

## ALL BECAUSE OF A MOTHER'S FAITH

A teacher I know posted this message last week:

***FYI DADS, your children will NOT be bringing home handmade Mother's Day gifts from school. You have 9 days to get something prepared.***

This teacher's message is a reminder of the times we find ourselves in right now due to COVID-19. Prior to the pandemic, dads could count on their children bringing home Mother's Day gifts from their school to bless their moms with. This year dads, as opposed to teachers, will have to be the creative thinkers when it comes to gifts from the kids to moms. My dad was fortunate that there was no pandemic during his lifetime as I think he would have struggled coming up with an idea for me to make something for my mother.

This teacher's message did get me thinking about the only gift I can remember making my mother at school and bringing home for Mother's Day. The gift was a card I made when I was in kindergarten. Naturally my mom kept the card, and she gave it back to me as a reminder twenty years ago this week. It was an appropriate time for her to give it back to me as I used it on that Mother's Day Sunday in 2001 in my children's story.

The reason why I remember that children's story is I was preaching for a call at St. Andrew's Petrolia and Knox Dawn on Mother's Day Sunday in 2001. As I showed this Mother's Day card and did my children's story some of the people said to me after it was at that moment in the service when God confirmed to them, I was the minister He was sending them. When I think back, it was very fitting that it was a Mother's Day Sunday that I would preach for a call and use a gift I had given to my mother 32 years earlier as a prop in my children's story. It was a Sunday that I had to walk in faith preaching for a call and show I was a person of faith as well. I would not have been able to do either if it had not been for my mother who gave me the gift of faith.

My mother has given me many gifts through the course of my life such as:

- Making our family home a welcoming and fun place for my friends to gather
- Buying many balloons for memorable water balloon fights
- Taking us to drive-in movies
- Being there for all my hockey games and giving me the opportunity to play at a Triple AAA level.
- Working hard and long hours to pay for my education.

These are just a few of the many gifts she has blessed me with. The most important gift that she gave me is the faith and love I have for the Lord. It was a gift that started by her taking me to church and Sunday school over the years and praying many prayers for me. Look where the gift of faith has brought me over the past twenty years:

- From preaching for a call at my first pastoral charge to now ministering in the midst of a pandemic at the church my mother started attending when she was a child in Mount Pleasant.

Even though Mother's Day is a time when I am supposed to give my mother a gift, God has used this Mother's Day to remind me of the best gift she has given to me.

As a minister I am blessed to hear stories about how you came to experiencing your journey of faith. Thinking back, many people have shared how their mothers and grandmothers were the ones who gave them the gift of faith. Timothy would be in the group of people who have their mothers and grandmothers to thank for this gift. Timothy must have shared this with the Apostle Paul at some point in their relationship, for Paul reminded Timothy of this in 2 Timothy 1:5-7:

*<sup>5</sup> I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flames the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us POWER, LOVE AND SELF-DISCIPLINE.*

Timothy's mother and grandmother were early converts to Christianity. Even though Timothy's father was not a believer, this did not stop his mother and grandmother from planting seeds of faith in him. When Paul gave this advice, Timothy was going through a period of opposition and resistance to his ministry because of his youth and association with the apostle. To help encourage Timothy to endure through this difficult period, Paul reminded his companion of the strong faith given to him by his mother and grandmother. Paul also reminded Timothy how the Holy Spirit would help him overcome his fear by filling him with power, love and self discipline.

Just like Timothy, we are going through a difficult stretch in our lives due to this pandemic. There have been a lot of messages and warnings instilling fear, worry and anxiety in us during this pandemic. One of the gifts that has helped us to endure during this pandemic has been our faith and trust in God. His presence, His Spirit, and His promises have given us the strength we have needed not to be afraid but to patiently endure and trust as He leads us through this difficult season.

As I mentioned earlier, some of you reading this might have your mothers and grandmothers to thank for giving you the gift of faith that has been sustaining you through this time. If this has been the case for you, then on this Mother's Day wouldn't it be fitting if the gift you gave to your mothers and grandmothers if they are still living is to say thank you for planting those seeds of faith in your heart along the way. If your mother or grandmother has already made the journey to Heaven, then in your prayers on Sunday thank God for having your mother or grandmother do this for you. God will pass the message along to them. Let's not stop there. May we follow the example of Lois and Eunice by planting seeds of faith in our children and grandchildren and praying prayers over them. It is the greatest gift we can give them both during this pandemic and after.

Keep Safe and God Bless

Pastor Dean