

## Mother's Day 2015

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I have kind of a confession to make right at the outset of this message.

I always feel a little bit funny speaking on Mother's Day because,  
here's the truth --

I grew up in a family that didn't really celebrate Mother's Day.

Yes, I did grow up in this country,

and yes, I had a mom, you've met her, you've heard me talk about her.

But we just didn't really DO Mother's Day.

And before you start to judge me for being just a horrible daughter,

let me explain:

it was all my mother's idea.

She told us not to celebrate Mother's Day.

I know -- this sounds weird.

Who *wouldn't* want cards and chocolate and flowers? Especially chocolate.

But my mother, a woman of immense practicality and good sense,

thought that Mother's Day had gotten way too silly and commercialized and expensive.

She said, and this is a direct quote, "It's a Hallmark Holiday.

They're just trying to make money.

Do NOT participate."

So -- we didn't.

With all this as background,

I was pretty interested,

to read, this week, an article kicking around the internet,

which reveals that the founder of Mother's Day herself,

a formidable looking woman named Anna Jarvis,  
said exactly the same thing as my mom.

Within a few years of Mother's Day being established, she became quite agitated about its commercialization.

With considerable irritation, in 1914, she wrote a series of complaints such as this one:

"I note that confectioners now put a white ribbon on a box of candy and advance the price just because it's Mother's Day.

There is no connection between candy and this day."

And she complained about cards, too:

"Write a letter to your mother," she said indignantly.

"Any mother would rather have a line of the worst scribble from her son or daughter than any fancy greeting card."

So who knew that, decades later, my mother was simply channeling the indignation of the Founder herself?

Anna Jarvis was right, of course.

My mother was right.

But here's where I goofed as a kid.

Neither Anna Jarvis, nor, I suspect, my mom,  
wanted us to give up Mother's day.

They just wanted us to remember the heart of it.

It's like Christmas and Easter.

Christmas is commercialized, but we sure don't stop celebrating it ...

So is Easter, and I noticed an awful lot of people showed up here a few weeks ago to celebrate that, too.

What we do together as church, in the face of all the stuff out there,  
is to be the ones who remember what matters,  
the ones who rediscover the heart,

the ones who proclaim the central message.

And here's the funny thing --

the central message is always the same.

What we remember, what we recapture, what we come here to proclaim,  
is always, always the same:

It's always LOVE.

On this Mother's Day ... and on Christmas ... and on Easter ...

what we are here to celebrate is LOVE.

The kids who stood up here earlier made that abundantly clear:

their love for their moms spilled out of their hearts

just as their mother's love has spilled into their lives.

That's what we're here in church to celebrate,

because *that's* what's holy.

We're celebrating love today,

Love that has come into our lives from a *multitude* of mothering angels:

from moms who cherished us, yes, and hallelujah for that,

or maybe a grandmother who adored us,

or maybe a marvelous aunt,

or a friend's mom who gave us a listening ear when it was most needed.

Mothering love from a teacher who noticed something special,

or a coach who found something inside us to draw out of us.

We're celebrating love today, because love is always the real message.

Because Love is the way that God shows up in our lives.

And today we honor, we rejoice in, we delight in *all* the motherly ways that we feel  
God's love.

Today we honor, we rejoice in *all* the women in our lives that have brought God's love to us.

I love my mom for many, many reasons.

I love that she is a no-frills person who knew she didn't need a bunch of stuff, and who taught me to focus on what's important.

I've also found over the years some great Mother's Day cards that tell her just that, and she's really liked those.

I've also discovered that chocolate actually goes over pretty well, but maybe not as well as good cheese -- that's actually what she's getting today.

But nothing's more important than simply telling her, on this Mother's Day and every Mother's Day, that I love her.

So, Mom, when you read this sermon online, 'cause I know you will: I love you.

And for whoever it is who was sent into your life to love you, and whoever it is *you* love with motherly tenderness, Happy Mothers day – and thank you, God. Amen.