

**Children’s Moment**

Hello, girls and boys. Esperanza and I pray for you and your family. We love you and we appreciate you.

What have we learned about plants in the last few weeks? (*plants need love, water, sunlight, and oxygen. Talking to them helps too! Some plants produce fruit.*) We showed love to grow this plant.

In the same way, Jesus shows love to us.

**We hear the word *love* a lot**, but we don’t always spend a lot of time talking about *love*. That’s because love isn’t just something we say; it’s something we show.

**How do we show people we love them?** I’ll bet you know lots of ways to show your love! Love is a special kind of caring and kindness. Those are all great ways to show love.

**Jesus tells us that “love one another” is the most important of his lessons.** Isn’t that interesting? When we think of the people we love, we probably think of certain people: our families and special friends. Maybe on this day, we think of our mothers.

**Jesus reminds us of something important:** He doesn’t say, “Pick a few people to love.” Jesus tells us to “love one another.” He wants us to show our love to **everyone**. Jesus wants us to treat everyone with kindness and love.

**But that’s not all!** Jesus not only wants us to love one another – but to show love to one another in the same way that he showed his love to us. That’s a lot of love.

**How many times can you show love?** I invite you to show love to someone today. Maybe it could be your mother or grandmother, or someone special. After all, Jesus taught us to love one another.

*Please pray with me ... Oh, how I love Jesus, let me count the ways. Let me show others the ways that Jesus loves me by my actions. Amen.*

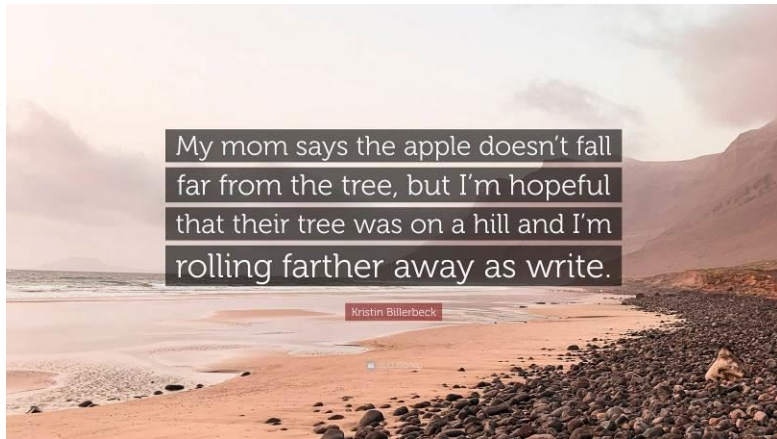
**You are invited to be part of Sunday School online.** Visit us at [www.coronaumc.com/childrensministry](http://www.coronaumc.com/childrensministry) to sign up.

**Message: “Being a Parent”**

**Ralph Waldo Emerson** said, “**The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.**”<sup>1</sup> I’m sure you’ve heard that expression. It means that a child has the same qualities and characteristics as their parents. When we hear that saying, we can come away with one of two reactions.

**We can have a positive reaction, seeing the good of the parents in the good of the child.**

Or we can see a negative reaction, either the bad of the child reflecting the bad of the parents or a child moving in a different direction from their parents. Here’s an amusing take on it.



**John’s words “Whoever loves someone who is a parent loves the child born to the parent” (v1) are striking.** They come from our reading today, 1 John 5:1-6. Properly, these verses tell us we are to love Jesus with the same love we have for God. This kind of love equips and empowers us. This is how we overcome the challenges of life. It’s how we keep God’s commands.

**Paul affirms John’s teaching with these words, “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37, NRSV).** Paul goes on to say there is nothing in all of creation – heaven or earth, that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Jesus is our Savior, God incarnate, the one who has fulfilled all that God requires.** As a result, all who believe in him are saved. God affirms this truth and the Holy Spirit, who can only speak the truth, speaks on Jesus’ behalf to us.

**The Holy Spirit, living inside us, unites our spirit with God’s Spirit.** And we aren’t filled with a spirit of failure, unworthiness or addiction, but a spirit of love, courage and hope. We, who are made in God’s

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.bookbrowse.com/expressions/detail/index.cfm/expression\\_number/530/the-apple-doesnt-fall-far-from-the-tree](https://www.bookbrowse.com/expressions/detail/index.cfm/expression_number/530/the-apple-doesnt-fall-far-from-the-tree)

image, are joint heirs with Christ. Jesus knows and shares the suffering of life with us, so we can have confidence in knowing and sharing a full life with him, a life lived without fear now and for all of eternity. Our bodies may decay and die, but our spirit lives and shines within us for all to see.

