

MOMS ARE SWELL

*Jeff Peabody
New Day Church
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Happy Mother's Day. Isn't it great that God created moms? I'd like to begin this morning by reading you a special Mother's Day poem:

*Moms are swell – they take us places.
And when we're hungry, they feed our faces.
Moms know how to keep us in line
And keep us clean – most of the time.
Moms give good hugs when things are sad,
And whoever hurts us makes moms mad.
That's why I say they're "da bomb";
Cause moms love kids and kids love moms.*

It's good to celebrate moms. Did you know that Mother's Day is the single most popular day for eating at restaurants, and it's also the day with the highest number of phone calls as people talk to their moms in different parts of the country? There are so many things we appreciate about moms but we forget to tell them most of the time. So it's good to have a day set aside to do that.

Church is really about celebrating God and the things we appreciate about him. So as I was thinking about this morning, I wondered, "How are moms like God?" We call God our Father, but did you know there are qualities about God that are more like a mom than a dad? He designed people – boys and girls, moms and dads, brothers and sisters – in such a way that something about each person shows us a little about God.

Genesis 1:27

*So God created people in his own image;
God patterned them after himself;
male and female he created them.*

Isn't that interesting? Men AND women are created in God's image. So even though we call God "He", that doesn't mean only guys show us what God is like. Girls do, too. And moms in particular have a role in our lives that helps us understand what God is like. Not only can they teach us about God with their words – they can show us God in the way they live. There are even places in the Bible where God talks about how what he does is similar to what a mom does. We want to look at some of those places this morning.

Let's go back to our poem we started out with and we'll walk through it line by line to see what moms have to do with God.

Moms are swell – they take us places.

I saw a billboard for a minivan that said, “Who coined the phrase stay at home mom?” Moms are always on the go, more and more as the kids get older. You’ve got your preschool, school, soccer practice, t-ball games, piano lessons, ballet, sleepovers, girl scouts...Moms spend a lot of time on the road, driving their kids from one activity to the next.

Why do they do that? A couple of reasons. Number one, they want their kids to be part of whatever it is they’re taking them to. They think it is important for them to be there and they don’t want them to miss it. Number two, kids can’t drive. Until you’re old enough to get your license, you need somebody else to take you places. So moms step in and do that.

That might not seem like a very big deal, but did you know even driving kids around is exactly like God?

God’s willing to do it, because of those same two reasons moms have. Number one, there are things God doesn’t want us to miss out on. He wants us to be with him in heaven. He wants us to enjoy having a relationship with him. He wants us to make good choices. But he also knows that Number Two – we can’t drive. We can’t get to those places on our own. He has to be the one to take us there, because we don’t have the power on our own to get to heaven or to live the way we should.

Isaiah 46:4

I have made you and I will carry you.

God knows us because he made us, and he will take us places. What Jesus did for us when he died on the cross was offer us transportation to get to be with God.

John 14:3

And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live.

So the next time your mom takes you to school or to your friend’s house, and you’re bored in the back seat, you can think about the fact that her driving you wherever she does is a reminder that God will gladly take you to be with him someday.

Although moms might feel like they’re always in the car, they do more than that.

And when we’re hungry, they feed our faces.

Robin mothers are some of the busiest moms around at dinnertime. Did you know that a baby robin can eat up to 150% of its body weight in a 12 hour period? That means if you were a baby robin and you weighed 70 pounds, you’d have to eat 105 pounds of food in 12 hours! If your mom thinks you’re always saying “I’m hungry” now, she’d really be tired of hearing that as a robin.

But moms everywhere take the job of feeding their kids seriously. They've done that since Bible times.

Proverbs 31:15

*She gets up while it is still dark;
she provides food for her family.*

When I was in first grade, I thought my mom loved feeding me so much that she would be deeply hurt if I ate hot lunch, so I always brought my lunch. Little did I know.

Moms don't like to feed you just anything. They want to make sure you get at least some sort of nutrition in your meals. It's important when you're a kid so that you can grow and be healthy.

And in that way, they're once again giving us a picture of God. God cares about feeding us.

Psalm 107:9

For He satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

He cares about our physical needs, and he can supply all the food we'll ever need. But more than feeding our mouths, God feeds our spirits. Just like we can't live physically without food, we can't live spiritually without food. And that's food of a different kind.

