

Let me wish you a happy Mother's Day. And I wish that to all of you. I know some of you are like, "Well, I don't have any babies." But I would say happy Mother's Day to you too. And some of you would be like, "I'm a dude." And I would say happy Mother's Day to you also. In four years, going on five years here, I've never addressed Mother's Day and I have never addressed Father's Day. And I get hate mail each week, each time I do that, when I don't do that. And so I figured this week, what I would do is get the hate mail off of actually addressing it. And so, here's what I want to do. If we're going to address Mother's Day and if we're going to address Father's Day, then we're going to do it biblically. We're going to do it biblically, we're going to address it biblically lest we celebrate the wrong thing when there's something very good and something very right and something very beautiful that needs to be celebrated, but it might just not be what you think it is. So in order for us to get going on what's going on here, Mother's Day weekend, we've got to read a little bit of the Bible in order to define what motherhood is. Because if we have a chance and I had a little mic and we went around the room and ask, "What's motherhood?," there will be an inference to having a child somewhere in that definition. If I said, "What's motherhood?," there would be like, "Well, it's nurturing, it's compassionate people who had babies...women who have had babies." Now, the problem with that is a little bit of a biblical one. And I'll show you what I mean.

In Genesis 3 is the fall of man. God creates the world in rhythm, functioning correctly, everybody in their part. The world's a beautiful place, no envy, no strife, no sorrow. Everything works. Everything God created worked well, worked seamlessly and everything was pretty much a beautiful reality, and then sin entered into the world. The narrative of how sin entered into the world is that Adam and Eve are walking through the garden, Eve begins a conversation with a serpent. And in that, Eve takes and bites the fruit, gives it to her husband, he takes and bites the fruit. He's with her the whole time. I think women have caught a lot of grief for that, but when God starts walking through the garden, who does He ask for? Adam. He does not ask for Eve. He does not blame Eve, He blames Adam. Paul would attest to this also in the New Testament that sin entered into the world because of the sin of the man, not because of the sin of the woman. And so, you've got the fall of mankind and everything that was good and right got fractured and broken. We talk about that a lot here. And so all of a sudden, wine gave way to drunkenness and food gave way to gluttony and sex gave way to perversion and all that God created good and right in the world begins to spiral out of control. And so, God begins to say, "Because of your sin, here's the result." And He addresses the woman and says, "Because of your sin here is the result. So now, there's going to be pain in childbirth." And He begins to list out the difficulties now in the world. All of them for the woman rotate around the home. It's very interesting. Then He begins to address the man. And interesting enough for the man, all the struggles of the man exist outside of the home and in the workplace usually if you'll read that list. "You're going to work the field, and it's not going to produce like it once did. It's going to be with toil now."

And then, after the fall, after everything's been fractured, after everything's broken, that's where we pick up in verse 20, a very interesting verse for several reasons. Here's what it says, "The man called his wife's name Eve,..." You would have thought that after the fall, he would have had some other names to her, but that's what he calls her. "The man called his wife's name Eve,..." Now, this is where it gets very intriguing. "...because she was the mother of all living." Now let me show you why this is so intriguing. Go down to chapter 4, verse 1. "Now Adam knew Eve his wife..." Now that "knew" right there is knew in the biblical sense. Please don't make me explain that any more. I'll keep reading, you'll know. "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the LORD." And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground." Now let's put

these things together. Adam calls the woman Eve because she's the mother of all things, and yet she doesn't have what? Children. She's called the mother of all living things before she has children. So it seems then that motherhood is more extensive and maybe deeper than physically having babies. Alright, I know what's happening here. Every mother who had their baby naturally is like, "Don't you take this from me, Chandler." The women who have had epidurals are like, "Alright. Whatever. Keep going. I don't know." But natural, they're like, "Oh no, he didn't!" There's kind of this anger welling up in their hearts right now. Just be patient with me, because in the Scriptures, she's the mother before there are any babies. So it seems like something's going on here and there's something intrinsic in the woman that makes her motherly before children enter into the world.

