

John 19:25-27
Christ's Care for His Flock

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

Christ has been Crucified, and now as He hangs on the cross, the majority of His followers are not there. Fearing the authorities they have gone into hiding. But we know that there were four people who knew Him well who could not stay away for long, and so they have followed Him even to Golgotha and they now stand looking on helplessly as Jesus dies on the cross.

By reading here and in the other Gospels, we can identify the people at the cross as John, who identifies himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved, Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome the mother of James and John, who is also Mary's sister, and Mary the wife of Clopas and the mother of James and Joses, and Mary Magdalene.

Why were they there? Love for Christ brought them to the cross! They cannot stay away regardless of the danger. This is the mark of a true disciple of Christ their love to Christ is so great that no matter how difficult or how dangerous it is, they must be near him. When the question comes to the Christian, **"Do you also want to go away?"** The true disciple of Christ will always be willing to say: **"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**

In these verses Jesus is keeping the 5th commandment to *honor your mother and your father* to the very end. And honoring your parents is more than just lip service, it means helping them, and providing for them. And so Jesus does not forget to perform the duty of an oldest son. His mother Mary was now in her 50s and widowed. Someone will have to take care of her now that her first-born Son Jesus is finishing His earthly ministry. So He commits his mother into the care of beloved apostle John, and we read that from that hour Mary did indeed go and live with John and his family, for as Paul tells us John was married and probably had children as well.

I hope you see that in this we learn that merely getting rid of all of our property and worldly goods as some Christians have done is not nearly as useful as putting what we have at the disposal of Christ and the kingdom. Had John taken a monkish vow of poverty and sold all that he had, who would take care of Mary and where would she have lived?

And yet Jesus does not commit his mother to the care of his own brothers. Why is this? Well it wasn't simply that John was the only man there at the time, and it wasn't merely that they were probably still in Galilee at this time. It was probably because at this point as we read in John 7:5 – **"For even His brothers did not believe in Him."** And that is why John was there and Christ's half-brothers were not. .

We know that as members of the household of faith there are ties between believers far stronger than those of family. For instance, one of the reasons why the relationship between Jonathan and David was so much stronger than that between Jonathan and his father Saul was that David and Jonathan were

both true believers. We see that also in the relationship between Samuel and Eli and countless other examples. Many of you who were raised in unbelieving families can testify to that, the ties of faith in Christ are thicker than blood. That has been my own experience, and frankly sometimes my parents can't understand it.

That is why Christ Himself when his mother and His brothers came to Him, concerned at the reports that He was being called mad and demon possessed by the Pharisees, and tried to take Him home we read in Mark 3:34-35 that when Christ was told that His mother and brothers were outside asking for Him that He ***"looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."***

He tell us as well, that we must do the same thing. If our family is seeking to drag us away from the kingdom to turn us aside from follow Christ, then we must respectfully refuse:

Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

But please know that part of the provision that Christ makes for believers is membership in the household or family of God –

Matthew 10:28 Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's,

30 "who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time -- houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions -- and in the age to come, eternal life.

To have a place in the kingdom of God is better than to have been born into the wealthiest and most powerful of unbelieving families. **I tell you no lie. I would rather be a member of Christ's kingdom than a prince in the Saudi Royal family.**

His words were also an indicator that he would not be coming down, that he knew He was going to die, and so he is making final provision for Mary. He even calls her woman, once again, which shows that the family bond that existed is being dissolved. The primary connection between Jesus and Mary is not Son and mother, but Savior and disciple. What Jesus is doing on the cross as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world is for her and her sins as well.

But still that very exchange must have cut her to the heart. But that wound was prophesied long ago.

They bring him up to be presented at the temple and to make the appointed sacrifices for Him as a first-born male child, Simeon

Luke 2:34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

35 "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Mary had to go through more pain than ordinary mothers

As AW Pink put it: *“What sorrow it must have caused her when, because there was no room in the inn, she had to lay her new-born babe in the manger! What anguish must have been hers when she learned of Herod’s purpose to destroy her infant’s life! What trouble was given her when she was forced on his account to flee into a foreign country and sojourn for several years in the land of Egypt! What piercings of soul must have been hers when she saw her Son despised and rejected of men! What grief must have wrung her heart as she beheld him hated and persecuted by his own nation! And who can estimate what she passed through as she stood there at the cross? If Christ was the man of sorrows, was she not the woman of sorrows?”*

One of the greatest pains that a mother can endure is seeing a child die, but to die like this? To see a child in pain is heart-wrenching, but can you imagine seeing your child not just in pain but mocked and humiliated. To hear the people demand a bandit in place of this best of all sons.

