crucified—must be replaced by something higher and nobler, that is, by adoration!”<sup>[4]</sup>

Notice what Jesus told Mary. “Here is your son,” is the NIV’s rendering. In the Greek text, there’s simply the word “Look” followed by the words “your son.” The AV’s translation captures the literal sense, “Behold thy son!”

Who is the son Jesus is telling Mary to behold. There may be a double sense here. He may be calling her attention to Himself, “Dear woman, look at your Son,” to her firstborn Son as He hung on the cross. Certainly, here is the need of every descendant of Adam. We must look to the Son of God!

But I don’t think that is primarily what Jesus is calling Mary to do with His words, “Dear woman, behold your son.” I see “son” beginning with small ‘s’ here. Mary has another family member, another ‘son’ if you will. It’s the man standing next to her, the one that Jesus will address next. With the words, “Dear woman, here is your son,” Jesus is telling Mary to look at John, her spiritual son in the family of God.

In a very real sense, Mary’s relationship with Jesus changed that day. Jesus actually broke His natural tie with her. “From now on, not I, but John will be your son.” (as Jones observes)

Russell Jones offers this insight (p. 35), “He speaks as Lord. He issues commands to Mary and to John, as if He were a king on His throne. He makes assignments, affecting position and responsibility, to His mother and His disciple and Himself.”

Don’t miss what Jones is saying. If you view Jesus as a victim on the cross, dying helplessly due to the brutal aggression of wicked men, you don’t understand what really happened at the cross. Jesus is in control at the cross. He is dying because He willed to die. He is a King dying to rescue His subjects. But even as He dies, He gives commands to His subjects.

Again I agree with Russell Jones who wrote (37), “What was Jesus doing to Mary? Jesus was denying special position or privilege to her because of her peculiar earthly relationship to Him. He was placing her on the same human plane with the rest of those whom He loved.”

Mary needed to do what you and I must do, submit her life to the Lord Jesus Christ. And she did.

Do you remember the scene in the upper room after Jesus ascended into heaven? Where was Mary then? Acts 1:14 says she was *with*, not above, the group of 120 followers of Jesus in Jerusalem. Mary needed to be saved, too, and she was. She learned that though in His humanity Jesus was her son, she must believe in Him as her Savior. And she did.

Jesus cared for Mary so much He addressed both of her needs. For His widowed mother, He fulfilled His duty as a Son, entrusting her to John’s safe-keeping. For one who needed deliverance from sin, He established His dominion as Savior.

Simply put, that day Mary lost a son to find a Savior!<sup>[5]</sup> In a very real sense, that must happen in our lives too. By that I mean this. I can hardly remember a time in my life when I didn't believe in Jesus. I grew up hearing stories about Jesus, about His good life, about His teaching, even about His death on the cross and resurrection on the third day. But one day, by the gracious working of the Spirit of God in my heart, I stopped viewing Jesus merely as a great and wonderful person and submitted my life to His Lordship and embraced Him as my Savior.

Has that happened in your life? Is Jesus Christ *your* Savior and King?

There's something else that Jesus accomplished in His third saying from the cross. First, He comforted His mother. Then...

## II. Jesus commissioned John (27).

Verse 26 ends with a comma in the NIV. In verse 27 Jesus continues the third saying. Having addressed Mary, He now speaks to the apostle John.

Verse 27 begins, "And to the disciple" [KJV 'Then saith he to the disciple']. In John's gospel the apostle John refers to himself as 'the disciple' or 'the disciple whom he loved' (as in verse 26). There on the cross Jesus delivers a message to John.

Don't forget, just hours before this, John had abandoned His Master. He did so along with all the rest of the disciples. But see him now, friend. He has come back to Jesus. He's identifying with his Lord at the cross.

Here's the message Jesus gave to John, a commission. "Here is your mother." [KJV "Behold thy mother."]

What did Jesus mean by those words? It will help us to ask the followup question... What did John take Jesus to mean? To find the answer, we simply need to look at John's own narrative in verse 27, "From that time on, this disciple took her into his home."

Something very important transpired that very moment in the shadow of the cross. With that statement to John, Jesus accomplished two things. First...

