

LENT SERIES

7 Sayings of Jesus (3 or 7)

“Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother.”

John 19:25-27

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

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Pray.

Illustration:

ers.” One of the greatest Christian social movements in history has been the Salvation Army. Its leader was General **William Booth**, who organized the Salvation Army in the 1800s to preach the gospel among the poor of England and to minister to their daily needs.

The Salvation Army organized soup lines to feed the hungry, orphanages to care for homeless children, hospitals for the poor and homes for pregnant unmarried girls. As the Army grew stronger and larger over the years, it branched out into an ever-widening field of humanitarian aid.

When **Booth** was too old and feeble to attend the annual massive convention of the Army, the leaders asked that he write a sermon to be read to the assembly. In response, General **Booth** sent a **telegram** with one word: “**Others.**”

We come this morning to the 3rd of the 7 sayings of Jesus from the cross. & He's still thinking of others!

- Jesus' first saying, "*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do*"...was a prayer for the soldiers.
- Jesus' second saying, "*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise*"....was assurance to the criminal on the cross that, because he confessed his sin and believed in Jesus, he would not perish.
- Jesus' third saying from the cross... "*Woman, behold your son. Behold your mother*", is again...about OTHERS. In pain & agony, the lamb of God is on the cross, bearing the sin of the world and yet he is selfless. He's caring for his mother.

Background information:

John's gospel was likely written between 70-90 AD. There were 3 great persecutions of Christians around that time by the Roman Emperors.

- Nero in 67 AD
- Domitian in 81 AD
- Trajan in 108 AD.

So, no matter when John was writing, he was writing to people who could pay dearly if they were a Christian.

John himself, had probably already been (as tradition says) boiled in oil and sent away to live on the island of Patmos.

Listen to this law that was in effect at that time.

“No Christian, once brought before the tribunal, should be exempted from punishment without renouncing his religion.”

So, John is writing to encourage these people during this time and he includes this saying from the cross for some reason. The other gospels don't include it.

Let's look at the text. **John 19-25-27**

25 But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold your son!” 27 Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

Who are these women?

It appears to me from looking at the gospels of Matthew and Mark, that there are 4 women. Matthew and Mark include 3 women and leave out Jesus' mother, Mary. There's no doubt that Mary is there.

The four women are:

- Mary, Jesus' mother
- Mary's sister (Salome, wife of Zebedee and John's mom)

[*I don't think it is saying that his mother's sister is Mary the wife of Clopas because it is unlikely that there would be two sisters with the same name.]

- Mary, wife of Clopas
- Mary Magdalene.

**Mary seems to be a common name.*

This passage is quite simple and there's no reason to try to squeeze out some cool or interesting meaning hidden in the text. It's clear.

I. JESUS IS TAKING CARE OF HIS MOTHER.

“Woman, behold your son! Behold, your mother.”

Where I come from in the USA, if you say WOMAN to *any* woman, much less your Mother, you will get slapped.

Well, Jesus wasn't from America and he didn't speak English.

In Aramaic or Hebrew, this phrase is not disrespectful but a highly respectful and affectionate form of address. Maybe like, Ma'am or My Lady.

You could read it like this, “My dear mother, John is now your son. John, she is your mom now.”

The following verse tells us the meaning. It says, “**And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.**”

Jesus is obeying the fifth commandment which says, “**Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving to you.**” {Exodus 20:12}

Mary needed caring for. In 1st century Palestine, she wasn't just going to go out and get a job. Women needed the protection, care and financial support of men.

But why John?

- **Jesus is the oldest son.** Jesus is *supposed* to take care of his mother. But Jesus is so poor that he has no worldly possessions. Even his clothes are being gambled for at his feet.
- **Joseph, Mary's husband has likely already passed away.** No mention of him. Surely he would have taken care of his wife if he was alive.
- **Mark 6:3** tells us that Mary had other children after Jesus. James, Joses, Judas, Simon and sisters.

Why didn't they take care of Mary?

Interesting that they aren't there at the cross. Maybe the distance was too great. Jesus was dying in Jerusalem and they lived in Nazareth.

But **John 7:5** says, **“For not even his brothers believed in him.”**

We know some of them do later because James in the early church is his brother. [Galatians 1:19]
Perhaps this is the main reason. They don't believe yet.

It wouldn't be too strange to ask John to care for his mother, **IF** “his mother's sister” is in fact John's mom. Matthew 27:56 says that the “mother of the sons of Zebedee” is there at the cross.

This makes John, Jesus' cousin on his mother's side. If their mothers are sisters, not that strange for John to take his aunt in and care for her.

Here is what the text means:

Jesus is making sure his mother is cared for in obedience to the 5th Commandment.

Is Jesus entrusting John to Mary or Mary to John?

Pope John Paul said of this verse,

“With these words Jesus gave the Blessed Virgin Mary a new mission and established a special relationship of love between her and all the disciples...In fact, attentive consideration of the text, ...presents us.....with one of the most important events for understanding the Virgin's role in the economy of salvation...The words of the dying Jesus actually show that his first intention was not to entrust his Mother to John, but to entrust the disciple to Mary and to give her a new maternal role....On Calvary this love is shown in the gift of a mother, his mother, who thus becomes our mother too.

May each one of us, precisely through the concrete reality of Mary's universal motherhood, fully acknowledge her as our own Mother, and trustingly commend ourselves to her maternal love.”

As Pope Francis said in Naples, "If you don't love the mother, the mother will not give you the Son."

**The following is taken from the official Catholic Catechisms from the Vatican website.*

Catechism 963 Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been treated, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary . . . is acknowledged and honored as being truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer.... She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ' ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who

are members of its head."⁵⁰⁰ "Mary, Mother of Christ, Mother of the Church."⁵⁰¹

Catechism 964

Mary's role in the Church is inseparable from her union with Christ and flows directly from it. "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death";⁵⁰² it is made manifest above all at the hour of his Passion:

Catechism 969

This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfillment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix."⁵¹⁰

“There is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” 1 Timothy 2:5

*Oh, what glory Jesus loses on the cross when we take the focus off of him and onto his mother.

Jesus is simply taking care of his mother. A selfless act on the cross. Thinking of **others**. Obeying the command to Honor thy father and mother. Nothing less. But there is something more to see here and it's not Mary.

II. JESUS IS TEACHING THE CHURCH HOW TO LOVE & CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Mark 3:31-35

31 “And his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside they sent to him and called him. 32 And a crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers (and sisters) are outside, seeking you.” 33 And he answered them, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” 34 And looking about at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

In **Acts 6**, the reason that Deacons were chosen was because the Greek speaking believing widows were being overlooked in the ‘daily distribution’, likely of food. Already in Acts 6 the early church has started to care for widows.

**1 Timothy 5:1-2 says,
“Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.”**

Then all through Chapter 5, Paul gives practical instructions for the church on how they should care for one another.

The church is an extended family where we take care of each other. We care for this lady as our mother, this man as our father, this man as a brother and other ladies as our sisters.

Jesus modeled for us, even as he was dying...what it means to love and to pour out our lives for **OTHERS**.

To those who are our enemies...

To those who are the worst of sinners....

To those in our family.....

To those in the church....

Others.

Here's a challenge for us this week.

One word.

OTHERS.