

1. As you well know we have been talking all year about this being our year of Jubilee. The year where God restores for us and in us what he originally intended us to be.
2. As encouraged as I am about God's willingness and ability to bring restoration, I am also aware that there is something better than restoration, and that is to avoid, if at all possible, the circumstances that cause us to need restoration in the first place.
3. Meaning, rather than having to be restored into what God originally intended us to be, to **remove the barriers that prevent us from being what God wants us to be in the first place.**
4. I recognize that today is mother's day, and we are going to use an illustration of a mother to unpack this message, but I also recognize as important as mothers are to this process of being what God intends us to be, all of us are important because all of us have a part to play in how those around us are formed into the image of Jesus Christ.
5. How we live and relate to one another greatly affects our identity in Jesus Christ.
6. Let's talk about mothers for a moment.
7. I've heard it said that mothering is the most significant, demanding, underpaid profession there is.
8. Being a mother is significant because of what children learn from their mothers.
9. I recently came upon a list of **things our mother might have taught us.**
 - My mother taught me religion. She used to say things like, "You better pray that comes out of the carpet."
 - My mother taught me medicine: "If you don't stop crossing your eyes, they're going to freeze that way."
 - My mother taught me how to be a contortionist: "Will you look at the dirt on the back of your neck!"
 - My mother taught me to appreciate a job well done: "If you're going to kill each other, do it outside. I just finished cleaning!"
 - My mother taught me about genetics: "You are just like your father!"
 - My mother taught me logic: "Because I said so, that's why."
10. As funny as those things might be, there are numerous things our mothers teach us that stick with us all our lives.

11. Dr. Henry Cloud in his book “Our Mothers, Ourselves” gives the following examples.
12. We learn how to relate to other people from our mothers.
13. We learn how to belong, and yet at the same time be separate.
14. We learn how to handle failure.
15. How to handle difficult emotions.
16. How to have proper expectations.
17. How to deal with grief and loss.
18. Those are some really powerful lessons we learn from our mothers.
19. But what I’d like to focus on today is not necessarily something our mothers teach us, but rather something our mothers have the power to allow to happen in our lives.
20. And again, though we are using the illustration of a mother, don’t check out on me if you are not a mother because this is something that all of us can and should allow to happen in the lives of those we have influence over.
21. It is in allowing those we influence to become what God intended them to be in the first place. In other words, to stay out of the way enough so that those we love don’t become what we want them to be, but rather what God wants them to be.
22. Turn with me if you will to the book of Luke chapter 2.

TEXT: **Luke 2:41-52** Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." 49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

TITLE: **Letting Them Be.**

INTRO:

1. I think any person who has ever been responsible for a child could see how this event was absolutely stressful for Jesus' parents.
2. They thought Jesus was with them, but then realized several days later that he wasn't with them, and according to Mary, this caused Mary and Joseph a fair amount of anxiety.
3. One time when our kids were little, my wife and I had driven separate cars to church that night. She thought I had 3-year-old Jeremy with me, and I thought she had 3-year-old Jeremy with her.
4. We arrived home to realize neither of us had him and the panic set in.
5. Fortunately, when we got back to the church, Jeremy was asleep, on a pew, in the dark church, and never knew he had been left behind.
6. In the case of Jesus however, as a 12-year-old, Jesus consciously made the decision to not go home with his parents, but to stay around the temple.
7. That was a decision that cause his parents to struggle, and when Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus, Mary wasted no time in telling Jesus that what he had done caused them stress.
8. And Jesus responded... Luke 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"
9. We find in verse 50 that even though Jesus' parents heard what Jesus said, they didn't understand what he said.
10. So, to put this into perspective, Mary scolded Jesus, and Jesus responded in such a way that Mary wondered if she had gotten her point across.
11. What do many of us do when we correct a child, but we think they aren't getting it? We lean in and try harder to make them understand.
12. But Mary responded differently. Luke 2:51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.
13. Mary was put in a situation that snatched her right out of her comfort zone. She was unsure if Jesus understood why they were worried, and rather than trying harder to make Jesus line up with what she wanted, she treasured what had happened in her heart.

14. In other words, rather than try harder to get Jesus in line, she wondered to herself, am I the one that might need to get in line with what God is doing in my little boy's life.
15. I don't believe we can afford to miss the significance of her reaction. That's because, **when someone we love steps out of their comfort zone, it usually shakes up our comfort zone**, and it makes us uneasy because we fear we have something to lose.
16. And when we fear that we are losing control of a situation based on how someone else is choosing to act or live, our natural tendency is to want to draw them back into a place that makes us feel comfortable again.
17. In his book *The Dream Giver*, Bruce Wilkinson calls this the behavior of border bullies.
18. Good, well-meaning people, who actually love us, but who will try and stand in our way to keep us where they feel comfortable.
19. If we're not careful, when those we love, especially children of any age, start to step outside their comfort zone, we can resort to trying to talk them out of it, and trying to convince them that they can't do it even if they try.
20. Our tendency is to want to reel them back to a place that is pleasing to us.
21. But as parents, as influencers, as disciple makers, our job is not to raise people who please us, our job is to raise up people who will choose to please the Lord at all cost.
22. When we force those we love to choose between pleasing us rather than pleasing God, they grow up to be people who have no clue what God's original intent is for their life.
23. They grow up to be people whose image of what God wants them to be is marred and damaged to the point they are going to need restoration in their life later on.
24. Am I making any sense this morning? Good.
25. So, let's take the next few minutes and see if we can determine what Mary did that allowed Jesus to take on God's identity rather than her identity.
26. Let's begin that journey by clarifying what we are not talking about.

