

What Hallmark Forgot

By Pastor Greg
5-11-08

Romans 2:28-29

Bunkertown COB

A mother's son really loved Chap Stick. He kept using his mother's Chap Stick and then losing it. So finally one day she showed him where it was stored in the bathroom. Well, one Sunday during the typical rush trying to get ready for Church, with everyone crying and carrying on, this son could not be found. So the mother searches everywhere and finally finds him in the bathroom applying Chap Stick very carefully to the cat's rear end. He looks at his mom and says "chapped." Now if you have a cat, you know that their little rear ends do look pretty chapped. And the only question to really ask at that point is whether it was the FIRST time he had done that to the cat's behind or the hundredth.

Happy Mother's Day mothers. And may it remind you that no matter how hard you try to civilize these glorious little creatures, there will always be that day when you realize they've been using your Chap Stick on the cat's rear. I'd like to see that printed on a Mother's Day card.

As a Pastor, I've never really enjoyed preaching on Mother's Day. The expectation is that I would put together some message that celebrates motherhood; exalting those who have been fortunate enough to bear children and those fortunate enough to have a great relationship with their mothers. But not every woman has been a mother, and not every mother holds a place of honor in their children's eyes. So what do you say? How do you celebrate Mother's Day without alienating those whom Hallmark forgot?

Many people see Mother's Day as a secular holiday, designed by the greeting card industry, promoted by restaurants, beloved by florists. Some pastors agree, objecting to the commercialism of the holiday. American consumers typically spend about \$10 billion each year on Mother's Day on greeting cards, flowers, meals, and other presents for mom. But the numbers don't tell the whole story, not by a long shot.

The woman credited with founding Mothers Day is Anna Jarvis who lived in Grafton, WV. Anna's mother spent a great deal of her time organizing "Mothers' Work Day Clubs" in the 1850's. These clubs provided medicine for the poor, inspected milk for children, provided nursing care for the sick, and shelters for children with tuberculosis.

When the Civil War broke out she called together four of her clubs and, in a remarkable display of courage and compassion, the women nursed soldiers from both sides. After the war, Anna's mother became a genuine peace maker by organizing "Mothers' Friendship Days" to bring together families across the Mason Dixon line.

In 1907, two years after her mother's death, Anna organized the first "Mothers' Day" in Grafton, WV so that the work of peacemaking and the war against poverty would not be forgotten. So in reality, Mother's day began not so we would remember one's own mother, but to help us focus on the cause of peace among the nations of the world, the fight against poverty, and the abuse of children. In the end, Mother's Day is more a celebration of what is in a woman's heart, not it the fact that they have given birth to a child.

Paul writes in Romans chapter two, ²⁸ **For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision. ²⁹ No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by God's Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.**" ¹ (Romans 2:28-29)

Here's the part I find really interesting. According to Paul, a person was a Jew based upon the attitudes in their heart, not based upon what they did. And it is one of the central truths of Christianity. A person is not a Christian because of what they do but because of what is in their heart.

¹Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Ro 2:28-29). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

So ladies, I want to ask you about what's in your heart. If we truly are celebrating the Mother's Day that Hallmark forgot, then we need to look beyond merely taking responsibility for giving birth and look at the role we are playing within the family of God.

In Titus chapter two Paul says to “teach the older women to live in a way that honors God. They must not slander others or be heavy drinkers. Instead, they should teach others what is good. These older women must train the younger women to love their husbands and their children, to live wisely and be pure, to work in their homes, to do good, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then they will not bring shame on the word of God.” ² (Titus 2:3-5) And the thought here is that ladies have a wonderful opportunity to show the impressionable young girls among them the traits of a godly woman. It was her mother's heart that impacted young Anna Jarvis.

The beautiful part about all of this is that one need not to have given birth to a child in order to have these characteristics in her heart. You could have a strained relationship with your mother and yet recognize that there are other women who have demonstrated these characteristics in their lives. And that the heart of a godly woman is what we are really celebrating today.

So today I'd like to say thank you to the women here for their integrity; for their wisdom, their purity, and their service to God. Thank you for the way you teach us how to care for one another and how to love one another. Thank you for your discipline and your modesty. Hallmark may have forgotten what Mother's Day is really all about, but I hope none of us here today will forget that it is the celebration of what lies deep within a woman's heart.

²Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Tit 2:3-5). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.