THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

Introduction:

A. On this day that the United States as set aside to remember and honor mothers, let us not forget that tho “man says it is Mother’s Day, this is the Lord’s day and we are here to honor and adore and Worship Him and Him alone.”

1. I saw this sign in front of one of the churches on Carolina Beach - “Make your Mother Happy, meet her here on Mothers Day.”
   a. How wrong a message ---- this has been up for two weeks now! How about where is God in this picture?
   b. Is life all about US, and if we can fit in God some place we may make the exception?
2. Tho, this is troubling and sad - Parents (both fathers and mothers) have a crucial role in God’s word - and yes it is Mothers day today - so I want to concentrate of what God’s Word instructs with regards to her role.

B. The title of this sermon is the hand that rocks the Cradle - and it is a very meaningful title to me personally, since all that I am and the faith I have in Christ Jesus, the love of God’s Word and the encouragement to proclaim His Word, comes directly from my mothers influence in my life.

1. Before she died in Nov 1992 - she asked me what fruits do I have to lay down at my Fathers feet, brethren you and I are recipients of her fruits in the Kingdom of God.
   a. My daughters, tho they did not get to know her personally, are fruits from her labor of love in my life.
2. From a young boy (age 6) when the neighbor told my mom - “dare is die domineer” (there is the preacher) my Mother simply answered God had blessed her with a son to use in His kingdom as He saw fit.
   a. She was humble in character, not perfect in life for she needed the blood of Christ just as much as all men who ever walk the face of this earth, but an example of serving God even in the face of physical, mental and emotional abuse.
   b. She trusted in God to be the judge and put all her trust and confidence in knowing that His way is the best way.
3. A mother has a great influence on her children and she can lead them in the paths of righteousness or she can lead them in the pathways of hell.
   a. That is why the “Hand that Rocks the cradle” is so important.
   b. Let me turn here from my personal appreciation of my mothers influence in my life and focus now on how you can be the type of mother, wife and Christian that God wants from you.

C. Several years back, a Scottish scientist announced that he had cloned a sheep in his experimentation.

1. This set off a euphoric shout from at least one militant feminist who is reported to have said that men now have no excuse for continuing to exist, women can reproduce without you.
2. This century has seen a battle of the sexes reach such ludicrous ends to which we are witnesses of.
3. As one man said - I was trapped in a women’s body for some time, but then I was born - mothers are to remember that your boys and to be treated like men and taught the importance of their role in God’s creation and thru His Word.

D. We are reminded that in the body of Christ, there is neither male nor female.

1. This does not mean that Christians are androgynous or asexual, but rather - that God’s grace does not shine any brighter on one gender or the other.
2. Our wives are just as much a Christian as I am and you are.
3. In the church, there are different roles to be assumed by men and women, each of great importance in the Kingdom of God and His body the church.

E. When it comes to God's other great institution, the family, there are also roles that are distinguished by gender. Today in our modern society these are often blurred!

1. A man is to take the lead in the household in every way and provide for its general welfare.
2. He is to oversee the rearing of his children. Eph. 6:1-4 ---- “anyone can be a father but it takes someone special to be a daddy.”
3. A woman is to make the house a home and rule her children well.
   a. There is an internal nature that is found in women to nurture ---- the home is not her war zone, it is a place that her family can come into from the war of the world - it is a place of peace and comfort.

F. It has been said that, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." I have thought often about the implications of that proverb, but I have never doubted its truth.

1. Mothers have one of the greatest and gravest responsibilities ever imposed upon mankind.
   a. Abraham Lincoln is noted as saying - “all that I am I owe to my mother”.
2. It is filled with joys and wrought with sorrows, but in the end bears grandchildren who make it all worthwhile.

G. Although women have been lied to by their self-styled leaders in recent decades, child rearing remains a noble calling and a godly profession. The Christian woman should raise her children "in the Lord."

