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## SHE WATCHED HER SON

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Do we have any perfect mothers here today? Let me see your hand if you think you're a perfect mother. Okay, now let's see how many of you believe—be honest, now!—how many of you believe your mother was a perfect mother? What if turned it around: how many of you have perfect children? Anyone? Maybe Ms. Lydia had one, but we won't say which one is perfect, will we?

There seems to be a lack of perfect mothers. Guess what? Even Jesus' mother was imperfect! Let's look at her life as a mother today so that we can learn an important lesson: a *good* mother is not a *perfect* mother.

## A CHILD IS BORN

Every year we think back to that special event, the First Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was born as a human child to the virgin Mary. We witness, through Scripture, the visitation of the angels and shepherds, and we with them stand in awe of His birth. How special this was for Mary! Her firstborn Son, the promised Messiah—a small bundle for her to hold in her own two arms. How sweet is this moment in her life; and not only for her, but for all of humanity for all time.

I wonder, though, what if that were one of you? How would you feel about having the responsibility for the care and upbringing of the world's only perfect child? Think about that! Would not His goodness and innocence cast a reflection on our own imperfection and impurity? Mary had the unenviable job of bring up the world's only perfect child.

Was she perfect? *No!* Was she a good mother? *Absolutely!*

## SHE WATCHED HIM GROW

...And she didn't understand Him. She did not understand His particular interests. The one glimpse we have of His childhood shows us clearly that Mary did not fully understand her perfect Son. His interests were something foreign to her. She even forgot who His true Father was, and Jesus gently reminded her. Luke 2:40-52:

*And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.*

*Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.*

*And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

*And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

*But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought*

*him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.*

*And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.*

*And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*

*And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.*

*And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

*And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

*And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*

*And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

Mary said to Jesus, “Your father [meaning Joseph] and I have been looking for you!” to which Jesus replied that He was about His Father’s business—His *real* Father. He was doing exactly what His Father wanted Him to do.

Notice this: Mary and Joseph *did not understand what He was saying to them!* They didn’t understand young Jesus.

Was she perfect? *No!* Was she a good mother? *Absolutely!*

#### SHE WATCHED HIM MINISTER

...And she didn’t understand Him. It was hard for her to let go! After He had been teaching and preaching for some time, she and His half brothers felt that He had just gone too far—He was dishonoring the family name. They attempted to bring Him home. Matthew 12:46-50:

*While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.*

*Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.*

*But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

*And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!*

*For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

The whole chapter up to this point recounts Jesus saying very controversial things. He was right, of course, but many people didn’t agree with Him. In fact, He’d just been accused of casting out Satan’s minions by using Satan’s power! His mother and His brothers apparently thought that enough was enough. Something had to be done because Jesus was embarrassing them. They didn’t understand.

Maybe you remember a time when your mother assumed you were doing something wrong when you really weren't. Perhaps you have children of your own; if you do, you've probably jumped to some conclusion about them as well. It's part of being human, as demonstrated by Mary.

Was she perfect? *No!* Was she a good mother? *Absolutely!*

#### SHE WATCHED HIM DIE

...And she didn't understand Him. The pain must have been unbearable—to see her child tortured, the victim of the worst crime in human history. She saw Him battered and bleeding; she saw Him humiliated and derided. She saw Him struggle for every breath; and yet her own welfare was on His heart and mind as He suffered. John 19:25-27:

*Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.*

*When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

*Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.*

Had she not heard His teachings? Had she not heard Him foretell of His death, burial and resurrection? Had she not observed His godly behavior all through His childhood, youth, and manhood? Of course she had; but when it came right down to it, she did not really see Him or know Him for who He really was.

Was she perfect? *No!* Was she a good mother? *Absolutely!*

#### SHE BELIEVED UNTO SALVATION

...And she is with Him now and forever. *Now* she understands His mission and His purpose!

While the Bible does not specifically record Jesus showing Himself to His mother after His resurrection, we cannot help but suppose that He must have done so. The names of individual witnesses are not always recorded for us in Jesus' post-resurrection appearances in the gospels. The gospel of John makes it clear that Jesus did more than could possibly be recorded.

But the fact is that we do have a further record of Mary. After Jesus ascended to Heaven, we find Mary among the other believers in the upper room at the birth of the Church. In fact, she is the only person actually named in Acts 1:14:

*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

We find her a believer among other believers. Her Son went to Heaven, and she has joined Him there.

What a blessed assurance that is for us! None of us wants to lose a child; none of us wants to lose a mother; but there is coming a day when that separation will end. The children you love, the mother you

love—we can and we shall meet again if we die in the Lord Jesus. Then and only then will you find that your mother is perfect, that your children are perfect, and that you yourself are perfect. We shall meet in that “sweet by-and-by.” In fact, it is then and *only* then that we will be able to see and understand and know each other perfectly, as God intends. What a joy that will be!

Mary was not a perfect mother. She did not always understand her Son. I’m sure there were times when she felt she had failed; yet God used her to nurture and cherish and love His Son in way that is only fully understood on earth among mothers. In just the same way that God chose Mary to be the mother of His Son, He chose your mother for you. Did an angel appear to your mother? No, Mary’s case was different because she needed to know about God’s plan for the virgin birth. Many people, even her own fiancé, would not accept her report. She needed that direct revelation to sustain her for the days ahead. I can say with assurance that your family relations were no accident.

Can you relate to that at all? Do you have regrets as a mother toward her children, or as a child toward your mother? Take comfort today! You’re not expected to be perfect, either as a child or as a parent. We are simply to do our best to press for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In the future, as believers in Christ, we can be reunited with those we love forever, and we will know them as the perfect people that they were intended to be.

*Dear Lord, it's such a hectic day  
With little time to stop and pray  
For life's been anything but calm  
Since You called on me to be a mom  
Running errands, matching socks  
Building dreams with building blocks  
Cooking, cleaning, and finding shoes  
And other stuff that children lose  
Fitting lids on bottled bugs  
Wiping tears and giving hugs  
A stack of last week's mail to read  
So where's the quiet time I need?  
Yet when I steal a minute, Lord  
Just at the sink or ironing board  
To ask the blessings of Your grace  
I see then, in my small one's face  
That you have blessed me  
All the while  
And I stop to kiss  
That precious smile.*

—Author Unknown