

Lessons from Mom

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 May 2025

Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 00] I want you to turn to Proverbs 31. Proverbs 31. Today I want to read from a familiar passage from Mother's Day.! It talks about the virtuous woman.

! A lady is singing, I can bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan and never let you forget you're a man, you know.

It was some perfume or something. But anyway, that's kind of what that reminds me of. I don't know if that's appropriate to say, but I just said it. So, I mean, if you read the whole chapter, poor thing.

Wear a lady out. All the duties and responsibilities and all the things that are listed can be absolutely overwhelming. But there's a particular part that I enjoy the most at the end of the chapter.

It's Proverbs 31, verse 26. It says this. She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

[1 : 14] She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed.

Her husband also, and he praises her. Many women have done excellently, but you surpassed them all. Charm is deceitful, and beauty is fleeting.

But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

I'm a blessed man. I am blessed for a lot of reasons. In a lot of reasons. A few of which I want to mention. I'm blessed to have had a grandmother that is now in heaven who always had an open, well-worn Bible lying on her kitchen table.

And every morning, with a cup of coffee and a piece of toast and a hunk of government cheese, she spent time with the Lord.

[2 : 21] And if you don't know what government cheese is, I am sorry. You missed out. I'm thankful she got in line. I'm blessed with a mother that loves Jesus dearly, reads her Bible daily, and is a faithful prayer warrior for the Lord.

Every night, she leans upon the Lord in every matter. One night years ago, I was living in Mississippi, and my mother called us crying and asked us to pray.

Please pray. And in about three seconds, I had a bag packed and was in the car coming to South Carolina because Mama was crying. And, however, before I left, thankfully, she said the cat was missing.

Pray for them that they can find their cat. I hung up, and Dawn and I prayed that my parents would not have a cardiac over that blamed cat.

Send him home, Lord. Send home the prodigal cat. Let him find relief.

[3 : 35] A few minutes later, I got a call again. Cat was in the closet. But it wasn't his closet. It was the other closet, not the one he normally went to.

But I love my mama, and my mama loves me, but not near as much as she loves the Lord. Years ago, a search committee was, somebody heard me preach and got word back to somebody, and a search committee contacted my former secretary because I had preached at my home church and said, you know how to get in touch with this fella.

And she said, I don't, but his mama will. And so she called my mama and said, can you tell me, wouldn't you love to have your son back in the upstate?

And she said, I want my boy in the center of God's will, wherever that is. My mama will clean your plows. She's serious about it. She loves the Lord more than she loves me.

She also loves my wife more than she loves me. She does. And she loves my kids more than she loves me. But that's kind of par for the story. Story of my life.

[4 : 44] So many of you sweet, pleasant people will say, preacher, you're fine, but you're family now. They're a blessing, you know, so you'll set aside. I was also blessed with a wonderful mother-in-law that loved the Lord Jesus with all of her heart and served the Lord as long as she had the strength to do it.

Anytime there was a need at church, she was there taking care of whatever needed to be taken care of. At the same time, taking care of her family and providing their every need.

She'd tell us she's going to the post office. And many, many hours later, she'd come back with a trunk full from Belks and the grocery store and everything, taking care of every need they had.

She was a blessing, an absolute blessing. And she's in glory today. I'm blessed with a wife that serves the Lord tirelessly and selflessly.

Church, I'm going to tell you, you're blessed with a wonderful pastor's wife. She knows what it means to be a pastor's wife. She don't want to lead anything, and she'll refuse to.

[5 : 57] But she'll serve in any capacity. And she knows how to set me straight when I need to be set straight and tells me, gives me those nudges, as Brian, I know you get.

You might want to check on so-and-so, you know. So anyway, so if I don't check on you, it's not my fault, it's hers. So I'm thankful that my two girls know the Lord and came to know him at an early age, and I pray every day that they'll have a zeal for the Lord Jesus that will control their life.

I'm blessed. And as I thought about Mother's Day, I thought about the lessons that my mother has taught me. And thank God that she still teaches me.

She wanted to be here today. It would have been kind of awkward for me to say what I'm about to say. But she wanted to be here today, but she's not had a good week. And she knew that she wouldn't have the energy to do that.

And so we're going to her in a little while. But I want to talk this morning for a few moments about what she's taught me.

