

Remembering the Love
John 21:1-14
May 10, 2020
5th Sunday of Eastertime
Mother's Day

The 5th Ten Commandment tells us to honor our mothers and fathers. What does it mean for us to honor our parents?

To show them proper respect and to value the godly ways that they live is what comes to my mind.

Mother's Day became a national holiday due to the efforts of Anna Jarvis, who wanted to honor her mother's heroic work and attitude of caring for wounded soldiers from both sides of the Civil War. The holiday began at Anna Jarvis' church, St. Andrew's Episcopal Methodist Church in Grafton West Virginia. Anna Jarvis believed a mother is "the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world." It became a national holiday in 1914 under President Woodrow Wilson.

It was out of love that Anna Jarvis wanted to honor her mother, and that all mothers are deserving of this special day. Yet the work that Anna did to create Mother's Day, wasn't the primary way that she honored her mother. Anna Jarvis continued to care for the sick as a way to honor the lessons and values that her mother taught her while she was alive.

This is what we need to remember as we celebrate Mother's Day. We honor our parents when we embody some of the lessons they taught us. Remembering and honoring require looking back and forward. To remember a lesson our mothers taught us could mean looking to yesterday, last month, and for some of us over the course of decades. Honoring the lessons impacts our lives today and into the future.

In our gospel lesson today, we see Jesus showing up on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. John tells us this was the third time he appeared. He died on the cross and rose from the dead three days later. His disciples were still in a state of confusion, shock, and grief. Jesus kept popping up after he rose from the dead. With these appearances he continues to show his love for them and is prompting the disciples to remember and honor him and the lessons he taught.

I wonder if Jesus had been out with the disciples that night, walking on the water, invisible to them, but aware of what they were doing, saying, thinking, and feeling. What he heard may have been what inspired him to do what he did on that beach that morning.

The actions we see Jesus do in this gospel lesson serve as reminders of some key events and lessons that they had shared together. Those events were powerful experiences of God's love that they clearly needed to remember at this time in their lives. What were those lessons? God has a claim and a call on their lives for them to fulfill. God's love is gracious and abundant. God's love is expressed through us as servant leaders. Let's unpack these lessons, for we can learn from them as well.

When Jesus appears to the disciples on the beach, he calls out to them asking how their fishing work went? They had to say, "No fish!" No Fish!! There was a similar time when Jesus did that. Peter and Andrew, James and John had heard him teaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus encouraged them to go back out to fish. They had fished all night but caught nothing. When they obeyed Jesus, they caught an amazing amount of fish! Jesus called them to follow him and Peter, Andrew, James, and John left everything and did so. (Luke 5:1-11)

Jesus did the same thing that early morning. He was reminding them of his call to follow him. Christ's call in the disciples' lives completely transformed them as people and the lives they were living. Reminding them of this call at this sensitive time of loss renewed their sense of purpose gave their lives deeper meaning. The disciples had many lessons to teach new disciples and many values to live out and embody to be vessels of God's love and powers. Jesus was renewing the disciples' call to remind others of God's love for them.

The second lesson Jesus taught had to do with all those fish! 153 of them!! There were so many fish that their nets could have ripped or torn, but that didn't happen!

The disciples by this time, realized that it was Jesus standing on the shore and they quickly moved towards him. When they gathered together they saw the campfire with some fish and bread on it. He invited them to bring some of the fish from their catch as well.

Serving them bread and fish may have reminded the disciples of the times when he fed thousands of people with just a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish. The disciples saw him multiply what had been provided so that they could care for all those people who had gathered in the fields and sides of mountains.

The disciples remembered that Christ has authority over all the creation and God's love is abundant and gracious.

The third lesson Jesus taught them that morning was about servant leadership. He invited the disciples to have breakfast with him. The last time they had enjoyed a meal with Jesus was on the Passover. That night Jesus washed his disciples' feet. This morning he cooked them breakfast. That last time they ate bread with Christ he told them it was his body, broken for them.

The disciples' lives were blessed with a fresh sense of purpose and meaning, an awareness of God's abundant grace, and their leadership would be very different from the privileged and authoritarian style of leaders that governed the people politically and even in their religious lives. These lessons were all expressions of God's love for them...and us.

The most important lessons we can pass to our children and others are those lessons that we embody from our faith:

- Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength which includes worship in personal and community ways.

- Loving neighbors as ourselves; treating people the way we like to be treated.

- Taking care of our spouses and children, nurturing them in loving homes and teaching them the lessons of our faith.

- Learning to be humble, not arrogant; gracious not critical nor judgmental; grateful and content, not demanding or greedy.

- Not lying, nor being jealous, nor lusting for others, nor betraying others

- Learning to embody the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, faithfulness, self-control; and other important qualities like honesty, courage, integrity, dependability, and wisdom.

- Caring for those who are financially poor, poor in health, strangers and newcomers, for those in prison, or suffering from oppression and injustice, or those have been attacked or injured.

--being good stewards of the creation, our Spiritual Gifts of service, and of our financial and other resources and blessings that the Lord shares with us.
--and finally not worrying, but trusting more and more in God.

These are just a few of the lessons that Jesus taught his disciples, and there are so many more! In order for us to honor God, we need to remember what they are and live them out.

What important lessons did your mother teach you?

It could have been a practical lesson like learning to cook or do your wash or to sew. Maybe it was some words of wisdom that she shared with you at critical points in your life. Perhaps your mother set examples of excellent ways of caring and working that you continue to embody in your life today?

I think one of the most important lessons my mom taught me was how she loved my dad. She thought the world of him. She understood and extended a great deal of grace to him. She was his biggest encourager, especially when he began his own business. My dad was a good man, respected in the community by many, but he had his share of problems due to poor self-esteem. My mom constantly built him up through her love and encouragement.

This lesson, my mom taught me was more something I "caught" through her actions and attitudes over the years. She taught me by example. I'd like to think that I am a good wife to Dale in part because of the example my mother set for me. The Lord however blessed me with a husband who is a confident man.

What important lessons are you teaching to your children or others, especially those who are immature in the faith?

Hopefully sometime today or in the next few days, you will take some time to think about that, so that you may remember your mother's love for you, but more importantly remember God's love for you too! We need to remember what these lessons are in order for us to live them out and honor them.

It is my prayer that this message sustains and nurtures your faith in our loving God. Amen.

Pastor Sheri