Look what Jesus says in the book of John:

John 6:33-36

The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day of our lives."

Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. No one who comes to me will ever be hungry again. Those who believe in me will never thirst.

When we visit Karin's mom, she's always happiest when we're eating. Even if you're completely stuffed from the double helpings you've already had of everything, you have to save room for dessert and then a snack later on. She likes to know everyone has been completely satisfied to the point where they're not the teeniest bit hungry any more.

God has given us way more than we will ever need spiritually in Jesus. He likes to know that we won't be the teeniest bit hungry. When we ask him into our lives to forgive us and be with us and change us, he gives us more than we need to live on. If we're full of Jesus, we won't feel spiritually hungry, like we have to go looking for something else to satisfy our heart. God keeps us well-fed, just like moms.

That doesn't mean moms spend all their time in the kitchen. The next line of the poem says

Moms know how to keep us in line

How many of you are really happy that you're mom knows how to punish you? That's not usually one of our favorite things about mom. Nobody likes getting disciplined.

Now when I was growing up, if I needed to be spanked, that was usually my dad's job, unfortunately. It never hurt when my mom tried that. So she'd resort to more creative means. If I was fighting with my brother, she might make us give each other a hug and kiss. When I said bad words, I'd get the old bar of soap. Sometimes she would take privileges away and I couldn't do the things I wanted because I'd had a bad attitude. Not very much fun.

Now that I'm a parent, I can tell you that it's not very much fun to be the one doing the disciplining. I don't like to make my kids sad or mad at me. Your mom doesn't like to have you sad or mad at her.

So why do they discipline you? Would you believe it's because of love? Moms know that if they just let you do whatever you want, you'll make choices that hurt yourself and other people. You'll become selfish and no fun to be around. Discipline helps you learn to go the right way on your own, so that someday, when she's not around, you'll make good choices by yourself.

Proverbs 6:20-22

*Good friend, follow your father's good advice;
don't wander off from your mother's teachings.
Wrap yourself in them from head to foot;
wear them like a scarf around your neck.
Wherever you walk, they'll guide you;
whenever you rest, they'll guard you;
when you wake up, they'll tell you what's next.*

God uses discipline the same way.

Hebrews 12:6

*Because the Lord disciplines those he loves,
And he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.*

Sometimes hard things happen in life just because that's the way life is. But sometimes, God uses the hard things in our life as a kind of discipline. Maybe he doesn't let us do something we want to, because he knows that ultimately, it wouldn't be a good choice. He might take something away from us that we think is super important, just to teach us a lesson about what's really important. If we're having a hard time getting along with

somebody, he might put them in our life a whole lot until we can learn to love them. God lets us be sad and even mad at him sometimes because he loves us and wants what's best for us.

So what else does the poem say moms do?

And keep us clean – most of the time.

If there's anything moms love, it's clean kids and a clean house. What did moms do before they invented baby wipes and Purell?

Being clean is important, though. Did you know a lot of colds and other diseases are passed along just because people don't wash their hands often enough?

Cleaning is pretty important, and it's an ongoing process. You have to keep at it if you don't want it to build up. Think of how terrible it would get if moms never cleaned the house. Dirty dishes would pile up in the sink until you ran out of dishes. The carpet would get so full of dirt that it would like a different color. There would be big globs of toothpaste on the bathroom counter. Pretty soon all that dirty laundry would start to smell. And so would the fridge with all the old food nobody cleaned out. The house would be unlivable.

David knew that in addition to having a clean house, he needed a clean heart. He prayed to God:

Psalm 51:2

*Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.*

A little later on in that same chapter he prayed:

Psalm 51:7

*Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,
scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.*

God is like moms in that he too cares about our being clean – clean on the inside.

1 John 1:7

...and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

We're pretty messy inside. We have bad attitudes. We want to do things we shouldn't. And pretty soon that starts to pile up in our hearts, and they get so full of the bad stuff that there's not much room for anything else.

God looked at that and said, "I'm going to make a way to make people clean again." So he sent Jesus, who never had any of that bad stuff inside him. And Jesus took all the bad

things ever done on his own shoulders and suffered the consequences of them by dying on the cross. And then he rose again. By doing that, he made it so we could all be free of that dirt called sin. God looks at us through Jesus and says, "You're clean." He doesn't even see the dirt anymore.