[7 : 05] And this list could go on and on, but it won't because it's Mother's Day. And there's other things to do on Mother's Day. Let me tell you what she's taught me. She's taught me to love Jesus with all my life.

My mother makes no apologies for her zeal for the Lord. She is unashamed, and she shows others what it means to love Christ. She raised two not-headed boys, and then one absolute blessing came along.

While my dad served our country many times overseas as well as on this side of the seas and sometimes at home, sometimes away, my mother played the organ or the piano in the church with one eye on the music and one eye on us.

She had one finger playing and one finger pointing while I was busy taking notes of the pastor's sermon. When Christ said, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, I know what he meant because I've seen it lived out.

She taught me to love Jesus with all my life. And I had the opportunity to come to know the Lord at an early age in my life. And it is my prayer that every child that comes in this church has the opportunity to know the Lord Jesus at as early an age as they can understand and digest what it means to commit their life to Christ.

[8 : 44] Now, they're not going to get the doctrine of salvation figured out. If you had to, we'd all be in a mess. Jesus said, in fact, that unless we come like a child, we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

But when they do understand, enough to know that they've sinned against God and need to surrender their life to him, it is always my prayer that they do that.

But that's not any different prayer that I have for each one of you. Many of you know that the greatest burden that I have in ministry is that somebody can sit in my preaching, under my preaching and be in this building and never have known the Lord.

And I'm going to tell you, if you don't know the Lord today, if you've never surrendered your life to him, confess that you've sinned against him and separated yourself from God, and ask him to take over your life and give your life to him, I want you to know it's the best decision you could possibly make today.

Scripture says that today is the day of salvation and that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. We can rest in that. My mother taught me how to love Jesus with all my life.

[10 : 00] She also taught me to trust God daily with prayer. I'm marked by two memories about my mother in prayer. One is her dependence upon God for all direction.

And some of the most haunting words that I ever heard growing up was, if the Lord wills. I couldn't stand to hear my mother say, if the Lord wills. I'd say, Mama, are we going to Grandma's?

And she'd say, if the Lord wills. And I'd say, Grandma loves the Lord. She reads her Bible daily with her coffee and toast and government cheese. Why wouldn't it be God's will for us to go see him?

Mama, can I go to the movies with my friends on Saturday, if the Lord wills? I couldn't understand it. I couldn't stand to hear it.

And then one day, I picked up on something that I, it was like I never read it before, although I know I have. It was in James chapter 4, verse 15.

[10 : 59] And it says, instead, you ought to say, if it's the Lord's will, we'll live and do this or that. And if you look at the passages before that, it says, do not plan out your life.

Don't say what you're going to do tomorrow. Or instead say, if the Lord wills, we'll live and do this or we'll live and do that. My other Mama prayer memory is a time that I spent the night with her.

I had traveled up here alone. We lived in Mississippi. And I was doing day hikes on the Appalachian Trail with a friend. And I'd come up and drive up one day and spend the night.

We'd get up early the next morning and do a day hike. I'd drive back the next day. And I came in. I went to bed early that night because I knew I had an early morning to do that.

And when I was laying in the bedroom, I heard something. And I didn't quite know what it was. And when I got up to go to the bathroom, I realized what it was.

[11 : 58] It was my mother on her knees by her bed praying. I'm sure praying for me and I'm sure praying for my brothers.

Whatever other burdens that she had upon her. And I thought and I still think about this. How for over now for 60 years, she's been praying for my brothers.

Not quite that long for me. But it took me back to a night, a rough night, when she came to me and asked for me to pray with her.

I was 16, 17, 18, something like that. And there was a relative that night that was in trouble. Having troubles, doing stupid stuff, getting caught doing it.

And she was grieved. And we got up and knelt down and prayed. And I was able to be a part of that. But I couldn't help but think at that time, and I still think today, how many times has she done that?

[13 : 04] You know, the reality is that sometimes the blessings in our lives that come today are because of prayers of people that not only were prayed years ago, but some of those people are already in glory today.

And their prayers are still being answered in our lives. That's a powerful thought to me. I don't know that she's ever told me to trust God daily with prayer.

She probably has, and I probably wasn't listening. But she never really had to because she showed me how to do that. And by the way, trusting the Lord daily in prayer is God's will.