**That’s why we are gathered this morning.** It’s why we embrace our spiritual life, as individuals within a community of faith. It’s why, at a deep level where we can’t explain or express things easily, we seek a higher purpose, a meaning to life. This message of love and unity is the source of our “Why.”

**We believe Jesus makes our lives together better in every way.** When we live that way as a community, the children in our community take notice. They learn and experience life in ways that shape their lives. They learn they can trust God in all things. They can trust God in their decisions. They can trust God with their family. They can trust God with their money. They can trust God with their deepest and most sensitive thoughts, feelings and fears. They can trust God because they’ve learned God loves them.

**Best of all, when we live the way Jesus shows us, others take notice.** Everyone wants to find meaning, to have a purpose in their life. Most people want to know there’s something greater than our daily struggle. Most people are curious, even fearful, about what comes after life. When we live as confident, loving heirs of Christ, we show care and compassion for other people in ways they don’t normally experience.

**People take notice. Our neighbors take notice.** One of our Scout leaders shared her appreciation for our church this week. She said, “Having a place to come and be accepted – even though we have different beliefs, gives the Scouts and their families great comfort.”

**That’s a wonderful testimony to the Scouts and Scout leaders we have.** It’s also a testimony to this congregation, as you have embraced these young people and their families. We aren’t afraid when someone believes or lives or acts in a way that’s different from us. It’s okay to be who we are. Love is inclusive, accepting and caring.

**It's a joy to be able to reflect on this passage on Mother's Day.**

Esperanza and I join with you in celebrating our mothers, as well as those who are mother figures in our lives. I hope you all have someone you remember with fondness today, whether you are related by biology or not. Thank God for the parental love we receive. We pray you are able to celebrate the same love today with your loved ones.

**Mother's Day is also a day that's difficult for some people.** Not everyone has a good memory of their mother. Some may be estranged. For a number of you, this is a day filled with some sadness as your mother has died. Those who were orphaned or who lived in foster care may have complex feelings. These are many reasons for uneasiness today. Equating God's love to a mother's love may not be a good image for some. We stand with you and care for you.

**Regardless of your upbringing, please hear this: God loves each of you just as you are.** While we are shaped by our parents, we are not our parents. God's love comes without limits, conditions or bounds. Human love, enjoyable as it is, is only a reflection of the love God has for you. I invite you to accept God's love, forgive those who are difficult to love in this life, and be set free.

**There's another reason John's words, “Whoever loves someone who is a parent loves the child born to the parent,” appeal.** The words go beyond biology. Our relation to God and Jesus isn't based on our bloodline or genetics. It's based on our spiritual life. Parenting is more than biology, there's a spiritual side to being a parent.

**We all have opportunities to be spiritual parents.** As believers, one of the vows we make when we join a community of faith is to give witness of our faith. To me, that means sharing our faith and experience of God with others in loving ways.

**I know, sharing your faith sounds like the scariest thing in the world.** I think we need to un-learn bad habits. For example, we may be afraid of being judged or of what others may say, rather than being confident in our own identity. We may feel like we have to give the perfect explanation of faith, rather than relying on our own experience in our own words.

Most of all, we may have learned sharing is a “one-time” conversation, rather than seeing it as part of a relationship that grows and changes with time. That’s why I don’t recommend the “cold call.” The best way to share your faith, to invite people to know Jesus, is to be yourself and make friends first. Your goal isn’t to close the deal and walk away, but to invite someone to join your family. That makes all the difference in the world.

**Those of you who have children were probably fearful before your first child was born and as they grew.** After all, your experience is different than your parents’ experience. There’s no instruction manual. Their life isn’t yours. But it has worked out. God is in control.

**The same is true for all of us as spiritual parents.** It’s different each time. We learn and change over time. The way parents raise their first child isn’t the same way they raise their second, third, fourth or other children. The way we connect with others in a spiritual relationship changes as we learn and grow in faith, becoming more confident and self-assured. When our identity is in Christ and our motivation is to show others love, we can’t go wrong. We are made to be spiritual parents.

So, on this day when we celebrate women, particularly our mothers or those who are our parents, I invite each of you to look around where you live. **Who can you reach out to this week?**

**Touch base and show you care.** Once you’ve made the first step, keep going. Trust God, be yourself and know love will carry you both along on the journey.

To God be the glory! Amen.

**1 John 5:1-6 (CEB)**

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God. Whoever loves someone who is a parent loves the child born to the parent. This is how we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep God’s commandments. This is the love of God: we keep God’s commandments. God’s commandments are not difficult, because everyone who is born from God defeats the world. And this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith. Who defeats the world? Isn’t it the one who believes that Jesus is God’s Son? This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ. Not by water only but by water and blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.