

Love that Provides
Woman, here is your son...here is your mother. John 19:25, 26

We are continuing in our study of the words that Jesus spoke from the Cross. His first words were those of love and forgiveness when He asked His Heavenly Father to forgive not only those who were nailing Him to a Cross but in a sense to forgive all of us whose sins made it necessary for Him to die.

Then we looked at the words of grace and love that pardons when He declared to one of the thieves dying with Him, **"Today you will be with me in paradise."**

Next, we will consider the words of love that provides as we consider Jesus declaring to mother, **"Woman, here is your son."** Then Jesus declared to the disciple John, **"Here is your mother."**

Near the Cross of Jesus stood His mother Mary. She was there that day as her Son hung in pain, bearing the weight of humanities sins and about to die. Mary was there to see and feel it all and we cannot begin to imagine the inner pain she felt that day. John was also there as the only disciple who ventured near that cross that day. All, including John, had previously fled, but he returned. And he watched as the one in whom he had staked his life was dying. He had to have been hurting deeply for his was a special relationship with Jesus.

Read John 19:26-27.

I doubt that we can fully understand what Jesus' words really meant to His mother or to John without first trying to picture the agony, sorrow and emptiness that must have filled their hearts and minds that day. Mary stood there looking on at the one whom God had given her via a miracle now being put to death. I'm sure she remembered the words spoken by Simeon at His presentation in the temple when He was 8 days old. Simeon declared that in time a sword would pierce the one whom God was giving to the world.

As for John, he left all to follow Jesus. He gave up a profitable fishing business to follow Him. He hoped so much and now it seemed like it was falling apart.

Both Mary and John were there that day, and both had to have been wondering what lay ahead. Then Jesus spoke to them and said. **"Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."** It's possible to look at these words in a traditional way and see them as fulfillment of the command to love your parents and to care for them. This certainly illustrates that. But if we look beyond that we can discover a deeper meaning to it all.

First, what did the words, **"Woman, here is your son"** mean to Mary? I don't think we can grasp the full meaning of this unless we look at the way in which He addressed Mary. The Greek word Jesus used is **"woman"** and not **"mother"** and that is significant. That word **"woman,"** in the Greek, was not in any way a derogatory term. That was not a **"hey lady"** term but was rather a

term of great respect. Jesus addressed His mother as “**woman**” at the beginning of His ministry when Jesus was asked by His mother to help with a shortage of wine. Jesus turned to her and said, according to John 2:4, “**Woman, why do you involve me? My time has not yet come.**” The term was used there for the very same reason that it was use here on the Cross. Jesus was clarifying His roles as Messiah and that of a son. Jesus would not have addressed His mother the way had there not been something important in what He was saying.

Until then Mary was the earthly mother of Jesus but on the Cross a heavenly transaction was taking place. In a real sense she would no longer stand before Him as a mother but as an individual for whom He was dying. From that moment on she would come unto Him like everyone else, by faith. There would be no special dispensation for her in eternity. She would enter heaven like every other sinner that has ever lived, by grace through faith.

Jesus was saying more to her than John will provide for you. To have done that, all He needed to do was to speak to John and say to him, “Please take care of my mother.” Rather He spoke, not of providing, but of a new relationship. He deliberately broke the relationship He had with Mary and declared that John was now her son. In declaring that He was saying that Mary was no different than any other woman. To have Jesus as your earthly Son is special but to have Him as your Savior is even more important. The spiritual relationship is far more significant than the family one. In those words from the Cross Jesus was proclaiming a provision far beyond ensuring a place for Mary to sleep and food to eat. As her Savior He could provide for her in ways He could never have done as a Son.

“**Woman, here is your son.**” It certainly speaks of Jesus’ love and care for His mother and serves as a reminder that all of us have family responsibilities that we must keep. But what did all that mean to John? John assumed that, in part, it meant caring for Mary. Historical traditions confirm his care for her. One tradition has it that John remained in Jerusalem for 11 years providing a home for her until she died while another says that when it was necessary for him to flee Jerusalem, because of persecution, he took her to Ephesus where he was pastor and that Mary died there.

Read John 19:27 and then read John 20:8. John saw the empty tomb and knew Jesus was alive. Then in verse 10 we read, “**Then the disciples went back home.**” Can you imagine John bursting into his house and shouting to Mary, “Your Son Jesus is alive, the tomb is empty. I know He arose. There is no other way to explain the graveclothes?” What excitement that must have been.

Why did Jesus ask John to do this? The initial response would be that it was because John was the disciple whom Jesus loved in a special way. Besides, he was there when all others were still in hiding. But Jesus had other brothers. Wouldn’t the responsibility of His mother’s care have logically fallen to His brothers? I am sure they would have assumed that responsibility. They had been caring for her in recent years. Once Jesus began His public ministry He was not really her primary provider in an earthly sense. He had been on the road for the past 3 years as an itinerant

preacher and really had not been home all that much. Certainly during that time his brothers had done their share and I suspect could have been counted on to continue. So why might Jesus have declared to John that from that point on Mary would be his mother?

I wonder if it was not a way of communicating to John that while Jesus was leaving, and the future seemed so uncertain the work and responsibilities of Jesus were not done. In the future His disciples, and then His followers down to us, would be expected to do the things that hitherto He had done.

John saw in this a responsibility to personally care for Mary. At the same time, it is reasonable that Jesus was going beyond that and telling John, and through him all of us, that we are now the hands through which He works, the mouths through which He speaks and the hearts through which He loves.

There are many practical lessons for us in those words that initially seem to be directed only to Mary and John. First, they remind us that there is no other way to heaven except via faith and even being the earthly mother of Jesus was not enough. As Jesus had told Nicodemus, **“You must be born again.”** Mary stood before Jesus as we all do, as an individual in need of redemption and redemption comes via faith.

In contemplating those words of Jesus from the Cross, we get yet another picture of the cost of our redemption as Jesus gave up all, even the closest of relationships that He might be our redeemer. We will never fully grasp that and all that the Cross cost Him. Our redemption is free only to us but it cost Jesus everything.

In contemplating those words from the Cross we are reminded that, as John was given a very practical assignment so, too, must we now do the work that He would otherwise have done here on earth. It is in the acceptance of that assignment that we express our love to Him who gave His all for us.