1. When Hillary Clinton, made that remark years ago that a stay at home mother was a parasite on society - she was echoing the thoughts of the world and scoffing at God’s Word. There is something very special about the mother who stays home and bakes cookies, she is the CEO of the home and that is more important than climbing the corporate ladder of success in the business world.
2. As the home goes, so goes the nation ---- a year back during the Baltimore riots and Ferguson riots here in the USA - I took my hat off the mother that saw her child throwing stones at cops and left work went down and dragged that child from the mob whipping him and saying - I taught you better than this.
   a. She explained later that she had no respect for herself, was living well off welfare and enjoying the easy life - but she said “I came to my senses” - I had no respect for myself, so I dusted off that attitude and went out and found a job that paid very poorly in comparison but I needed to teach my children that nothing in life comes cheaply or free, if you want it you have to go get it with hard work.

H. Let us now concentrate on some of the instructions, examples and life’s lessons from God’s Word on the value and importance of the Godly women of old.

1. Let us learn how important you are “who rocks the cradle”! I want to use just one example, many can be found, but this is one that has an impression on my as a Gospel preacher.

II. Lois and Eunice – 2 Timothy 1:3-5 (NKJV) ---- 3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.

A. Timothy's Growth

1. It seems very likely that Timothy's father was not a believer
2. This is not a unique situation, but it does present some unique problems
3. With no paternal leadership, how will a child be raised to know the truth?
4. The apostle Paul gives us the answer
   a. The great thing is to see precious faith passed from generation to generation in this family—not by mere hereditary inheritance, but by teaching and nurturing
   b. One of my dearest dreams is to someday baptize my grandchild and to encourage them in the faith. This will mean that Danielle and Aubrey have done their jobs and imparted the same earnestness in teaching their children the truth of God’s Word.
      (1) You might be saying, wait a minute are you not jumping the gun here, they are not married yet - but folks the dream is that which they have been taught in God’s Word will be passed down to the next generation is not just a dream but a fulfillment of God’s purpose in the home.

5. Paul says that faith in God first dwelt in Lois and then was recreated in Eunice and then found a home in Timothy's heart
   a. You don't pass faith on to your children by mere good intentions or wishes; it takes time and dedication and it is a full-time job with no vacations
   b. In the hands of every mother in the world is the next generation (the next generation of Americans, of Texans and hopefully of Christians)
   c. Shame on anyone who suggests that child rearing is a low calling

B. Have Faith Yourself
   1. If a mother is going to bring her child up in the Lord, she is going to have to be there herself
   2. Timothy's faith rested first in his mother's breast: I can only imagine what it was like to grow up in Eunice's home
      a. This was true of my mother, and the role she played in the formation of my understanding of truth.
   3. We understand, however, that this home life helped lead Timothy to obey God
      a. he saw a mother with a real and vital relationship with her Lord
      b. he could tell that her faith meant more to her than anything
   4. As I watched my daughters grow up, even now, I can tell that they see and understand a whole lot more than I give them credit for and I am so proud of the young ladies they have become.
      a. They learned to wave, though I never even began to teach them how to do that; they learned to kiss even before I asked them to do that....
      b. Children are always watching, always alert and always learning
      c. They don't know as children yet to choose the good over the bad: they only comprehend that what their parents do is to be copied
      d. We had better make sure about what we are doing if we want our children to grow up right.
         (1) None of us are perfect, we all have our flaws and our warts but we must make sure that our children do not walk away in life copying those.
         (2) So lets look at some of the things a mother must do!

III. What Must Mothers Do?

A. Love Your Children— Titus 2:1-5. (NKJV) ---- 1 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

   1. First we need women like Lois to impart faith and womanly virtue to younger women
   2. Then we can be blessed with woman of child rearing age who love their children and build their homes
a. A woman who loves her child never would willfully harm them nor neglect them nor
withhold anything that would benefit them.
   (1) Sometimes our selfish actions do not take into consideration the effects it has on our
   children - I know I have failed in this manner.
   (2) Remember it is not all about you and I, it is about bringing Glory to God in Heaven.
b. Her children would never go hungry or be abused physically or emotionally.
c. But if we only apply that logic of love to physical needs, our children will starve spiritually
   and the gift of faith will perish.
   (1) The greatest gift you can give your children is the love of the truth of God’s Word. This
   is done by your actions and your words, when they see your complete obedience to God’s
   Word.
   (2) You can not say one thing and live another ---- if your are a good Christian women then
   you follow Christ without compromise.