So let's take a look at this. Go back to Genesis 1. We'll do just verse 26. "Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" This is a conversation within the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. "Let us make man in our image." Verse 27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Alright, so God, wanting to display His imagery to the universe, creates mankind in His own image, male and female in His own image. And so, He begins to create, He picks up some dirt and He forms a man and He breathes into it, He tells man to find a helper, man looks over all creation, no suitable helper is found, so God knocks Him out, pulls a rib out of him and makes the woman. And although they are equal and although they are on the same playing field in terms of the imagery of God, you would be a fool to argue that they're not unbelievably distinct in their creation. God, wanting to display the width and the breadth of who He is creates the man and then creates the woman. And as a rule, there are distinctives between the two. Men were designed by God to be physically stronger. Now, you can hop online and find the one case, you can give me ridiculous arguments here about this woman who's on steroids and bench presses 325lbs can whoop my 4 year old son. And I would be like, "Well okay. I guess I'm wrong there." But in the end, it starts getting a little ridiculous. On a whole, on average, men have been created by God to be physically stronger than the woman. Now, I know you've got Tae Bo out there right now, but on a whole men are physically stronger. Now, God creates the woman with certain attributes, physical attributes that the man does not possess. He gives her breasts. And if you think about that, that's a real unique piece. And it's hard in our culture because in our culture, breasts are decorative. But in most cultures, they are for raising children. I might get in trouble for that one on the sit down with the elders on Monday. He makes her hips rounder, and He makes her body softer. And this plays itself out over and over again. God makes the woman, anatomically as a comforter, as a nurturer, softer she is, quieter she is, more gentle she is.

When we had Audrey, this is how we wired our lives. It was our first year here at the Village, and we were working 10-11 hour days. It was just an interesting time. We've backed off to 10 and a half hour days now. Because I had to get up early in the morning and work all day, the rule was that at night, Lauren would take care of Audrey. So if Audrey was crying at 2:00 in the morning or crying at 4:00 in the morning, Lauren would get up. Now, what we did though was, because I was off on Friday, Thursday was my night. And so Lauren would go to bed as soon as it was dark. Like at 7:15, she was out. She would go get in the bed, and if Audrey cried or if she got upset, it didn't matter what time of the night it was, it was mine. I had to get up, I had to take care of her. So no matter how hard things got, Lauren knew on Thursday, she was getting 12-13 hours of sleep. And that's how we wired it. There were specific nights where Audrey would get upset and I would rock her and pat her back and feed her and sing to her and hum to her and pray over her and three hours later, asked Christ for help. And no matter what I did, I could not get her to quit crying, and she was upset and her being upset upset her more. And then it was past the point of me being able to do anything about it, and so on several occasions, I just had to wake up Lauren. I just had to say, "I can't get her to quit crying." And Lauren would mumble something about "her day" or something and then she would get up and grab her, and within minutes, crying turned to silence. Why? My wife's body is softer than mine. She has breasts. She pulled my daughter close and the softness of her skin, the softness of her voice makes Audrey feel safe and she slips back into quiet sleep. So man, I was like trying to put

sock in. I'm kidding. I didn't do that. That was ridiculous. And so, my wife's body is built for it. By the way God designed her, she is a nurturer.