It's not if it's the Lord's will. It is the Lord's will. I promise it's the Lord's will to do that. She also taught me to treat others better than myself.

I'm quite sure that she's never told me that, to treat others better than myself. At least not in a repetitive fashion. Not like mothers teach you the important principles of life, like brushing your teeth, or wearing deodorant, or making up the bed, or those type things.

[14 : 14] But those repetitive phrases work. I brush my teeth more than daily. Thank you very much. And I wear deodorant, and I encourage you to as well. I wouldn't go the natural route if I were you for the sake of your neighbors.

I'd go ahead and use the chemicals or whatever they got in it. And I somewhat do my part with making up the bed. Now, I have a religious objection to 18 pillows on a bed.

I just don't think that's right. I didn't grow up that way. Yeah, I'm more of a minimalist. But I don't always honor that part of it. But I was taught to treat others better than myself.

Philippians chapter 2, verse 4 says, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. I can never remember a time when my mother put her interests above others.

I have no memory of it. I remember one time coming home from seminary. I was living in New Orleans for a visit and looking. I came home and I looked in the refrigerator and I saw Clearly Canadian in the refrigerator and about two pounds of green grapes.

[15 : 26] Now, if you don't know what Clearly Canadian is, it's non-alcoholic. So don't panic, okay? But Clearly Canadian is a drink that was real hot in the late 80s and early 90s. And it's come back.

You can get it by the case at Sam's now, by the way. But it was not something that was in the refrigerator of a home that had three boys coming through it.

Because we'd have drank them all in one sitting and ate all the green grapes at one time, too. When I looked in there and saw that, I looked at Mama and said, Mama, who's coming? And she said, you are.

Mama is the one that did the food ministry at the church. And I'd tell her, Mama, you know those people ripping you off. They don't need that. They're just coming to get it. And she said, Lord, work all that out. Later, it inspired me and we had a food ministry at my last church.

And we gave out those bags. And people would come to me and say, you know, we're taking those bags out of those cars. They're driving nicer cars than we are. And I said, the Lord will work all that out.

[16 : 33] She's the one that visited the homebound. She's the one that took care of the down and the out. That cat that I talked about, that wasn't a cat they got.

It was some yard cat that came up and they claimed it. Or either somebody died and they inherited it. A neighbor or something. One time she stopped at a stop sign. And a new young driver hit her in the back.

And she felt sorry for him. And so she let him go. And she came home and there was damage to the car. And so we all went out to the car and told her how wrong she was for letting that boy go.

And she said she was concerned that somebody else's son would get in trouble. And she said, I want somebody to do the same thing for you. And so she let him go.

And that bumper had two dimples in it for the rest of his life in the back of it. That's my mama. And that's the heart of a mom. My mother has a servant's heart.

[17 : 33] She always washed, cooked, cleaned, looked at folks and always went the extra mile. Ask her for one. She'll give you two. Sometimes even without asking. One time when I was visiting there, I forgot my toothpaste.

I looked in the cabinet, found somebody's toothpaste, and I used it. The next day she came to me and gave me two tubes of toothpaste. Brand new in a box. And I said, Mama, this has got to mean one of two things.

One is you don't want me using your toothpaste. Or number two, you think I desperately need toothpaste. I said, which one? And she said, neither. You said you like that brand. It was hard to find, so I bought you two of them.

Treat others better than yourself. She also taught me, always know that I love you. As a mother of three grown men, there's been a lot that has troubled my mother over the years.

Whether it was our own foolishness or whether it was a family concern or whether it was one of those major interruptions that happen in life where everything turns on a dime.

[18 : 39] She prayed through our mistakes. She prayed through our smart mouths. She prayed through our decisions. She prayed through our difficulties.

She dearly loved us through it all. And I could tell you stories about it, but I'm not going to. You got your own stories. Ladies, never let your family doubt that you love them.

It's okay to be disappointed by them. It's okay to be hurt by them. But please don't ever let them doubt that you love them. You can be unhappy with them.

You can be disappointed with them. You can be hurt to the core. But please let them know that you have a 1 Corinthians 13 kind of love because there's hardly anybody else in the world that's ever going to give them that kind of love.

1 Corinthians 13, 7 says, Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. And some of us are those things that are endured before.

