

If You Had a Mother Who...
Genesis 16:1-6; 1 Kings 3:16-27

Slide 1

I've delivered several Mother's Day messages through the years and what I have come to realize is that no matter how much I say about a good mother it doesn't do them justice.

I can't tell you anything new, but I can give you a gentle reminder as sometimes we can take them for granted because we're accustomed to them being good.

Many of us have or have had good mothers or "good mother figures" who, although not perfect, loved us enough to help us become who we are today.

This morning, as you listen to this message, if you had a good mother or "mother figure" that cared enough about you to help you become who you are today, bless them and give God the praise for the woman who influenced your life!

Therefore, today I want to share with you the stories of two unlikely mothers who share some traits with good mothers today.

We're going to start with Hagar, the slave of Sarah, Abraham's wife, so turn with me to Genesis 16.

Slide 2

Genesis 16:1-6, *"Now Sarai (say-rhy), Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; so she said to Abram, 'The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.'" Abram agreed to what Sarai said. So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.*

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me." "Your slave is in your hands," Abram said. "Do with her whatever you think best." Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her."

Hagar was part of a dowry that the Pharaoh of Egypt gave to Sarah when he mistakenly thought he would make her one of his wives. This made Hagar Sarah's property, her servant-slave.

Therefore, when Sarah couldn't have children, she gave Hagar to Abraham to bear a child for her.

In this transaction, Hagar became Abraham's concubine which carried more importance than just being a servant.

A concubine was a female slave designated to bear children. They had a certain status that placed them above normal slaves.

Some were even listed among family members. In fact, sons of concubines could also be equals in inheritance and succession, thus they were a threat to the sons of wives.

Although they may have had other responsibilities, their primary job was to bear children of the man to whom they were given. But don't forget, Hagar was still a slave. She had no choice in the matter.

So, when Sarah offered her to her husband, Hagar couldn't refuse, she had to obey in order to bear children to him on Sarah's behalf.

Can you imagine how she felt? Even though this was the custom of the time, she was still a woman serving as a surrogate for someone else without a choice.

Now the Bible tells us that, when Hagar found that she was pregnant her attitude changed towards Sarah, probably because she succeeded where Sarah failed.

When Sarah noticed this change of attitude, she complained to Abraham. In fact, she actually blamed him for the situation although it was her idea.

When she blamed Abraham, he told her in verse six: *“Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.”*

Regardless that Hagar had been given to Abraham to be his concubine, she was still Sarah’s slave. Because of Hagar’s attitude after she became pregnant, Sarah revoked Hagar’s “concubine” status.

In fact, Sarah began to treat Hagar so harshly that Hagar ran away. When you read the rest of the chapter, you’ll find that an angel of the Lord found her and told her to return to Sarah and submit to her.

He also told her that she would have many descendants and she was to name her son Ishmael. So, Hagar returned to Sarah and bore Abraham a son. As directed by the angel, she named him Ishmael.

We need to understand that after her child was born, Hagar didn’t reject her son even though he wasn’t conceived out of love.

Because she had conceived and delivered a son on behalf of another it would’ve been easy for her to see her son as a reminder of what she had gone through and how her life would forever be changed.

There was a chance that no other man would want her since she had been with another man. Every time she looked at her son, she would be reminded of this.

However, this was not her response. She became a mother, and she loved her son.

In Genesis 21, Sarah requested that Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away so that Ishmael wouldn't be in competition with Isaac for his inheritance.

This distressed Abraham, but God told him to listen to Sarah and promised that He would make a nation out of Ishmael's descendants. Many Arabs today claim Ishmael as their forefather.

After she was driven away, she ran out of provisions. It got to the point where she thought she and her son would die.

Genesis 21:15-16, *"When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, 'I cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there, she began to sob."*

Not wanting to see him die, she separated herself from him and cried because she knew she couldn't save her son.

These actions are not the actions of a woman who was the mother of a child that she didn't love.

Even though she was forced to have this child, it forever changed the circumstances of her life. He was her child and she loved him.

Keep this in mind as I move to mother number two. Turn with me to 1 Kings 3.

Slide 3

In 1 Kings 3:16-28, we find the story of two women who had babies within days of each other.

Both mothers had given birth to sons. One of the mothers accidentally laid on top of her baby while she was sleeping and smothered him.

When she realized what she had done, she switched him with the baby of the woman who lived in the house with her.

When the other woman woke up in the morning, she found that the baby lying next to her was dead.

Initially, she thought that her child had died, but upon a careful examination, she realized the baby wasn't hers. A mother knows her child!

She confronted the other woman who claimed that she hadn't switched the babies. Finally, they were brought before King Solomon.

I want you to understand, before I go further, what the rules were in that day, when you were in the presence of a king.

Remember the story of Queen Esther? When she went to see the king without being summoned and how she had to wait to be acknowledged?

In Old Testament times, when you were in the presence of a king, you did not speak without permission, or it could cost you your life.

Well, when these two mothers stood before King Solomon, one of the mothers broke protocol.