The Bible calls Eve the nurturer before she has any children. Motherhood, more than it was going to be having babies, although that's a huge part of it, was going to be instead the role of the woman in how God created the world to function. Now, let me be really careful here, because I don't want you to hear that what I'm saying is that nurturing has something to do with cleaning the house and cooking dinner. Because that's not at all what I'm saying. In fact, the Scriptures tell us that God nurtures us by speaking the truth in love, and sometimes that's very aggressive. Like, this is an interesting study I just finished reading. There was a study on certain adolescents who came from really good homes but their hearts were filled with just rage. And so, they would medicate them and try to figure out why. And so, they started this intensive on why these kids are angry like this, and here's what they found. In almost every one of the cases, they found a mother who took nurturing to a sinful level. Let me explain what I mean. They found in one case that one of the kids would paint and then as the kid walked away and left the paint and started playing with another toy, mother would clean up the paint and put it away. And then the kid would move over to this toy and then he would come back and want to paint again. And so, the mother would pull out all the paints and then put back up the thing and the kid would then start to paint. And the mother would come over here and clean up the toys over here and clean up the toys over here. And then the kid would leave the paint, come over back to the toys that she just put up and pull them out and start playing. So she would clean up the paint, because you can't leave the paint out, she would screw on the top, she would take down the easel, she would put it all up and then the kid would come back over and want to paint again. And so the mother would get the easel back out...and I see some of you looking at your mom like, "Who is this mother?" It was not my mother, but would pull it all out and set it back up. And what ended up happening is, as the kid grew and developed, they weren't ready for the disappointment that is life. Because that's the only bubble you'll get your way in all of the time. And so, they couldn't deal with kindergarten. And so as they grew, they began to develop this anger and this rage towards everyone who didn't give them what they want. Because if we would just give them what they want...and I don't know if you've ever been with anyone like that, that they have this pervasive problem and they can't ever see that the common denominator is them. And what happened here is that's not biblical nurturing. Biblical would be, "Uh baby, mommy put those up. You can paint tomorrow. (kiss) Little artist, go on now. Go on, play with your stuff. Mommy put it up." This idea of nurturing, if you break it down in the Hebrew it's this. The woman provides nourishment.

Now, my first year here, there were some theological differences on the role of women in church. And so I did an extensive teaching, I think it's like an hour and forty five minutes long, on the role of women, how this nurturing plays itself out across the life of the church, across the life of the home, across the life of the community. And so, if you're interested in where we stand on that, just go online, click on "Listen," click on "What we believe," click on "Role of Women." It's all there on PDF files and you can listen to the whole thing. But in the end, how does this stuff work it out? Well, sometimes it's just biblically black and white. I mean, the Scriptures would say that if you're an older woman, you should be nourishing and nurturing younger women whether they're your children or not. I would take it a step farther and tell women of all ages that they also have a role to nourish and to press men, young men, children, godly men. I plead with single women all the time, when that single man starts throwing game and he's not godly but he's the church guy, to confront him, to go, "Listen, I think you're cute, you're a good looking dude, but here's the problem. I'm looking for someone who loves Christ, because if they loved Christ with their whole heart, they'll love me like Christ loved the church and that's the paradigm and you're an immature believer. And so, I'm out. Don't get me wrong, you look good, but I'm out." Now, that's nourishing, that's nurturing, that's you being motherly to the guy that's 24, playing the x- box with no job. I mean seriously, have you studied statistics on masculinity in the U.S.? Are you kidding me? Congratulations, you've mastered "Doom 3." It's probably time to move on. "Well, I just don't know what I want to do." Here's what you do: get a job. Because we don't find our fulfillment as men in careers. But that's Father's Day. I digress. "I just don't know what I want to do." Work. That's what you do. Because if you don't work, you don't eat and you live with

your mom...and that's not sexy, at all. You know it. That's why when she goes, "So, where you living?," that's why you try to change the subject. Alright, so why not? Like Deborah, in the debate over "can women be pastors, be elders?," if fall on two lines: egalitarians that say women can be pastors and elders and there's complementarians that say, "no there are specific roles that God laid out for us and gave to us." And egalitarians love to use Deborah as the example. They say, "Well, Deborah was a judge. That's the highest level of Israeli government at the time." But here's the thing. If you'll go read Judges 5, where Deborah's the judge, she calls herself the "mother of Israel" and uses that position to engage and encourage sagging male leadership. Nurture, nourish, confront, encourage, love, this is the role of the mother, and by that I mean the female. I found this verse this week. I would say in this place that you're the mother of this community, whether or not you've had physical children at all. Listen to this verse. This is a powerful verse. Isaiah 54:1 says this, "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD." So, the Scriptures admonish, "Come on, we need you. Mother, nourish, encourage. The number of those without mothers will always far outweigh those with."

