

What's a mother to do? That question may express helplessness over how things are going with her children. She's doing her best. What else can she do? She might ask this at the birth of the first child or while raising many children, or when she sends a child into the world. You did your best, what you knew to do at the time. Now what's a mother to do?

Today three themes meet that make the question timely and answerable: Two of them are Mother's Day and Graduation. By that time, the mother's role in teaching and modeling the life she wants children to live is largely over. At the very least, it has changed in scope and character.

The third theme is Jesus' prayer, which answers the question, "What's a mother to do?" The relationship Jesus shared with the disciples for the last three years was about to undertake a dramatic shift. Daily he taught them God's Word and modeled a God-pleasing life. He gave them assignments and corrected their errors. He was preparing them for life apart from his daily physical presence.

Earlier that night he told them, "A new commandment I give you, love one another." "In this world you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." To strengthen them he celebrated the Passover. The very next day, he fulfilled its meaning as he hang on the cross, a lamb without spot or blemish, of which no bones will be broken, just as the Scriptures prophesied.

He died because of the hatred of the world that loved the darkness more than the light, because they did not want to give up their sins. He died to take into himself God's righteous anger against the sins of those who hated him. He died also for us who love and believe him, for by nature we are rebellious children. Wanting to please Him, we still fall short and have no more right to heaven than the most wicked pagan. We live here now and will in heaven forever only by faith in His mercy and grace.

The next day, Friday, three hours after his bloody body was lifted on the cross, his corpse was lowered and buried in a tomb. By Sunday, he vacated the tomb and left the door open as a witness to confirm what he had told them:

I will arise from the dead. Forty days later, He ascended to heaven, to return once more to judge the faithless and take the faithful home to their eternal paradise.

Before he left, he gave them some final instructions. Though he was leaving the world that hated him, he was sending them into it that very world to baptize and to teach the Gospel. So with the years of daily instruction about to end, and with the anticipation of sending them into a world that will reject their message and hate them for following Christ, what's He to do?

The answer: Pray for those from whom He will soon be departed. He did that very night. He still prays today for all of us whom He has left in a world that rejects God's truth in the person of Jesus, God's Son, who is the Way to the Father and by his death and resurrection is our very Life.

He prays today before the Father's throne, that we may be kept safe, not just from whatever makes the life of faith hard or harmful. He especially prays that we would be kept safe from Satan, who by his lies, temptations and accusations tries to separate us eternally from our faith.

He prays that we remain set apart from the ways of world, even as we live in the midst of it. He prays that we will stay grounded in truth, which He teaches in His Sacred Word. Praying is what a departing Savior is to do and what our Savior Jesus still does for us.

Praying is what a mother's to do for her children who are about to leave home and go into the world, those who soon will enter the world, and those at all stages in between. Pray for those children who are grown, single, married, having children of their own. Pray for them and with them.

Though today I speak to mothers, this is for fathers as well. Before those children leave, see that they are set apart daily through the Word of God. It is the truth that their sins are covered by the blood of Jesus. Forgive them in His name. Teach them all of God Word at home. Bring them to worship and Sunday School, that others may also teach them. What you pray for your children, God uses you to grant. You are His main messenger.

What's a mother to do? What our Savior always does for us. He teaches us, Prays for us, and always love us. Amen