

THE THIRD WORD FROM THE CROSS

John 19:26-27

1. Father forgive them.
2. Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise.
3. Woman behold Thy Son.

Mary's son had long left home. He is completing his task in life.

A task so far reaching Mary did not understand, things which he had done -- she did not grasp the reason why he was hanging on the cross. But she was there at the cross sharing her son's experience. Her body was in pain because his was in pain. Her heart was broken. She felt forsaken. She was his mother to the end.

Motherhood is not just an interlude of 20 years of life of a woman when she has children at home. It is (an experience) -- it is (a destiny) which has a point of beginning but is ended only by the death of a woman whom someone calls "Mother".

There are vast dimensions in motherhood from the birth of the first child until the death of a woman who is mother.

There are responsibilities and different stages of motherhood.

There are many changing demands.

Pre-School Years

Characteristics of the Period - The home is the child's entire world and the mother is the most important figure in it.

Special demands of the period.

1. Be with your children during this period.

Do not relinquish this role (unless) it is absolutely unavoidable.

2. Give your children plenty of affection.

By actions and attitudes you will leave a life long impression upon your child that the (world) is either a friendly place or is hostile. Give your child security during this period. Help him to be able to accept himself. Later on -- love him in this formative stage.

### School Years

Characteristics of the period - your child will be entering the wider world.

Special demands of the period.

1. Help your child through the crises of this period.

The fear of starting school.

Anxieties over changing schools.

Meeting increased responsibilities and experience adolescence.

2. Help your child to stand on his own feet more and more. Don't shield him from the world of real people. He is going to have to spend his life in a world where there will be some people with whom it is difficult to relate.

### Turning Them Loose

Characteristics of the period. Your work as a mother will be tested when your child leaves home and your ability to let go.

Special demands of the period.

1. Relate to your children as fellow (adults) who have freedom of choice and must live with their mistakes.
2. Let them work out their (own problems) in money matters, career, and marriage.
3. Do not deprive your child of the benefit of struggling.

### The Grandmother Stage

Characteristics of the period - I have never been a grandmother -- but *let's put it away from home*  
this appears to be a time of great satisfaction.

Special demands of the period.

1. Do not complicate your children's task of parenthood by (interfering).  
Remember that you are a mother first, and a grandmother second.
2. Do not do their job for them.  
Make it clear to your children that you are not free - standby baby-sitter.

### Old Age

Characteristics of the period. Accept the reality of being old.

Special demands of the period.

1. Stand on your (own feet) as long as possible, but face the fact when you can no longer do so.
2. Remember your role in (living arrangements) that have to be made.

Don't live exclusively for your children - it will hurt them and it will hurt you.

When they leave home, as they will, your life will be unspeakably empty.

Maintain a good marriage.

You had a husband before you had children. Cultivate other interests -  
funds - church - community service - hobbies.

Don't live through your children - make them be what you wanted to  
be.

Gain knowledge from lectures, books - maturity - flexibility demands of  
your role change.

Divine help - ask God for wisdom, guidance. He will give it to you.

I have traveled a field - however this has meaning for 3rd word on the  
cross.

Can anyone really take the place of a son in the heart of a mother?

(Could Mary forget) that son - could he be replaced.

On the outskirts of the crowd at the crucifixion stood a small frightened  
group - Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary, wife of Cleophas, Mary Magdalene,  
and Salome mother of John were present.

The (eyes of Jesus roving) over the multitude lighted on his mother standing  
at the foot of the cross.

Beside the cross in tears

The woeful mother stood,

Bent 'neath the weight of years,

And viewed His flowing blood;

Her mind with grief was torn,

Her strength was ebbing fast,

And though her heart forlorn

The sword of anguish passed.

It is always hard for a mother to see her son die. She expects him to lay her head in the grave. But in the case of this - it was the first born son. He was only about 33 years of age and of course you think of the death that he was dying -- that of a criminal. Many mothers have had to suffer. And they do suffer the kind of death that their children have to die.

But what Mother's sufferings were ever equal to Mary's. There he hung on the cross before her eyes. He was helpless. His wounds bled. His mouth was parched. There was no way for him to reach out and grasp her hands or for her to put her arms around his neck. The nails pierced her as well as him. And the thorns on his brow I am certain cut her heart. Like swords. She has been told that he would be called great and the son of the highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father, David. This greatest, this throne, this crown and kingdom -- where were they.

