

Wrington & Lynch Chapels Minister's Website Article March 2021

A princess was walking down the street and met a frog. 'If you kiss me,' the frog said, 'I'll turn into a very spiritual, kind, and nice, Presbyterian minister.' The princess picked up the frog, put it in her pocket, and started walking away. 'What are you doing?' shouted the frog. The princess said, 'I'd rather have a frog than a Presbyterian minister.' You know something? The world isn't impressed with spirituality. They're impressed by love and compassion. They don't want super-spiritual miserable saints. And I agree. Sometimes I'd rather have a frog, too.

In March comes Mothering Sunday (not Mother's Day - that's a modern commercial campaign). Mothering Sunday was traditionally when people apprenticed to a trade, or working in service, could return to their mother *church* for one Sunday. It's not about mums! Of course, it often meant they went back to their families. But, we often forget the church bit. Sure, I like to honour mothers; but I want to honour God more. I thank God for the love mothers have; but thank God for his love more.

Who's the first woman in the Bible? Eve. The Bible says, when she was formed from Adam's rib, she was called 'woman'. But, later, we're told she was called 'Eve' not because she was Adam's wife, but because she was '**mother of all living.**' What does that mean? It says something about fulfilment for a woman when a man and a woman form a completeness that echoes God's intentions. It also says Eve knew her unique identity when she became a mother. There is something powerfully fulfilling in being a mother. How, then, does the Bible view mothers?

Firstly, mothers (and fathers) are to be honoured, held in respect. We read, '**Honour your father and your mother.**' Or even, extremely, '**Anyone who curses his mother or father shall be put to death!**' That should control the kids. Proverbs says, '**A foolish son is a sorrow to his mother,**' and warns: '**A foolish man despises his mother.**'

Of course, even mothers get things wrong. They can get tired and snappy, get too possessive, make wrong decisions. And the Bible shows some bad mothers. Some are devious, some vindictive. Yet, when the bible talks about the love of God, it often uses the picture of being like a mother's love. It says: - '**As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you says the Lord**'. Paul writes that to be gentle is to be like a mother caring for her children.

None of us are perfect. We make mistakes, get selfish, hateful. The Bible uses the picture of a mother/child relationship going *wrong* to show what it's like when God's people turn from him. Micah says a sign of a people far from God is when '**the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother**'. When mothers don't act as they should. When children don't honour and respect their mothers, then you know it's gone bad. Therefore, honour your mother as an incomplete picture of the care of God. There are always people who need a mother. Even if their own children are far away, mothers are called to keep finding children to love. And the bible says that's how church should be. So, celebrate Mother's Day if you wish. But celebrate God and the way he calls us to mother and father each other.

Have a great Spring

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