3. We see pictures of African children in poverty and famine, their ribs poking out and their bellies
swollen from emptiness: we gasp and weep for them and call it such a shame
a. If spiritual famine and neglect could be displayed so graphically, would we do anything about
   it then?
b. If a mother willfully keeps her child out of Bible class and worship on Sundays and
   Wednesdays or fails to teach her to pray and sing and give, is not her child even needier than
   that refugee from war and famine a continent away?
c. Is not such neglect even more shameful?

4. I am sounding a call right now to every mother, aunt, grandmother and sister in this house to
make certain this famine never happens in your house .. to end it today if it has being allowed to
happen
a. If not, you are going to ask one day, why your children or grandchildren aren't Christians and
you are going to start looking to lay blame on society, the schools, the preacher and the elders
b. But the blame will belong squarely on any who saw the neglect and did nothing to stop it; but
then, it will be too late, the children will be lost and we will be left alone with our tears

B. What To Do?
1. Sing hymns—James. 5:13 (NKJV) ---- 13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is
anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms.
   a. My mother started singing hymns with Me at an early age, my daughters were sung to even
   before they was born (she looked like Hannah to Eli as she spoke to this person no one else
   could see but her), we used to play them classical piano and violin with headphones on Kim’s
   belly before they were seen. The kicked the most when we sang songs of praise to the Lord
   in worship.
   b. James says that cheerful should sing hymns (5:13) and nothing imparts a joy in faith to
   someone else like singing praises to God.
   c. There is no lullaby more soothing than Amazing Grace, or as I sang my daughter Danielle to
   sleep with “In His Time” - she would say one more time Daddy.
   d. When we sing in our homes when we have the sounds of spiritual songs in our cars, in our
   homes, we fulfill the divine mandate to speak to God and admonish others in psalms, hymns
   and spiritual songs
2. Introduce them to God—Gen. 1:1, 26-27 (NKJV) ---- 1 In the beginning God created the heavens
   and the earth.
   a. Genesis 1:26-27 (NKJV) ---- 26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according
   to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and
   over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27
So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

b. A child is a blank slate in regard to knowing God ---- their minds are an etchasketch, what are you drawing in their lives?

c. It is your duty to introduce them to their Maker.

d. Don't wait for the preacher and the Bible class to do it for it is your responsibility!

e. We hear so much about the secular self-esteem movement, making kids feel good about themselves no matter what
   (1) That movement ejected God from its philosophy long ago and sealed its doom because it removed the greatest sign of self-worth there it: every child was created in the image of God, a spiritual being with an eternal something inside that must be preserved in its maker's approval

3. Introduce them to Jesus– **John 1:40-51** (NKJV) ---- 40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone). 43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!” 50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you under the fig tree,’ do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”
   a. Make them know that Jesus loves them, that He lived and even died for their good
   b. Talk about how that fact compels you to go to church each time to honor and remember him and sing and study about what he did.
      (1) Let them see a tattered bible from years of use and study, not a bible that can’t be found on the way out of the boor, that still looks brand new because of lack of use.
      (2) A sign on a church building on Carolina Beach road - reads “A tattered bible does not lead to an unraveled Life” ---- How true!
      (3) Let them see you searching the scriptures in service, let them see your studying God’s Word on your own, let them see the bible living in your life - not just enough to say I’m a Christian but a life that is walking in the light.
   c. Help them to see that they have a sure place in his mercy
   d. Song leaders, the children’s songs are some of the sweetest sounds we will hear here in this building as the children and we get to hear and sing along with them their sweet tones in innocence and their sincerity of the love of God is heard.

