

# Jesus is Worth It

## Part 2 - "How to Raise Children who Love God"

### Test | 2 Timothy 1:3-5; 3:14-17

Delivered at Central Baptist Church on May 12, 2019 by Pastor Barton Priebe

#### INTRODUCTION

- **(SHOW SLIDE 1)** This morning though I want to gather all the roles of a mother under one umbrella. Every role is vital but, for the Christian mother, every aspect of raising a child comes under this one umbrella.
  - The overarching call of a Christian mother is to devote her life raising her children to know Jesus and to love Jesus. The ultimate end of all mothering is to teach your children to love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength and to show how this works itself out in every part of life.
- God has designed the home to be the primary training ground for Christian discipleship. In the home a child or teen is to learn who God is, what he is like, what he has done for us in Jesus, and what he expects; to learn how following Jesus affects everything from relationships with others on the playground, to choosing a career, to expressing their sexuality...and a million other things.
  - Motherhood is all about the Great Commission; it is making disciples.
- My aim this morning is to honour the calling that God gives to mothers and to equip you in your role. But this is not just for mothers. This is for grandmothers. And this is message is, by extension, for everyone for we are going to see the profound impact we can have on others.
  - We have begun a new sermon series through Paul's second letter to Timothy. Today we are in verses 3-5 which talk about the influence of Timothy's mother on his life.
    - I want to do three things today. First, we will hear the story of Timothy's mother. Second, I want to encourage you with a story about a mother whose husband did not love Jesus and whose son was out of control and how she disciplined her son. Third, I want to give some practical tips on how mothers fulfill their calling.

#### TIMOTHY: A GREAT MAN OF GOD

- Let's begin with **(SHOW SLIDE 2) Part 1: Timothy's story.** Timothy may not have been one of the Apostles but consider how highly Paul thought of him. Paul met him in his hometown of Lystra, which is now Modern Day Turkey.
  - Acts 16:2 says this of the teenage Timothy: "***The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.***" Paul takes this young man with him on his missionary journeys and Timothy becomes Paul's lifelong disciple, friend, and co-labourer in the gospel.
- Paul ends up appointing Timothy as the pastor of the church in Ephesus. These two New Testament Letters are of course addressed to him. You can see Paul's affection and respect for him in his address in verse 2. **READ 2** - "***To Timothy, my beloved child.***" Paul then goes on to begin his letter with a memory of their last time together. **READ 3-4** - ***<sup>3</sup>I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup>As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.***
  - Timothy faithfully pastored the church in Ephesus for 15 years. Even when his spiritual father Paul was beheaded in Rome he continued to persevere until, according to tradition, this great man of God was stoned to death in AD 98.

## WHAT MADE TIMOTHY TO BE THE MAN HE WAS?

- Whenever I meet someone who is so faithful, who loves God, and who serves him, I always want to know what shaped them. How did they become who they are? So let's ask this of Timothy. **(SHOW SLIDE 3) What influences shaped Timothy's life of faith?**
  - Part of the answer is most certainly the apostle Paul. Paul actually introduced him to Jesus. However, from the pen of Paul himself, we see that his foundation was set long before he met Paul. Paul attributes the foundation of Timothy's faith to the influence of someone else. Look with me now at verse 5.
    - **READ 5a – I am reminded of your sincere faith.** Paul says that he believes Timothy's faith is real. And now Paul identifies the root from which his faith has grown.
- **READ 5 - I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.**
  - What influences shaped Timothy's life of faith? **(SHOW SLIDE 4) Timothy's life of faith was shaped by his mother and grandmother who devoted themselves to raising him to know God from an early age.** It is likely that his grandmother lived with him.
    - What a word of praise Paul gives these women. These are first class women.