We are...

Not talking about an absence of boundaries.

1. We are not talking about just letting those we love do whatever they want willy nilly, with no regard to how their behavior affects others.
2. **Luke 2:48** When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."
3. I believe that it was probably God's desire that Jesus hang back at the temple, learning and interacting with others. It was probably a source of spiritual growth in his life.
4. But his 12-year-old, adolescent mind, didn't think far enough ahead to tell his parents what he had in mind.
5. His 12-year-old adolescent mind didn't consider how his decision would affect those who loved him.
6. So, Mary makes sure Jesus knows that what he has done has had a negative impact on them.
7. Why have you treated us this way? We have been anxiously searching for you. Your staying behind without communicating with us was an act of disobedience.
8. Mary made sure to establish clear boundaries, and to let Jesus know that he had violated those boundaries.
9. And once Jesus understood what she was saying, he made a decision.
10. **Luke 2:51** Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.
11. Jesus was obedient to the boundaries that had been established for his protection.
12. But somehow, probably with the help of the Holy Spirit, Mary, in her own flawed way, tried to distinguish between boundaries meant to protect Jesus' safety, and boundaries that were meant to make her feel safe.
13. And I believe she did that by asking...

Is this God?

1. Is what I see happening in my son's life a result of God trying to mold

and make him into what He wants?

2. Luke 2:51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

3. I believe that phrase, treasured all these things in her heart can be summed up this way.
4. 1st. Mary didn't dismiss what made her uncomfortable.
5. She could have easily dismissed Jesus' behavior as that of an immature boy, especially since his behavior made her uncomfortable, but instead she may have asked herself the question. Is this God? Is God up to something?
6. 2nd. Mary allowed God to mold Jesus into his image and not her image.
7. Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.
8. Notice with me what it doesn't say. It doesn't say Jesus grew up in wisdom and stature, and in favor with his mother. Jesus grew up in favor with God and man.
9. Over time, Mary gave up her authority over Jesus so he could come under the authority of God.
10. She allowed him to be known as God's child first, and her child second.
11. Finally, Mary didn't stand in the way of God's plans for Jesus' life, even when those plans brought her pain.
12. I know the bible gives us no evidence that Jesus had a conversation with his mother about his future death on the cross. But my opinion is, if Jesus prepared his disciples for his death, he probably prepared his mother for his death.
13. I will touch more on this in a second, but I don't believe Mary got it all right without any mistakes. But at some point in the conversation, Jesus probably said to his mother.
14. Mom, this is why I came to earth. This is why my heavenly father sent me here, through you, so that I could die for the sins of the world.
15. And at some point, she accepted that in spite of her pain.
16. The reason why I believe she accepted Jesus' fate is because she was present at Jesus' crucifixion, but she didn't try to interfere with his crucifixion.

17. She painfully allowed it to happen because she felt it was God's will.
18. As we close this morning, I want to be clear that I am not trying to paint a picture of Mary as someone who was perfect and got everything right.
19. And I'm not trying to set a bar of perfection for all of us to try and shoot for but fail to achieve.

Mary wasn't perfect.

1. We know Mary was not perfect because on the day Jesus performed his first miracle, he and Mary had a disagreement.
2. Jesus and his disciples attend a wedding. Jesus is a grown man with his own ministry.
3. Somewhere in the reception celebration, the host runs out of wine.
4. Mary immediately approaches Jesus and informs him; they have no more wine.
5. It's obvious from Jesus' response she wasn't just passing along information. She expected Jesus to do something about it.
6. I love what Jesus says to her. **John 2:4 "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."**
7. Jesus wasn't being disrespectful, he was basically saying...Mom, this is none of our business. It's not my problem. Why are you trying to make this my problem.
8. And as only a mother can do, she ignored what Jesus said and turned to tell the servants to do whatever Jesus told them.
9. My point is, Mary didn't get it all right and we will not get everything right. We are going to make mistakes.
10. But if we will allow the Holy Spirit to help us get out of the way, God can use us to provide the proper environment to allow God to mold those we love into exactly who and what he wants.

Conclusion:

1. The reality is, this parent-child relationship is just the tip of the iceberg.
2. What if there other relationships where rather than giving the other person the space to grow into what God wants, we are trying to make

them into what we want?

3. I wonder how many husbands are so busy trying to get their wives to be the kind of person that will please them, that they never stop and give her the space that she needs for God to mold her into the kind of woman He wants?
4. I wonder how many wives are so busy trying to raise their husband up where his mamma left off, that they don't leave any space for him to become the man that God wants?
5. I wonder how many families operate with this underlying dynamic that says, you're here to make the family happy, you're number one devotion needs to be to the families wishes that very little room is given to be devoted to God's wishes?
6. Probably more often than we think.
7. It is a sign of spiritual immaturity for everything to have to be the way we want, and it is a sign of spiritual maturity for us to submit to what God wants for those around us.
8. In the great love chapter of the bible, Paul makes a very profound statement about how we love others, and how our spiritual maturity are connected.
9. **1 Corinthians 13:11** When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me.
10. Only you can answer this for yourself. But are there some childish attitudes. Childish behaviors. Childish mindsets that you need to lay down?
11. Is there some area in your life where you need to give up control so that God can be in control?
12. As I pray over us will you allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you, and allow him to show you if there are areas of spiritual immaturity you need to let go of?
13. As it relates to the people closest to you in your life. Husbands. Wives. Children. Parents. Grandparents. Extended family.
14. Are you leaving them be to the point that God can direct their life, or are you hanging on in the hopes that you can direct their life?