

Sermon for May 10, 2026
Mother's Day
"A Mother's Fears"

1 Peter 3:13-22

"A mother's fears." As a pastor I have a lot of mothers ask to pray for their children. The concerns of these mothers ranged from whether her child would survive an illness to whether her child would pass an exam. Once a mother came to me asking for prayer because she was afraid her son would be called away to fight in the Gulf War. More recently a mother asked me to pray for her children because prom night was approaching. Countless times, when people are in pain both emotional and physical, it is their mother who is the first to turn to God in prayers.

The reality of Motherhood is that along with all the joys and blessings of caring for a child there are also fears. Fears of what the future holds. We live in a society that seems to be getting worse by the hour. We fight against crime and injustice and drugs yet those things seem to be on the rise. What will happen to our children in the future?

We all have both hopes and fears for the children we raise. Will the things that we try to teach them here in the church and at home stick? Will they surrender themselves to God and receive strength for abundant living, or will they give in to the pressures of this world and suffer the pain of a life lost in sin. Sometimes the fears overshadow the hopes.

The early church faced a similar situation. Their fears for their children in the faith sometimes overshadowed their hopes. The early church faced enemies on all sides. The Jews opposed their proclaiming that Jesus was the Messiah and they started riots wherever the Christians went. The Romans didn't like the problems that this new upstart religion was causing so they persecuted the Christians too. What would become of the church and of the spiritual children that were being born again into it every day.

Peter the Apostle was concerned and so, inspired by God, he sent a message of hope to the church. He began, "Who will harm you if you are eager to do good?" It makes sense. Would you beat someone up for trying to lift you out of a hole, but that was exactly what was happening to the Christians. The Jews and the Romans were beating them up for trying to lift them out of the hole of sin. Peter is very much aware of that reality so in his next sentence he says, "But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed." He goes on, "Do not fear what they fear and be intimidated." So even though they suffer for doing good they should have hope and not fear.

Now forgive me for complaining but the last thing a person who is genuinely concerned wants to hear is "Don't worry." You remember the a few years back there was a song that said, "Don't worry, be happy." It is good to be hopeful, but that attitude belittles people's concerns. People don't need to be told "Don't worry" they need to be told why they don't need to worry. Is Peter here telling the early church in the midst of persecution "Don't worry, be happy?"

Peter is not saying "Don't worry, be happy" to these suffering Christians. He is not ignoring the enormity of the troubles that faced the early church. Remember who Peter

is: He is the chief Apostle. He was the first for the disciples to confess that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Do you remember Jesus response to Peter's confession? "You are Peter (the rock), and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."(Matthew 16:18) Now Jesus did not build his church upon Peter. Peter was just a chip off the old block. The rock Jesus built his church upon was the truth that He, Jesus, was the Christ the son of God. So Peter reminds the church of this truth. First Peter says "for it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil"(vs. 17) Then he puts this suffering in context, "For Christ suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous in order to bring you to God."

This statement says several things to the early Christians. #1. Christ suffered for us. He knows the suffering we are going through. He can feel our pain. #2. Like us, Jesus suffered for doing good; for following God's will. #3. God willed Jesus' suffering for a greater good. It was his suffering that bought our salvation. He suffered and died so that all of us could live eternally. So our suffering must be for a greater good. What was that greater good that the early church was suffering for? If they had not suffered in faith who would have passed on the faith to us. Their suffering is a living proof of what Peter has written here. It was also a fulfillment of what Jesus said to Peter: "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it!"

Peter points out that Jesus "has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him." Jesus Christ has ultimate authority over all things. The powers of evil have been let loose on this world for a time and they make the righteous suffer, but Jesus has ultimate authority over them, as well. In Christ we have victory over the forces of this world! In other words the church should not fear for the future because their faith was in Jesus who is King of Kings

Have you ever feared for your children? What woman who has mothered a child hasn't feared for that child's future. The Bible has several very important things to say to you.

#1. Jesus knows your suffering. He's been there. Jesus said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How often I have desired to gather your children as a hen gathers her brood."(Matt. 23:37) Out of love Jesus wished to "Mother" his father's children but they would not let him.

#2. Your worries and fears are sanctified by love. Your suffering is one born of love for your children. I believe God honors that love, just as God honored the love Jesus had for us as he died on the cross. When we suffer for doing good we are following in Jesus' footsteps.

#3. Your suffering is not in vain. God knows your concern, and when you lift those concerns to God in prayer God hears and answers.

#4. Don't fear as the world fears. Don't fear because Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. If you have confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God, then He lives in you. In that case your life and your prayers are built on that rock of faith, and if you teach your children that faith then the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. Simply put your trust and your children in Jesus' hands.