## WHAT DID HIS MOTHER DO TO LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR FAITH?

- Let's get more practical and ask another question: **SHOW SLIDE 5) What did Timothy's mother and grandmother do to lay the foundation for his faith?** Turn over to chapter 3 with me.
  - **READ 14.** *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it."*
- **(SHOW SLIDE 6) First, they modeled the Christian faith to Timothy.** Notice Timothy is exhorted to continue in the faith as he remembers the example of his mother and grandmother.
  - **READ 14a – But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.**
    - Paul is saying, *"Timothy, think back to who these women are. Think about their example. Follow their ways."*
- **(SHOW SLIDE 7) Second, they taught Timothy the scriptures. READ 15 - and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**
  - Notice they did this from infancy. Before he could even speak they were being taught to him. Oh parents, hear this: this is your calling – to teach your children the scriptures.
    - After stating the great command to love God with our whole being Deuteronomy 6 says, *"Impress [these commands] on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"*.
- That leads us to another question: Why is teaching the scriptures to children one of the greatest tasks in raising children? **READ 15-17 – All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**
  - The scriptures reveal the way of salvation and teach us what it means to follow Jesus. Only those who call on Jesus will be saved. But how will your child call on Jesus if they have never heard of him, if they know nothing of God, of sin, and what Jesus did? And how will your child know anything of this unless you teach them?
    - It is the calling of parents to model the Christian faith and teach the Christian faith to their children.

- Oh yes, we want our children to be educated, to be well rounded, to have good social skills, and to mature. But all of these things are secondary to instilling in them a love for Christ. For what does it profit our children if they gain the whole world in wealth, degrees, success, and status and yet lose their souls?
  - The foundation for Timothy’s faith was laid because his mother and grandmother taught him the scriptures.

### WHAT ABOUT TIMOTHY’S FATHER?

- But here is a question for you: what about Timothy’s father? Why is he not mentioned? The answer is given in Acts 16.
  - **READ 1-3** – **“He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”**
- Saying that Timothy’s father is a Greek is just a way of saying he was not a Jew and also not a Christian. Timothy was not circumcised as other Jewish boys were, which clearly reveals that his father was not in favour of his son being raised to know the God of Israel.
  - Biblically speaking, fathers are supposed to lead their families. They work alongside their wives but they bear primary responsibility for the family and so for their children’s spiritual lives.
    - Fathers are supposed to say to their wives, **“Honey, let’s start praying together for our kids.”** Or, **“Let’s buy a kids Bible with pictures and read it every night.”** Timothy’s father had no concern for his son’s spiritual life.
- Yet, the opposite was true of Timothy’s mother. If Timothy’s father would not train up their son in the ways of God, then she would ensure that it happened.
  - If he would not have the outward sign of the people of God in circumcision, then she would make up for it in inward substance.
  - If his father was full of unbelief and not praying for his son then the mother would train him all the more.
    - What a woman Eunice was. What an example for all mothers here today. So that is Timothy’s story.

### THE INFLUENCE OF AUGUSTINE’S MOTHER

- I want to continue along these lines. Let’s turn then to **(SHOW SLIDE 8) Part 2: The story of Augustine.**
  - Do you know that name? You need to. Listen to what the publishers of *Christian History* magazine write: **(SHOW SLIDE 9) “After Jesus and Paul, Augustine of Hippo is the most influential figure in the history of Christianity.”**<sup>1</sup> You may know such great names as John Calvin, Martin Luther or Thomas Aquinas. By their own admission they all stand on Augustine’s shoulders. He is a giant among the giants of Christian history.
    - Augustine was a philosopher, a theologian, a poet, a great speaker, and a godly man. His impact on Christianity is beyond calculation.
- But it is his mother that I also want to talk about. Her name was Monica and she was married to Patricius. Augustine was born on Nov 13, 354 AD. But until the age of 31 no one would have thought of Augustine would become the Augustine that we know today. Although he was a brilliant public speaker,

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<sup>1</sup> “Christian History”, Vol VI, No. 3, 2.

he was like a lot of 21<sup>st</sup> century university guys. He lived in a great city, he partied a lot, and he slept with a lot of women under the trees of the local forest. He also believed all kinds of strange things as he followed the teachings of a group called the Manicheans.