The shepherds had visited him. The wisemen worshipped him. And Simeon had recognized him as the Messiah. He was only a village carpenter.

And on the cross he is no longer the son of the mother - but Jesus is both sacrifice and high priest, for all men. As the sacrifice, he is dying for sins. As our high priest he ministers to our needs.

First of all Jesus is our Saviour from sin.

Second, he is our comforter, guide, and strength.

He spoke first to his Mother. What a special privilege of identifying her.

But he addressed her as a woman. To some, this seems to be a matter of lacking in respect. Others, misunderstand the word woman. In fact it is a term of respect. Carrying none of the sense in its modern usage - Matt. 15:28. It was often used in great tragedies, to address queens, or persons of distinction. And Jesus was taught to honor women and mothers, himself.

And Mary is the greatest of respect by the use of the word - he implied a difference in relationship. At the cross he was reminding her that she was merely a sinner saved by grace and he is now her Saviour. ~~Then~~ she had once upon a time gone down into the valley to give physical birth to him -- he is now going through the valley to give her eternal life.

It showed her to what extreme Jesus went - to bear the sins of the world. A destiny she had known - awaited him.

Now the Roman Catholic Church insists that Mary has been given the position of mediator. Entrusted with the treasures of his grace. They call her the mother of God, the queen of heaven. Surely nothing like this can be gotten from the words of the cross. You can't possibly find it anywhere else in the Bible. In fact Jesus, assignment to Mary at the cross, the most exact and opposite of that.

Other interpreters say that Mary was given a special consideration of loving provision, for the rest of her natural life. She was commissioned to provide food and clothes and well as sympathy in old age.

This third word deals with a peculiar human relationship, existing between Jesus and Mary. According to the flesh, she is his mother. He is her son.

Woman, behold thy son. He is actually breaking the relationship when he asked her to look at her son, he does not draw her attention to himself. But she is directed to John, the disciple. Not, I - but John is your son.

If you were standing by your dying son, and awaiting for his last recognition and he should address you as woman in his dying breath, it would no doubt break your heart. Regardless of the respect shown in the world. But Mary no longer was to be his mother and he was no longer to be any woman's son. Jesus was denying any special privilege or position.

There is a well known painting of Mary, broken-hearted, being led away from the crucifixion scene. John, who is now her son, is with her. And it seems that her trembling hand is carrying the crown of thorns in her mother-love. The artist was innocent of speculation. Mary had unfastened the thorny crown from Jesus brow. It was like a mother to do that. But before she got away from the cross, these thorns had pierced her own heart. And it was almost too great to bear.

And Mary discovered that she had been led from the natural union with Jesus to the mystical union with Christ. And she gladly took her place among those silent worshippers. She learned that it was better to have him as Saviour and Lord. She took her place among the believers. She learned that it was better to have him as Saviour. Now there are ~~some~~ who think that Mary was born without original sin. The assumption of Mary - in which she did not die but was taken alive into Heaven.

Thus they attribute her an (equal) to our Lord Jesus. And it is difficult to discern between the facts that men worship Mary as well as Christ.

V. (26) He spoke of Mary's relation to John - behold thy son. In one breath he took away her son, but with the next he gave her to another. Mary suffered more than any other of those that were at the cross because of her tenderness. (Often) she had felt the pain, the whispers of the neighbors, the hard things that were said against Jesus. And she was zealous for her son. Being her oldest son, Jesus had doubtless been Mary's main stay. Probably when (Jesus) was about 16 years old, Joseph had died, and from that time until his baptism he had been a source of counsel and economic support. Now Jesus in fulfilling - meant that the family expectations were dying as a common criminal. (How) could she return to their home. How could she face the talk. Where could this poor widow go for help. Where could she turn for understanding. She had no son, no one on earth could take his place.

Into her (tormented heart) came the words of Jesus, behold, thy son. Thus the desire of that hour, Jesus gave comfort. As he would spiritual salvation to all man. (He) did not forget, the needs of one poor woman.

