

The Women of the Cross

“And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him” (Matthew 27:55). We read also in another place, “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene” (John 19:25). Two observations are evidenced. Women are ministering to Jesus and they do so unto the end. Great is their faithfulness! In these verses of Scripture we see a powerful message for moms today. And the message to Mom is a message for all. To minister means to attend to the needs of someone, provide something necessary or needful. What a contrast to today's women of our culture! They are trained by the world to look out for number one. Ah, but not the women of the cross.

1. The women of the cross are consumed with fulfilling the desires of Christ.

My heart goes out to these beloved women who used to feed our Lord, wash His feet or run his errands. Now I can see them as they perhaps volunteer to clean the blood stained streets where He walks. Perhaps they volunteer to give Him drink. I can also imagine their being denied this request as they, with tears, beg. We know this is the spirit of the women of the cross as revealed by these touching words of Mary Magdalene, “...Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away” (John 20:15). Bless her compassionate heart! Mary was willing to carry the deceased body of Jesus all by herself. Love knows no limit of sacrificial service. They are not in this life for themselves. Truly, the women of the cross are here to serve their Lord.

2. The women of the cross possess the nurturing heart.

The mother's natural inclination is to over-reach her own capacity to fulfill the needs of those whom she perceives need her. I see this evidenced by the mother of Zebedee's children who said, “And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom” (Matthew 20:21). This precious mother has been criticized by many a clergyman who doesn't understand the heart of a mom. She wants the best for her kids! Nothing is wrong with that.

3. The women of the cross are brave!

While even some of the very chief of Jesus' disciples, those of whom the Bible speaks, “...that have turned the world upside down...” (Acts 17:6), have deserted, these brave women not fearing for their life are faithful unto the end. Their undying loyalty stays by the dying form of Jesus. They hear the thunder roll, feel the earthquake and hear our Lord breathe His last breath. No wonder they are the ones granted the first appearances after He has risen. The women of the cross are faithful when the odds are against them. The women of the cross don't give up hope.

4. The women of the cross bring their children to Christ.

They are not the type who sends their kids to church; they take them to church. Through their meek and quiet spirit they preach many a sermon that is not necessarily heard, but definitely seen. I am here today because I had grandmothers and a mom committed to bringing their offspring to the Lord. It is said to young Timothy, “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also” (II Timothy 1:5).

5. The women of the cross follow their designated roll in honest humility and grace.

“When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (John 19:26,27). It is believed by Bible historians that Joseph, who was much older than Mary, died before our Lord was full-grown. The loving Savior understood His obligatory duty; He, as the eldest son, became the provider for His mom. As our Lord

was in the very throes of death for our sins, He reached out and placed Mary under the authority of John, the beloved disciple. History tells us that she died in Ephesus where John was serving as Pastor. She was highly respected and loved in the congregation. I remember gleaning the wisdom of Grandma Hyles, our pastor's wife in my youth. I enjoyed getting to church early to talk with her. Can you imagine what it must have been like to glean the wisdom of Mary? Mary understood, "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Corinthians 11:9).

A woman of the cross does not try to contradict the Word, but upholds the Word. The Bible commands the woman, "To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:5). According to this passage, the woman who does not stay with this principle can actually become a stumbling block for the advancement of Christianity. In contrast, the women of the cross who fulfill their roll can change even the hardest of husbands who live in rebellion to the Word of God: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (I Peter 3:1). It takes deep humility and God's grace to be this lady of esteem.

Happy Mother's Day to all of our Proverbs 31 mothers. Your price is far above rubies. Although I feel unworthy, I am honored to be called your pastor.

- Pastor Pope -

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