- Of his lust he writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 10)** *“I dared to roam the woods and pursue my vagrant loves beneath the shades. . . . Lust stormed confusedly within me, whirling my thoughtless youth over the precipices of desires. . . . The torrent of my fornications tossed and swelled and boiled and ran over.”*<sup>2</sup> Translation: lust completely controlled him and he pursued sexual relationships with all his might. When his friends boasted of their sexual exploits, especially the most debauched acts they had committed, he wanted to be like them and to surpass them.<sup>3</sup>
  - Yet this young man goes on to become one of the greatest Christians who ever lived. Why the change? It has everything to do with his mother, Monica. Let me read to you from his autobiography, which is entitled, **“The Confessions of St Augustine.”** Note as I read that he writes his confessions as a prayer to God so when he refers to “you” he is speaking of God.
- Now Augustine writes pages about his mother but he only mentions his father in passing reference even though his father sacrificially funded his education. Why is that? Because his father was not a Christian and only cared that Augustine succeed in this world as a great public speaker.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 11)** *“At that time everybody was full of praise for my father because he spent money on his son beyond the means of his estate, when that was necessary to finance an education entailing a long journey. Many citizens of far greater wealth did nothing of the kind for their children. But this same father did not care what character before you I was developing, or how chaste I was so long as I possessed a cultured tongue.”*<sup>4</sup>
- This is virtually the last time he speaks of his father. But not so his mother. He considers her to be God’s instrument in bringing him out of darkness and error and into Christ. Listen to her zeal for her sons’ soul in this quote.
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 12)** *“You put forth your hand from on high (Ps 143:7), and from this deep darkness ‘you delivered my soul’ (Ps 85:13). For my mother, your faithful servant, wept for me before you more than mothers weep when lamenting their dead children. By the faith and spiritual discernment (Gal 5:5) which she had from you, she perceived the death which held me, and you heard her, Lord. You heard her and did not despise her tears which poured forth to wet the ground under her eyes in every place she prayed.”*<sup>5</sup>
    - Her husband had died and her son refused to listen to the message about Jesus. But she kept crying out to God.
- **(SHOW SLIDE 13)** *“For almost nine years then followed during which I was ‘in the deep mire’ (Ps 63:8) and darkness of falsehood. Despite my frequent efforts to climb out of it, I was the more heavily plunged back into the filth and wallowed in it. During this time this chaste, devout, and sober widow, one of the kind you love, never ceased her hours of prayer to lament about me to you.”*<sup>6</sup>
  - Out of great concern for the false teachings that her son had fallen under she went to see a pastor to see if he would speak with Augustine. Listen to the concern she had for her son’s soul.
- **(SHOW SLIDE 14)** *“When my mother had entreated him to agree to talk with me, to refute my errors, to unteach me evil things, and to teach me good things . . . he refused, wisely as I afterwards perceived. He answered that I was yet unteachable, being puffed up with the novelty of that heresy.*

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *Confessions of St. Augustine* trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 50.

*... 'Let him alone a while' said he, 'only pray to God for him; by reading, he will discover for himself what his error is and how ungodly it is.' ... When he had said these things and she still was not satisfied but urged him even more with pleas and many tears that he would see me and reason with me, he, a little displeased at her persistent urging, said,*

