

Mothering Sunday 2018. Notes.

Readings Colossians 3 v12-17, John 19 v25-27

Mothering Sunday is always a challenge for the preacher but it is also a wonderful opportunity to share the gospel with many people who are not regular attenders.

An awareness is always needed of the people who are feeling hurt on this Sunday; those who are bereaved mothers, those who long to be parents and for them this has not proved possible, those whose experience of their own mothers was far from good, those who are struggling with their family relationships.

In this all age address it is important recognise that mothering and care is something that people of all ages and genders offer to those whom they love and care for.

In reading Colossians we discover encouragement to be clothed with the qualities of holy living and encouragement to become more Christlike. We must put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, tolerance, forgiveness and love.

These are also the qualities that enable us to be and to become good parents, Mums, Dads, Grannies and Grandads. Good uncles, aunts, children and friends.

So with these qualities in mind and with the idea of being clothed in Love the address seeks to clothe a volunteer Mum in many of the items that remind us of what mothers and parents do in our lives and so often we don't stop to think about it or to say thank you. Mothering Sunday gives us the opportunity to change that. To say thank you to Mum and to give thanks to God for our mothers and all who mother us whatever our age.

Aiming to engage younger children we include many of the things they associate with mum.

The illustrated talk begins by making a silly mistake as our volunteer mummy is wrapped in a toilet roll! The wrong kind of mummy!

Then she is to be dressed in all sorts of items

Apron.....for cooking meals.

Stethoscope or first aid kit .....caring for us when poorly.

A Whistle.....refereeing between siblings

Muddy football boots.....to scrub clean

A huge handbag.....with sweets, an apple, pens and paper, a nappy etc.....for any everyday need

A teddy.....to give comfort

Car keys.....for mums taxi!

Personal organiser.....so mum knows where everyone is and what school kit is needed when etc.

A briefcase.....mum works and needs to keep organised.

Hair dye.....to cover the grey hairs because of her worrying about the children.

A party hat.....she often organises parties.

Flowers....because being a mum can be wonderful.

A sword.....because sometimes mums are sad and like Mary in our gospel reading mum can become sad and it hurts. The cost of mothering.

As the items are placed on the volunteer the congregation are reminded about why they are being given.

Whilst the mum is being dressed up in this way if there is a large congregation it is worth asking for a volunteer child who is good at maths to stand in front of each block of pews. With an adult to oversee them so that you can ask between each item who in the family does the things you are speaking of...is it Mum, Dad, Granny or someone else? A show of hands from each block can be counted and scores kept.

Adding up all the scores at the end should tell you how much of all this mothering is done by mums.

Once your mummy is fully clothed stop and get people to think of the things that make a good mother what else needs to be added?

As your volunteer takes off all the props reflect and discover how some of these things are important but the most important thing is to be clothed with the qualities that we heard of in our first reading.

Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Tolerance, Forgiveness and above all LOVE.

These are the qualities all of us should show as we seek to become more like Jesus.

And where do we get the strength for this? Well the Colossians reading makes it clear these are gifts from God as we are his holy people.

God has chosen us to be his.

We are loved by him and whatever our experience of our earthly parents his love for us is assured and endures. He will give us the strength and these loving and mothering qualities in all our relationships with other people. Whether young or old.

With grateful thanks for all the discussions shared with the Revd Nicky Carnall as this podcast developed and for colleagues who have heard it in action and encouraged me to write it up! I hope you enjoy it and Mothering Sunday is a special blessing this year.

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