So at the beginning, I said that we are in danger of celebrating the wrong thing. Don't get me wrong. We got my mom a little gift and we got Lauren's mom a little gift and we're hooking up with them tomorrow and I'm so unbelievably grateful for my mother. She was the glue that held us together. She was definitely these things for me. But in the end, it's the wrong celebration, because you're celebrating the shadow, not the form. Here's what I mean. In Genesis 1, the triune God says, "Let Us make man in Our own image," and the Trinity agrees, because It always does, and They make mankind in Their image, both male and female in Their image, so that in the female nurturing and nourishing and mothering, we have an aspect of the character of God that is not so readily seen in the male. If you read the Bible, there are these times that the masculinity of God is this dominant...like when Jesus returns, He's all like tattooed up, holding a sword, riding a horse, coming to judge the nations. If it gets more masculine than "tats" and a giant sword to kill a bunch of nations, then I don't know what it is. But then there's this other side to God that He communicates, a nourishing, encouraging, life giving part of the character of God. And so, my dad told me to suck it up, but my mom would hold me and let me cry. My dad would be gruff and straight and hard, and my mom would be slower, more gentle. This is God displaying Himself to you and to me. So we celebrate mothers, yes, absolutely. But why? Because of Christ in them and because of what Christ is communicating to us about Himself in them, gentleness, compassion, sensitivity. And I know some of you are like, "Well, that's not all women." You know, you're right, because we live in a fallen world, the same reason why servant leadership from men is such an extinct animal. Because of the fall. But in the rhythmic way that God created it, this is what it was. And so, I'm grateful for my mom. I'm grateful for my daughter, all girl. I'm grateful that when my wife puts her hands in mine, they're so much softer than mine. I'm glad that they're so much more sensitive and compassionate, because I just like to make war. I'm so grateful for their compassion. Even my four year old, she's got it. We were at the Village Grill, there was a dead bird out in the road and she was just staring at it. "Go get him. Go get him." I'm like, "He is gone. That is not your daddy's job. That is Animal Control." She's moved, she wants to help it. That we might celebrate the creative width of God that would say, "Yes I'm this and yes I'm this."

And so, my hope tonight is kind of all over the map. I know some of you, you want to have children, you want them so bad, but I would say well come on, mother us. It's what God created you for. Mother. Please mother. It's how God wired you. It's how He wired you physically, it's how He wired you mentally, it's how He wired you emotionally. Of course you want to mother. Mother then. And then, there are some of here that have a hard time forgiving our mom. I think maybe it's time to let go. I promise you, as wicked as she was, she did the best she could with where she was. Nobody's perfect. That's why we need the cross. And then, there are those of you who are doing this so well. So we should celebrate. It should be big. It may not be an external celebration. I'm not telling you to blow out the block for Mother's Day. Maybe if you can, do it. I always say blow out the block anytime you can. Maybe it's just a card. And I know that as soon as I was like, "Happy Mother's Day," I saw like eight of you panic. You're going to be at Target tonight, getting the card. But maybe

there could be real thinking on what God reveals to us about Himself in our wives, in our daughters, in our sisters, in our nieces. What's God telling to us? What's He communicating to us? What's He saying to us? May He be praised for the display of His perfections in the mothering gifted to us in women.

Let's pray, "Father, I thank You and praise You for the desires You place in our heart, godly ones, the ones intrinsic and woven in there from conception. I thank You that motherhood goes well beyond just having babies. And I thank You for what my mom's love for me revealed to me about You, what my sister reveals to me about You, what my wife, what my daughter, what my grandmother reveal to me about You, about Your character, about Your compassion, about Your love. Will You teach us? Will You teach women how to walk in this role, how to operate in this role, how to function in this role? I pray that older women would connect with younger women so they might walk them there. Father, this weekend we celebrate You and how You display Yourself in so many different ways. We love You, and it's for Your beautiful name that we prayed and talked tonight. Amen."

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