Applications:

1) The First application deals with something almost too silly to be taken seriously, but you should probably be aware of it. As you are all aware, Roman Catholic theology assigns Mary a place she never had in the bible, *the mediatrix of all Grace* and there are even movements afoot to make her co-redemptrix with Jesus. And so Roman Catholic theologians see this as Jesus telling John as the representative of the church, that Mary is his mother, and that she is under his care. Thus it makes Mary not only the mother of Jesus, but the spiritual mother of the church. That is clearly not the meaning of the scripture, especially because Mary is put under the care of John and not vice versa.

2) Great sorrows may come even to those who are highly favored of the Lord and loved by Jesus. To be afflicted is not an evidence of the Lord’s disfavor.

3) The Lord did not forget his mother and made provision for Her need. So too he will make provision for our needs as well, but sometimes we don’t like what he provides. I’m fairly certain that at that moment that Jesus was hanging on the cross, what Mary wanted most of all was for her son *not* to have die, but that could not be both for her sake and for the sake of all the elect.

SO

4) Do not be overprotective when it comes to the Christian work of your children.

We can do that, the Devil had tried to use the natural desire of mother to protect her child to work against the ministry of Christ:

Matthew 3:31 Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him.

32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You."

The example of the TWO MARY’S Margaret Wilson had been born at Glenvernoch, a farm near Newton Stewart in Wigtownshire. Her parents were dutiful Episcopalians, but her older brothers were among the Covenanters. Local conventicle to see the charismatic James Renwick. On occasion they also took along their young sister Agnes.[1]

In February 1685 the sixteen year old Thomas Wilson left to join other Covenanters in the hills. The girls went on a secret visit to Wigtown to visit friends, including an elderly widow Margaret McLachlan (there are various spellings of her second name). The young sisters Margaret and Agnes were taken prisoner, possibly after declining to drink the King's health, and put into the "thieves' hole". They refused to take the Abjuration Oath renouncing the Covenant. On the following Sunday Margaret McLachlan was arrested, and also put into the "thieves' hole" with the Wilson girls

*The other three were found guilty on all charges, and sentenced to be "tied to palisades fixed in the sand, within the floodmark of the sea, and there to stand till the flood o'erflowed them". **The father of the girls, Gilbert Wilson, went to Edinburgh and made a plea to the Privy Council of Scotland for clemency for all three, presenting a petition which claimed that Margaret McLachlan had recanted. Agnes was granted freedom on a bond of 100 Pounds Scots, and reprieves were written out for the two Margarets with a date of 30 April 1685.** There have been claims that the two women recanted the Covenant and were not executed, but Kirk Session records written out twenty years after the events provide detailed accounts supported by witness statements.*

Margaret Wilson and Margaret McLachlan, were condemned to death by drowning and were chained to stakes on the Solway Firth. Although at the last moment, choking on the salt water, Margaret Wilson was allowed to offer a prayer for the King, this was not good enough for her accusers, and she was forcibly thrust beneath the waves. It is said that, as the tide rose, she defiantly quoted from the psalms and the epistles and sang.

5) The Lord did not rebuke John, even though he had initially fled from Him. So too, Jesus will never rebuke and drive away the wanderer who returns to Him. So if you have strayed far from Christ, wandered from the faith, and pierced yourself through with many sorrows, know that as long as you have breath you can return and that he is eager to receive you, and may even be waiting to assign you, like John, some important role to play in the kingdom.

Remember always that scene in the parable of the prodigal son, and note that here you are being told that when you return to God he doesn't receive you grudgingly and assign you the lowest position. Far from it -

Luke 15:20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

23 'And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

***24 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'* And they began to be merry.**