[19 : 48] Stop me one more lesson. She taught me never stop doing any of this. I'm thankful that my mother today is still teaching me these things.

And I realize that today's a hard day for a lot of variety of reasons for a lot of people. I had somebody early on in ministry. I would just pastor maybe my first year or two in ministry.

And a lady came by at the door at the close of the worship and said, I have always dreaded Mother's Day. But you made it special for me today.

And I'll always think about Ms. Doris' comment when I think of Mother's Day. Because I realize it's a tough day. There's folks who've had losses in this building that hurt.

And those folks who've had struggles in their life around that subject. And I know that it's a very difficult day for many.

[20 : 51] So please don't misunderstand why I share what I do this morning. I want you to understand why I share it. I don't do it to brag on my mother.

She's not perfect. I ain't figured out how, but she's not perfect. I do it because Proverbs 31, 31 says, Let her works praise her in the gates.

You know what the gates are? The gates are the entrance to a walled city. To keep a city protected, they didn't let people in except through the gates.

And that was well monitored. And anytime anybody had to leave the city, they had to go through the gate. And anytime somebody came into the city, they went in the gate. So if you wanted to see what was happening, I mean the social media spot was the gate.

That's where you went. You know what else you got there? You got all the information. You found out what was going on in town. Whether it was true or not, you found it out.

[21 : 57] At the gate. That was the place. The gate's where people listen. Where they hang out. It's where they talk about things.

So I say that because I want each lady in this building, each one watching online, to never underestimate the opportunity that is before you. To never underestimate that God has placed lies before you.

We were blessed last week to watch a parade of children that sang to us in a wonderful fashion. Each one of them, every last one of them, some of them more than others, need all of us to be good, godly, loving examples.

And men, that does not just fall on the ladies. We all have a responsibility in that. Listen, those kids need all of us to be good and godly and loving examples and to not miss the opportunity that we have on hand.

Because we can influence lives. Let me be blunt. We are influencing lives. In one way or the other. Even before we leave here today, we have the opportunity to influence others.

[23 : 24] Let's not waste our influence. Take advantage of it and use it for his honor and for his glory.

And it'll lead to changed lives. Ladies, thank you for what you do for the Lord.

Thank you for what you do in his church. Thank you for what you do in your family. The reality is, everything the church stands for relies so much on the backs of so many ladies who've served him so faithfully.

Legacies of faith. As God gives you opportunity, live it out for him. Now, if you're here this morning and you've never surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ, I don't want you to miss the opportunity today to confess that you've sinned against God and done wrong that's displeased him and ask him to forgive you of that, to come into your life and to save you and change you.

If you've never done that, I encourage you before you leave here today to do that very thing. We'll stand in just a moment. We'll sing a song and I'll be down front. If you have any questions about that or need any leadership in that, you come see me.

[24 : 53] I'd love to guide you in that. Maybe you're here this morning and you do know that you're a Christian, but the reality is there's things in your life that affect your influence upon others and in not a good sense.

And we need to lay those things down before the Lord. Whether it's private matters or public matters, let's walk out of them.

Leave them before the Lord. You can do that in the pew where you'll stand in just a moment or you can do it at this altar or I'll be happy to pray with you. I have no idea what God's laid upon your heart today, but I encourage you to just simply be obedient.

To do what God shows you is His very best for your life. Maybe God's drawing you to First Baptist Church. God's moving and working in lives in our church and I'm thankful for that.

And if God's leading you to be a part of this church, I encourage you to come. I'd love to guide you in that as well. I just encourage you today to be obedient. I'll never ask you to do more than what God tells you to do and I never want you to be satisfied with doing less.

[26 : 11] I just encourage you to follow Him. Not only in these next few moments, but as you leave this building, as you go on your way, just follow the Lord Jesus.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, thank you for the opportunity that you give us to influence lives around us and I pray, dear God, that you will help us to live lives of good, godly influence today.

God, I pray that you'll give encouragement where encouragement's needed. I pray that you'll give comfort where comfort's needed, dear God. I pray, dear God, that you'll give clarity where clarity's needed.

Direction, dear Father, and even conviction, Father. Work and move in our midst. Help us to simply be obedient to follow your will. In Jesus' precious name, amen.