### **A. Jesus gave John a new responsibility.**

"Here is your mother," the Master told young John. This was a sacred charge. Notice the beginning of verse 28, "Later [KJV says 'after this'], knowing that all was now completed..." Jesus knew the hour had come. His work on the cross was now finished and He would shortly bow His head and give up His spirit (30). At that point Jesus gave John the responsibility to care for Mary. This was no trivial matter. It was a responsibility that Jesus as son took very seriously, the care of His mother.

He commissioned John to provide that care. John was to be a substitute son. It was his task to protect Mary, to provide for her physical and emotional needs. He did just that.

One tradition says that John had a second home in Jerusalem. Mary lived there with John for eleven years, until she died. Another tradition says that John eventually took Mary with him to live, and eventually die, in Ephesus.

Which is true? I don't know, nor does it matter. The important thing is that John fulfilled his responsibility. From the day he heard his Master's words, "Look, your mother!" until the day she left the earth, John cared for her. John himself verified this in his inspired text, "From that time on this disciple took her into his home."

I stand amazed at the compassion of Jesus on the cross. I see it in His words of comfort to Mary and in His

words of commission to John. But did you realize the Lord was telling us something here as well? He was. With those words to John...

## **B. Jesus introduced a new relationship.**

Why did John record this third saying? The significance goes far deeper than mere sentiment. Jesus' words to John introduced a new relationship, new family ties.

It was John who recorded these words of Jesus in John 13:34-35: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

When Jesus committed the care of His earthly mother to His spiritual son, He was emphasizing just how vital this new relationship is for His followers. Our bond in Christ is stronger than blood ties. Do you believe that? Do you practice that? It's true. If we know Christ, we are part of an eternal family, the family of God.

When Jesus Christ established the Church, He formed a new humanity, a new people. We are related to each other.

And listen. We are responsible to one another. We must not take that responsibility lightly either.

John didn't. It's not coincidental that the apostle John had more to say about 'love' in his writings than any of the other New Testament writers. To the church, John penned these words in 1 John:

**1 John 3:11** "This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another."

**1 John 3:16** "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."

Lay down our lives for our brothers? Is that what we're supposed to do, to value each other in practical ways, to sacrifice each other, to be willing to die for each other? Yes, and why? Because Jesus introduced a new relationship. We are to care for each other in a way that resembles His care for us.

And so John did. He fulfilled his responsibility. He cared for Mary. Consequently, he exhorted the churches he led to care for each other. That's our assignment, too, beloved. We are to care for each other because Christ cared for us.

Dear friend, if you want to see what true compassion looks like, then look at the cross! Behold the comfort that Jesus gave to Mary. Ponder the commission that He gave to John. He cares for you, beloved. In His life He provided an example of the kind of selfless love that God expects us to exhibit. You say, "But I can't attain Jesus' example. I'm a sinner." Yes, indeed, and that is why Jesus died on that cross, to bear your sins and provide a blood-stained covering for your sins. And His cross-work is sufficient not only to rescue us from our sins but also to transform us into the kind of loving people who are willing to care sacrificially for those in need, as John did with Mary.

Make It Personal: Allow me to highlight two implications.

*1. We must respond to Jesus' care.*

Every one of us. Here's the main lesson of the third saying from the cross. Jesus cares for His own. Oh, friend, the Savior is interested in you! He died and rose again to save sinners. Have you trusted Him to be the Savior of your life?

Here's what you must do. One, admit that you are a sinner, and acknowledge that your sins have separated you from a holy God. Two, repent of your sins, and put your trust in Christ and His work alone for your salvation.

2. *He calls us to care for one another, to follow in His selfless steps.*

Is there someone right now that Christ would have you to reach out to and show His care? Some of us have living parents that we've shut out of our lives. Some have children that we've cut off. Maybe there's a brother or sister in Christ who needs your help. Let's choose today to follow in His steps.

## **Communion (following the message)**

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\*\*Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[\[2\]](#) Information taken from *U.S. News & World Report*, May 15, 2006, p. 44.

[\[3\]](#) William Hendriksen, *John*, p. 433.

[\[4\]](#) W. Hendriksen, p. 433.

[\[5\]](#) Jones, 39