- Now listen to this. After seeing this mother's zeal for her son's salvation shown in her prayers and persistence he says to her, **(SHOW SLIDE 15) 'Go your ways, and God bless you, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish.'**<sup>7</sup>
- But she did not just pray, she also instructed the young Augustine with great passion in the ways of the scriptures. Listen to this:
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 16) "Whose but Yours were these words which through my mother, Your faithful one, You sang in my ears. Yet nothing of what she said sank into my heart so that I would obey it. For she wished and I, remember, in private warned me with great anxiety, 'not to commit fornication, but especially never to defile another man's wife.' This seemed to me womanish advice which I should be embarrassed to obey."**<sup>8</sup>
    - She was so concerned for his spiritual well-being that she sailed over the sea to see how he was. He told her that he had rejected the Manicheans but was not a Christian. After he said this Augustine writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 17) "Most calmly and with a heart full of confidence, she replied to me that she believed in Christ that before she departed this life, she would see me become a believer."**<sup>9</sup>
- That hope was realized as God humbled Augustine's pride and revealed Christ to him. The story is a great one but I do not have time to tell it. The short version is that one day he read Romans 13:13 with a friend which says, **"Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension or jealousy. Rather clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature."** Augustine writes,
  - **(SHOW SLIDE 18) "No further would I read, nor did I need to, for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light, as it were, of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away."**<sup>10</sup> *... Then we went into my mother. We told her, and she rejoiced. She leaped for joy and triumph and blessed You.*<sup>11</sup> This was her greatest joy.
- Two years later they stood on a porch speaking about the glories of heaven and God. His mother said to him, **(SHOW SLIDE 19) "Son, for my own part I have no further delight in anything in this life. ... My hopes in this world are fulfilled. There was one thing for which I desired to linger for a while in this life, that I might see you a Christian before I died. My God has done this for me."**<sup>12</sup>
  - Five days later she fell sick with a fever. Augustine writes, **(SHOW SLIDE 20) "Then, on the ninth day of her sickness, and the fifty-sixth year of her life, and the thirty-third of mine, that godly and holy soul was freed from the body. I close her eyes, and a mighty sorrow flowed into my heart and overflowed into tears. At the same time, my eyes, by a violent command of my mind, drained their fountain totally dry, and how I battle with sorrow!"**<sup>13</sup>
- Friends, this is an example of a mother. Augustine says that his mother anguished more in prayer for his soul than she did in giving him birth.<sup>14</sup> What an example of a mother whose priorities were straight.

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<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *The Confession of St. Augustine*, (PA: Whitaker House, 1996), 69-70.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 211.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 236.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 113.

## HOW TO DO THIS

- Well, let's turn to talk about one more think (**SHOW SLIDE 21) How mothers raise a new generation of Timothies.**
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 22) First, seek the strength that comes from Christ.**
  - We cannot fulfill the calling that God has placed on us. We need hearts that love God. And so the most important thing that a mother or father does for their children is to leave them and seek Christ on their own.
    - Fill your heart with Scripture. Fill your life with prayer and worship. Seek God's strength.
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 23) Second, love your husband.**
  - Again, your example in this area will speak volumes about how to love God.
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 24) Third, pray fervently for your children.**
  - Never give up on this. Never stop praying. Like Augustine, I attribute the spiritual joys of my life to the fervent prayers of my parents and grandparents. Pray for your children daily crying out to God for all of their needs but most of all that God would work in them hearts that love him.
    - My grandfather used to pray in front of our whole family and with tears he would say, *"Father, I pray for my children and grandchildren. I ask that not one of them would be lost."*
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 25) Fourth, saturate their minds in the scriptures.**
  - Read scripture with your kids. Here is a copy of a book my mother used to read to me every morning at the breakfast table. It is simply scripture verses. On June 13, 1980 I was 4 years old and that morning she was reading scriptures to me.
    - She was amazed to hear me asking how Christ could live in me. Not thinking I understood sin and my need for Christ she explained it more to me and was amazed to see that I understood my need for Christ that day and called on him to save me.
      - Why was I ready that day? Because she and my father had faithfully and intentionally taught me from infancy.
  - Parents, mothers, read scripture to your kids. Challenge your kids and teens to memorize it. Fill their lives with scripture that they may be made wise to salvation.
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 26) Fifth, make everyday life your classroom.**
  - When you discipline them, teach them of the cross and forgiveness.
  - When you see the beauty of creation, point them to God.
  - When you teach them on sexuality, proclaim the goodness of God's design for it in marriage.
  - When you sit around the house or drive in the car speak to them of God and let them see your love for him.
  
- (**SHOW SLIDE 27) Finally, love your children.**
  - There is so much more that could be said but mothers today we honour you. May you devote your lives to this great calling.
    - May you devote your lives to raising up your children to know and love Christ.