Now chances are that even after we accept what Jesus did, we still will make bad choices almost every day. We still get dirty. The great thing is that we can keep going back to him to ask him to clean us up. And he'll always forgive us again.

1 John 1:9-10

But if we confess our sins to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins.

So God and moms are alike in that they take us places, feed us, discipline us and clean us up. They're also similar because of the next line of the poem:

Moms give good hugs when things are sad.

One thing that dads learn early on is that they are second choice comfort when it comes to being hurt. Kids first want their mom when they get a scrape or fall down. Dad will do in a pinch, but mom's the preferred choice.

That's because Mom is typically a little more sympathetic than Dad. She has the soft heart that causes her to give just the right reaction when you want someone who understands that it's the worst accident ever.

She doesn't have to pretend or work at it. She just naturally cares and wants to make it all better.

Isn't it good to know that God has a soft spot for us in his heart, just like Mom?

Isaiah 66:13

*As a mother comforts her child,
so will I comfort you.*

He really cares about us on a personal level. Let's say you go to the park with your mom, and you see a bunch of other kids with their moms. If one little girl starts crying, you won't see all the moms jump up and go comfort her. Only that girl's mom will go, because she's the only one who's connected to her. They are personally related, so her comfort will mean more.

When you become part of God's family, you have a real connection to him on a personal level. He's like the mom who will jump up and run to your side when you're hurt.

Revelation 21:3-4

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes."

That's one of my favorite verses. Has your mom ever wiped the tears from your face? That's her way of letting you know it's going to be okay. It's time to stop crying because things are going to be better. Someday, God will wipe away all tears and say, "It's okay. Everything will be better now." There will be no more sadness and pain. And that will be the best kind of comfort – even better than a hug from mom when you're sad.

One more thing we see in that poem:

And whoever hurts us makes moms mad.

One of mom's biggest jobs is to protect her kids. All kinds of moms share that instinct in common. Can you think of a particular kind of animal mom that is known for being super protective of her kids?

Bears. You don't want to get between a mother bear and her cubs. That's one of the things they warn you about if you're going to be out in the woods. Even the Bible talks about how fierce a mama bear can be if she thinks you're trying to hurt her baby. Did you know that mother polar bears are so protective of their cubs that they've been known to leap in the air at helicopters when scientists are trying to get in close to do research.

Now you might think that bear was being a little paranoid. After all, bears are some of the biggest and toughest animals out there. Everybody's afraid of them! But the mother bear isn't being too concerned at all. Did you know that only 4 out of 10 polar bear cubs survive to become an adult bear? There are real dangers out there, whether it is starvation or hunters or accidents or other animals.

Human moms are the same way: They want to protect their children. Sometimes they might seem over protective – telling you what you can't wear, which friends you can't have over, what you can't watch on TV. But you know what? There are real dangers out there in the world, and moms know it. So they do what they can to shield you from getting hurt.

God says he is just as protective as a mother bear.

Psalm 12:5

*"I will now arise," says the LORD.
"I will protect them from those who malign them."*

When Jesus was on earth, he showed the same kind of fierce protective love that a mother has for her children:

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.”

Think of a mama duck, out with her ducklings by the pond. A big storm starts rolling in, and she reaches out her wing to cover up her babies and give them a covering from the wind and rain. But one of the ducklings has waddled off a little ways. As soon as he feels those first drops of rain, what do you think he’s going to do? He’s going to turn and waddle back as fast as he can to the mama duck and burrow under her wing to stay safe and warm and dry.

We’ve been studying the story of Ruth, and last week Boaz talked to Ruth about how she had taken shelter under the wings of God. When the big storms in life come, we can either be out there in the wind and rain on our own, or we can be safe in God’s protection. All we have to do is ask him, and he’ll spread his wing over us and protect us.

Moms are swell. They do so many great things for us, and best of all they show us so many great things about God.

As you look at that list this morning, ask yourself: What “mom” quality of God do I most need today? Which of those things about mom do I most need to know is true about God? Do I need to ask him to take me where he wants to go? Am I needing to be filled up with Jesus? Do I need his cleaning – his forgiveness for something? Is he trying to discipline me about something? Maybe I need his comfort and protection, because I’m feeling sad or scared.

This Mother’s Day, go and celebrate your mom, and celebrate the God who made her to be a picture of him in your life.