Today is Mother’s Day, a day where we recognize and celebrate those special people in our lives who love, nurture, teach, and well… mother us. It is a day when can show our appreciation to those mothers who give so much to us. I must tell you though, some Mother’s Day experiences can be more revealing than others, as one Mom found out.

Her two children ordered her to stay in bed. So, she stayed in there looking forward to being served breakfast in bed. As the smell of bacon floated up from the kitchen, she waited and waited patiently as only a mother could do.
At last the children called her downstairs, and she found them sitting at the table, each with a large plate of bacon and eggs. When they noticed her, one of them looked up and said, “As a Mother’s Day surprise, we have cooked our own breakfast!”

That says it all, don’t you think? Who else in this world does more for us than Good ole’ Mom?

Who else is taken for granted more than our Mom? It is only right that we devote at least one day in honor of those women who have devoted their lives to Christ, their family, to their children and to their church.

Our gospel lesson today could easily be about being a good mother. However it is not only aimed at mothers, it is for all of us. Here Jesus is looking to the cross, where he will glorify God by his perfect obedience to God’s plan. Jesus is also calling his disciples to perfect obedience. The question is, just what is this perfect obedience which he calls them?
“A new commandment I give to you,” says Jesus, “that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” Now, I would like for you to notice that love is not an option for followers of Jesus. Jesus says, “A new commandment I give to you…” this is not a suggestion, not a recommendation. It is a commandment! Why should we have such a commandment? I will tell you. It is a commandment, because in every one of us there is a part that rebels against the idea of pure unconditional love. Even in the example, that almost everyone of us received in the form of our Mother’s love, there is still a part of us that says there is no place for this kind of love in the world in which WE live. There is a part of us that says, “sure, love is great up to a point….” But there has to be a point where we say, enough is enough! I am here to share with you today that there is never enough. All of us are capable of that love that so many of us equate to a motherly love. A love that is unconditional.

A story is told about a teacher who was helping one of her kindergarten students put his boots on. He asked for help and she could see why. With her pulling and him pushing, the boots still didn't want to go on. When the second boot was on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost whimpered when the little boy
said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked and sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off then it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on - this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" like she wanted to.

Once again she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off. He then said, "They're my brother's boots. My Mom made me wear them."

She didn't know if she should laugh or cry. She mustered up the grace to wrestle the boots on his feet again. She said, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed them in the toes of my boots..."

Ever have one of those days???

I think all of us do. The question is - will we bite our tongues - and do that good thing we desire to do? Will we face the countless
little crosses that appear before us each day? Will we willingly taking on the burdens that should not be ours to take - despite a lack of appreciation and understanding among those whom we are helping?

This is what love does - it accepts the little crosses, knowing that the large cross has already been taken for us, knowing that because Jesus has accepted us, so we can accept others In his love - that we can trust them into his care, his judgment, his mercy, and his righteousness.

And never more so than with those towards who love is hardest to show.

This is the love that seeks to embrace us.

This is the love that is more than simply our guide and our model.

It is the love that when received - is more than able to pour itself out upon others, no matter how we might "feel" about them.

It is the love of the one who gave himself for us while we were yet enemies of God; the freely given love of the one whose
faithfulness destroys our death and whose resurrection restores our life.

Love one another as I have loved you.

This means be open to the new and to that which was previously impossible for us.

That may mean be to be open to those that our wisdom and our feelings tell us to be unclean, unholy, unacceptable, and undesirable.

For some that may be someone in their own family who has hurt them beyond words. For others it may be the nameless pan-handlers and refugees who beg at our doors. Or the sinners who enter into our homes to steal not only physical treasures, but to rob the entire human family of its joy and hope. For still others it may be an employer, a debtor, or some group of persons that have done us or our world an injury.

God will judge all people. Not us. Blessed be God for that!
Blessed be the one whose love does not fail - and who wills to give us that love, and who vows to take care of all who follow him, to nurture them and help them to grow and to usher them into the blessedness of his eternal kingdom.

God will judge all people. Not us, that is not what Jesus commanded. He said, Love one another as I have loved you!

God loves us most powerfully. And gives us the power to love others.

Would you love someone today that you find it hard to love? Could you love someone you find it hard to love? Then know this, God loves you. God loves you without condition and will make your life full and abundant as you love others with that same love. One more story…

An elderly woman and her little grandson, whose face was sprinkled with bright freckles, spent the day at the zoo.

Lots of children were waiting in line to get their cheeks painted by a local artist who was decorating them with tiger
paws. "You've got so many freckles, there's no place to paint!" a girl in the line said to the little fella. Embarrassed, the little boy dropped his head.

His grandmother knelt down next to him. "I love your freckles. When I was a little girl I always wanted freckles," she said, while tracing her finger across the child's cheek. "Freckles are beautiful!" The boy looked up, "Really?" "Of course," said the grandmother. "Why just name me one thing that's more beautiful than freckles."

The little boy thought for a moment, peered intensely into his grandma's face, and softly whispered, "Wrinkles."

May all our friends - and all those who would be our enemies if we let them be, have beautiful freckles and gorgeous wrinkles. Church it is time to Let go and let God, and love one another as Christ loves you - with a love that saves and redeems his people -- both Jew and Gentile alike. I tell you this today because this is a perfect example of why Jesus commanded us to love one another --- because without the command that we love one another just as Jesus has loved us --- many of us might end up thinking that it is
good enough to pick and choose who we are to love, like only your friends and your family and to hate, or despise, or simply ignore, everyone else that doesn’t fit onto our idea of what it is to belong.

Or perhaps it is okay to ignore that other person based on their gender, sexual orientation, or color of their skin. It is not okay. Maybe we are tempted to turn our heads when those we consider those we see as less than perfect are not in need of love and compassion. I say it is not!

We are called to love others in the way the Christ loves us. We are called to love our brothers and sisters in the way that a motherly love is given to children. We are called to love without condition --- to care for --- and to pray for others --- Regardless of their attitude towards us. Regardless of what they may or may not deserve. Regardless, of whether or not they are related to us by blood, or by ties of affection and common interest.

Jesus commands us --- he orders us --- to love one another just as he loves us. Our ability to love comes from our relationship with Christ. “We love because he first loved us,” says the Apostle John. We are able to love because he loves us. Understanding this is vital to our ability to live out the Christian faith. It is vital to our ability to keep the only commandment that Jesus in fact gave to us.
Of all the things he could have said he said, “Love one another.” Of all the hidden knowledge he could have revealed to them, of all the spiritual depths he could have sounded, he chose to remind them to love one another, as he had loved them. That is what we need to hear this morning.

In churches all over, preachers are giving advice to mothers this morning. I will not apologize for not getting into more detail than this: “Love your children.” I know that’s what comes naturally, but too often our ability to keep it short and simple is lost in the complexity of being a parent. If you can keep in mind that love is the most basic thing our children need from us, then all the other things will fall into place. We all need to remember this lesson.

Of all the details of the Christians faith, love is the most important and basic. Love should be our defining quality. People should know that we are Christians by our love. Jesus said, “Love one another; even as I love you. So, remember the love that has lifted you up when you have fallen and love one another! Amen. This is the word of the Lord for this day. May it take root in your hearts and may it grow.