

For 8am on Mothering Sunday.

Opening prayer

Heavenly Father, the words I will speak today have been written by others but I pray that you will use them to fill all of our hearts with the virtues of compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience and most of all love. Amen

Today is Mothering Sunday – we are thinking about our Mothers, those with us and those who have passed on and perhaps our own roles as Mothers and (probably most of us here) Grandmothers.

The first reading this morning from Colossians 3 v12:17 was about how we should live as God's chosen people and Paul listed the specific qualities I have just mentioned in my prayer. These are virtues we should all aspire to of course but because it is Mother's Day I found myself thinking about the Mothers in the Bible and their virtues.

I found a piece written by Emmy Kegler which reminds us of the women of the bible and also of all of the women in our society today.

As I read this, I found myself wanting to read again the stories of each of these amazing Women and thinking about their qualities - I hope you might be encouraged to do so too.

The Women of the Bible

By [Emmy R. Kegler](#)

My childhood was composed of a simple mother-daughter relationship. I am not yet a mother myself. And until that point — in this space where I am not-still-a-child, and not-yet-a-mother — my faith brings me to a place that is not simple.

Because of my faith, my story is bound up in the story of others: Stories that filled the backgrounds of my childhood Bible, and stories that friends and family have had to bear, often without recognition or compassion.

To celebrate Mother's Day, I begin by remembering the many biblical stories of motherhood — stories that too many of us forget, or lack words, to celebrate.

I remember Dinah and Joseph, children of Jacob and Rachel, burying their mother on the way to Bethlehem and leaving her grave behind. I know too many children who have faced this day, suddenly without their mother.

I remember Rachel, Sarah, and Elizabeth, and I have celebrated with every friend who held her newborn child and found it to be simultaneously the greatest gift and the hardest task.

I imagine the hundreds of women who never merited a name in Scripture because they were unable to bear children to pass on the family faith. I know too many women facing miscarriage, infertility, and loneliness.

I remember Rahab, Deborah, Joanna, and Phoebe — women whose work surprisingly outweighed the need to record whether or not they had children. Were they childless by choice, by circumstance? Were the names of their children lost to a history that found them unimportant? Were they shamed in their lifetime for putting work ahead of family?

I remember the unnamed mother of Moses (not named in scripture) and the daughter of Pharaoh, linked and yet so separate. One gave

Genesis 35

Genesis 30

Genesis 21

Luke 1

PATIENCE

Joshua 2

Judges 4

Luke 8

Roman's 16

up her child to save her child, and one took in a child despite the risks. I remember all the women who have given up their children in the hope of better life for them. And, as one who may one day join their ranks, I remember every woman who has made family through adoption, who has taken in a child “not her own,” because bone of bones is not always how a family is made.

I remember Naomi, demanding, “Call me ‘bitter.’” And Ruth her daughter in Law - I know too many women who buried their children, lives lost unbearably early.

I remember Dinah, the daughter of Jacob, and Tamar, the daughter of David. I know too many women whose bodies, sexualities, marriages, and children should be a source of joy, instead corrupted by someone else’s sin.

I remember Hagar, and Tamar the wife of Er, women whose only hope for protection and care lay in having a child with a man who was not married to them. I remember that Hagar was sent into the wilderness to die, her son Ishmael at her side. I know too many women raising their children alone, and remember the women whose destruction has become a footnote while the men made history.

I remember Rebekah, and her twins Esau and Jacob already at war within her. I remember she chose a favourite son, just as her husband had. I know too many children who bear the trauma of parents who, perhaps, did what they thought was right and did the best they could, and scarred their children’s hearts for life.

I remember Hannah, her heart so wounded by the abuse of her husband’s other wife that she wept at the altar of God until she could not speak — and how Eli, the holy priest, assumed she must have been drunk to pray so hard. I know too many women whose heartbreak has been turned into a weapon against them.

Exodus 2
Pharaoh’s daughter showed
Compassion

Ruth 1
Naomi showed
Kindness to Ruth and Ruth to Naomi

Genesis 35

Genesis 21
And 38
Hagar’s
Humility in obeying the Lord

Genesis 25

1 Samuel 1
Hannah showed
HUMILITY and kept her word

<p>I remember the woman at the well, silenced and shunned by divorce. I know too well the wretched freedom found in divorce, the messiness of new life with a broken heart.</p>	<p>John 4 (one of my personal favourites)</p>
<p>I remember the foreign women described in Ezra and Nehemiah, the wives of God’s people, who came home with their husbands to rebuild the temple only to be cast aside by men claiming to be righteous and pure. I remember how many mothers have been made homeless or landless, often for reasons beyond their control, and how powerful men have turned them into pawns to be manipulated and ostracized.</p>	<p>Ezra 10</p>
<p>I remember the Syrophenician woman, alone, unsupported, and persistent beyond comprehension on behalf of her dying child. I know too many women whose demands were mocked or pushed aside, whose insistence on justice and equality has left them struggling against the establishment.</p>	<p>Mark 7 She also showed HUMILITY</p>
<p>I remember Mary Magdalene, the first preacher of the resurrection, soiled by centuries of slander that turned her from wide-eyed witness to reformed harlot. In her testimony, she gave birth to the church. I know too many women whose gender, sexuality, history, and bravery has been used against them and the gospel they proclaim.</p>	<p>Mark 16 SUCH LOVE</p>
<p>I remember Mary the virgin, a teenage girl, cradling her stomach with wonder, answering the shock of a miracle and the sureness of societal judgment with a simple and determined “Yes.”</p>	<p>Luke 1 GENTLE MARY Chosen to be the Mother of our Lord</p>
<p>And I remember Eve, the mother of all, bone of the bones of the man of dust, her name a reflection of the Hebrew word for life.</p>	
<p>I remember each woman who has found an inner courage to face impossibility.</p>	

I want to end with a prayer for Mothers everywhere but especially for those who will spend today just hoping that they and their children will survive until tomorrow. Our Father God who mothers each of us we pray that you will be a source of courage for those who need it, solace for those who grieve and hope and life for us all **Amen.**