After both women pleaded their case, Solomon knew there was no way to determine who was telling the truth, so he made a decision.

You see, some say possession is half the battle towards proving ownership, but not in this case. Although one woman had the baby, the real mother was determined to have her child.

Let's pick the story up 1 Kings 3:24, *"Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword for the king. He then gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other." The woman whose son was alive was deeply moved out of love for her son and said to the king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby! Don't kill him!" But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall have him. Cut him in two!" Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him; she is his mother."*

Because both women claimed the child as their own, Solomon decided that the child should be divided equally between the two.

When this decision was announced, the real mother of the child being *"deeply moved out of love for her son"* spoke to the king out of order.

She was no longer concerned about protocol. She was only concerned about her son.

She was not concerned about being killed for speaking to the king; she was only concerned about saving the life of her son!

She spoke up and told the king to give the baby to the other woman. The other woman told the king to go ahead and divide the child, she didn't care.

At this point Solomon knew who the baby's mother was and returned the child to his rightful mother.

It would be hard to recognize someone as a mother who'd be willing to allow her child to be killed.

Slide 4

This story contrasted two mothers – one who loved her child and one who would rather see a baby killed versus being a part of the child's life even though she was not the child's mother.

I don't know of a mother who could stand by and watch a baby be killed, even if that baby wasn't hers.

Sometimes I think about what that baby's life would've been like with a mother like that – but, sadly today, we see mothers just like this.

When the mother of the child stood before Solomon and heard him speak the words to divide her son, she quickly processed what that meant.

If she allowed Solomon to divide her baby, she'd lose her child forever, but if she allowed this woman to have her child, at least he would be alive.

She would be able to watch him grow and possibly have a relationship with him. There would always be a chance that later the child would come to know who his real mother was.

I'm not sure if this mother was thinking that, but I believe that she was thinking about saving the life of her child.

She was willing to put her life on the line and speak out to the king to save her child. If you had a mother who stood up for your life, then you'd know what I'm talking about.

I've shared these two stories to stress this point: delivering a baby into this world makes you a birth mother but it's what you do afterwards that determines if you're a "good mother."

Each one of these mothers are examples of mothers today. Yes, there are mothers who love their children and would give their lives for them.

Likewise, there are mothers who not only don't care about their children but see them as a means to an end – whatever that "end" is.

Mothers like that wouldn't put their lives on the line for their children. Mothers like that view their children as a hindrance to the lifestyle they wish to live.

But when you find that good mother, Proverbs 31:28 tells us that "*Her children arise and call her blessed.*"

If you have a good mother who's still living, Bless Her Today! Don't wait until tomorrow. There're many mothers who've passed through this world, some were good, and some not.

Some people measure the "goodness" of a mother based on whether or not that mother did things for them as they grew up under her guidance.

This is why you don't ask a child or teenager if they have a good mother because their frontal lobes are not fully developed. They can't fully understand the question.

You see, sometimes you have to experience some things in life before you really understand what it means to have had a good mother.

Most of the time we don't appreciate them when we're living with them - it comes later when we've had time to reflect. So let me share with you some of my thoughts on a good mother.

Slide 5

Conclusion

If you had a mother who stopped you from leaving the house for school dressed in an outfit that was too tight and revealing, an outfit that was probably made with less than a half yard of fabric, bless her!

Then, if she showed up at school to see if you sneaked those clothes out of the house so you could change when you got to school, bless her and give God the praise!!!

You see, your mother cared about the image you presented when your frontal lobe was not developed enough for you to know how to dress.

She understood the doors that could be opened or closed based on how you looked, and she wanted you to know that early in life versus learning it later.

If you think I'm wrong, go to the mall or Walmart, and just walk around and see what children are wearing these days.

By the way, while you're looking at them, look at the adults who're giving them their example!

If you had a mother who worked several jobs in order to provide for you and your every need, even giving you a few of your "wants," bless her and give God the praise!

You see your mother worked several jobs in order to take care of you and to invest in you.

If you had a mother who quit her job to be at home with you because that's what you needed at the time, bless her!

If she was there for you when you got home from school and was present at all of your school functions, bless her and give God the praise!

Your mother forfeited her career to be home with you. She made a conscious investment in you and that investment kept you off the streets, out of jail and alive.

If you had a mother who washed your mouth out with soap when you used words in the house because you forgot where you were, bless her!

You had a mother who was willing to teach you early how to converse using appropriate language skills.

If you had a mother who took you to Church, wouldn't let you fall asleep during service, and made you go to Sunday School, then bless her and Give God the Praise!

If your mother had not done those things, you might not be sitting here this morning!

If you had a mother who prayed for you because she had you on her mind, thank her for those many prayers that she prayed for you while you were too unaware to pray for yourself!

Many angels have been dispatched from heaven because of the prayers of mothers!

As I close this morning, I ask that you give God the praise for the mother or mother figure who so influenced your life that you accepted Christ as your personal Savior and will be able to live an eternity with them when all is said and done.

Have a blessed Mother Day today!