We are reminded that Jesus (promise), I will not leave you comfortless. But I will come to you. John 14:18. Comfortless - means orphans. I will not leave you as an orphan. You will have the presence of the Holy Spirit in times of sorrow. Through the Holy Spirit is the source of comfort. And it is always true that the one means of administering His comfort to the person. Jesus was acquainted with sorrows. To know that one does not sorrow alone is to find comfort and strength, in the (ordeals) of life. When you express sympathy one to another - we suffer with them. (Sometimes) a



cheerful word, a squeeze of the hand makes all the difference in the world. Knowing that you have one constantly by your side. To walk with you.

A little boy suffering from a burning fever - throughout the night his father sat in the darkness. Suddenly from within the gloom came a voice. Daddy, -- the father's reply - yes, son, -- Daddy sit over here by my bed. If I can touch you, I won't be afraid. As Mary faced the future, she reached out and touched her son and was not afraid anymore. Why didn't Jesus say, to look to the other sons and the other daughters. Until after the resurrection Mary's oldest children did not believe in her eldest son. As he died on the cross, it is entirely possible that they felt little sorrow. The Lord Jesus commended her and the disciples whom he loved and who in turn loved him more than any other.

Recently a wonderful lady lost her husband through death. Some weeks later she went to her summer home which she loved so much. She questioned whether or not she should go there. When she, together with friends arrived, they stopped before the home of an elderly man, who had dearly loved her husband. When he came out to the car he did not say a word. But as he looked at the woman, tears came down his face. From there she went in comfort to the home, which was filled with memories of her beloved. She knew that someone else had loved him too and in that knowledge she found strength. The deepest relationships of life are really not physical but spiritual. On one occasion, Jesus Mother and brothers came to take him home, but he replied - who is my mother, who are my brothers. But he stretched out his hands toward his disciples. And he said, behold, my mother and my brother. Matt. 12:48. One who is not willing to forsake his merely physically relationships if need be for a spiritual fellowship with Jesus.

How wonderful it is that we can have both at the same time.

Because Jesus realized the true value of the fellowship of kindred minds. He told his mother, to look to John. The none Christian cannot enjoy true happiness. It is impossible to understand the comfort given here.

Jesus was interested in Mary's welfare. He did not forget John. He spoke to him of his relationship to Mary. He entrusted the care to one of the dearest to him and doubtless they heard this commitment. John had been with Jesus and very faithful. And now he is rewarded by the Lord's faith in him. Trustworthiness.

Jesus gave John comfort. He gave him a great responsibility.

When life seems to go to pieces. The best way to put it together again is to replace the things of loss with the sense of duty.

The daughter who had just lost her mother said I want to stay busy. When I am working, I do not have time to think of my sorrow. And John watched Jesus die. Life seemed to lose its' value. What is the use to go on living said he. Then suddenly Jesus gave him a trust. Life had meaning again.

This is the great way in which Christ commissioned his disciples. And evangelized the world - he gave them a commission. He commissioned the 12. In the Upper Room he talked with them. On the Resurrection Sunday, he said, peace be unto you as my Father hath sent me. Even so, send I you. John. 20:21.

After John in the case of his mother, Jesus to the 12 in the matter of a lost world said, the father sent me to perform a task in world redemption. I have accomplished my work - now I am returning the remainder over to you. Life for them took on a new value. That John was true to his trust is evident.

From that hour - that disciple - he took her unto his own home, John 19:27. One tradition says that she lived with him in Jerusalem until her death, 11 years later. Another living her old age with him in Ephases. In either case, we might gather mutual comfort and strength and we recall the experiences of life, the words of Jesus.

There are today thousands of mothers and sisters who know to do the will of God. And will he discharge and discover this peace.

John had received an assignment. He was going to be the substitute for Christ, in taking care of his mother.

There is a piece of poetry which so beautifully expresses this.

Christ has no hands but our hands.

To do his work today,

He has no feet but our feet

To lead men in his way.

He has no tongue but our tongue

To tell men how he died

He has no help but our help

To bring them to his side.

Here is a responsibility that cannot be ignored except we dispise  
the cross. Here is a sacred assignment and mission that we dare not  
neglect. It is every mother's responsibility to be a substitute for  
the substitute.