4. Use Old Testament history for "story reading"– **Romans 15:4** (NKJV) For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.
   a. Kids love to hear stories and be read books and there is no greater collection of exciting stories than in the Bible
(1) From Noah's Ark to David and Goliath, there is treasure trove of the adventures of God's people that will teach them far deeper lessons than anything from Walt Disney
b. They will learn lessons that they can relate to their Bible class teachers and they will understand just a little more about what the preacher is saying
c. I love to hear a child tell me after a lesson that he had just read that story with his mother or father; that is worth all the "fine sermons" I have ever heard.
(1) As a preacher my heart is filled with joy when these little ones hands me a note or a drawing of something that I was doing during my sermon.

C. Teach right from wrong--**Heb. 5:14**(NKJV) ---- 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1. Your job as a mother is a trying one, for you are spending twenty years preparing your precious one to one day leave your nest
   a. But if you do your job well, they will build their own nest and fill it with their own little ones
   b. Modern pop psychology tells us that we should never say "No" to a child
   c. But when I saw my daughters going for an electrical outlet or walking toward the street, I can't help but advise against it ---- before they were born we put all those annoying latches on all the cabinets especially double on those that had harmful chemicals in them.
   d. There are certain things to which we must be taught to just say no
      (1) It is your job to label things as right and wrong and make the labels stick
      (2) It is your job to make doing right desirable to the child
e. Use the Bible and explain that this is right because it makes God happy with us

2. Provide correction (we all know the difference between abuse and correction) – **Prov. 19:18, 29:15**
   a. **Proverbs 19:18** (NKJV) ---- 18 Chasten your son while there is hope, And do not set your heart on his destruction.
      (1) **Proverbs 29:15** (NKJV) ---- 15 The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.
   b. As a mother, you have to draw the line between acceptable and unacceptable and enforce it
   c. You discipline your child so that they can learn to discipline themselves when you are not around
      (1) Whether a smack on the hand or the behind or something more creative, a parent must have the strength to do what is best even when it hurts
      (2) How many times I heard my mother say - this is going to hurt me more than you!
         (a) Did not fully comprehend it then, but when I had my own children, the pain of correction was realized.
   d. Correction is strong, bitter medicine that yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness
   e. If I hated my daughters I would not discipline them, but I loved them and so I correct them when they needed it

3. Practice the virtues you preach
   a. It is said that a sermon seen is better than one heard: practice what you preach and it will have a more durable effect on your child
   b. If you preach honesty, you had better not lie to the car salesman about your trade-in
   c. If you preach against shouting, you had better cool that temper d. sometimes we learn as much as the kids when we teach virtues
      (1) We all make mistakes in this area of our lives, and none of us is above failure - but the strongest example you can be to your children is to admit it when you are wrong - and say "I’m sorry I’ve not been a good example.” This is something I had to return to South
Africa in 2012 to rediscover. Problems in life sometimes makes us calloused to the effect we are having on others.

(2) When you start to play guitar on steel strings your fingers bleed and are in great pain, (so too with our lives when we have soft hearts) but the more you practice and the more you play the finger tips become hardened ---- so much of life does that to us, but Christians we can not be the clay in the “Potters” hand if we become calloused.

4. Never complain about the consequences of faith—Phil. 3:7-8 (NKJV) ---- 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ
   a. Don't make faith seem like a poor choice, but like the only choice
   b. Don't make your life seem miserable because you are stuck in the discipleship to a draconian master.
   (1) Show your children what a loving Master we serve and how much you love to do His Will.
   c. Let the spiritual appeal of faith shine through your life.

IV. Conclusion:
   A. The next generation of elders and preachers and all saints are in your care.
      1. It is a task fitly undertook - with the greatest of rewards.
   B. Do well in the work the Lord has given you to do and the church and your family will be blessed.
   C. Do poorly and we will all be cursed.
      1. Don't let them suffer from spiritual neglect.
      2. Don’t be a poor example - show them what it means to be committed to the Lord and the acceptance you have made in the covenant you made before men.
      3. Only two covenants are life commitments - marriage “till death do us part” and becoming a Christian - “be faithful until death” - Rev. 2:10 (NKJV) ---- 10 Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.
      4. Teach them that God hates covenant breakers by being and example to them in deed.

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