

# The Third Word From the Cross

by John Piper

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*Jesus' care for his mother from the cross is a tremendous encouragement to our faith, showing us that he loves and cares for his disciples who obey him and that he is eager to meet our needs.*

**Scripture:** Luke 8:19, Luke 9:23, Acts 20:28, Romans 10:12, Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 4:19

**Topics:** "The Cross", "Family Of God"

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## Description

John Piper preaches on the significance of Jesus' words to his mother and the beloved disciple at the cross, emphasizing three reasons why this is a tremendous encouragement to our faith. Firstly, Jesus' care for his mother highlights his even greater love and provision for obedient disciples who hear and do the word of God. Secondly, Jesus' ability to provide for his own in his moment of weakness assures us of his present power and exaltation to meet all our needs. Lastly, Jesus' assignment of a new relationship between Mary and John illustrates the benefits of the church as the family of God, where needs are met and relationships are formed beyond biological ties.

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## Transcript

April 9, 1982

John 19:26-27

So Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing there, said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his family.

There are at least three reasons that this word of Jesus to his mother and to the beloved disciple is a tremendous encouragement to our faith. The first reason is this: if Jesus was so eager to care for his mother in her hour of need, how much more is he eager to care for his disciples who hear the word of God today and do it. Ordinarily one would reason just the opposite: if he loved his disciples who were not his relatives, how much more would he love his own mother. But Jesus didn't view things in an ordinary way. With him it was strangely true: if he loved his mother with a natural affection how much more can his obedient disciples bank on his love.

We know this because of an incident recorded for us in Luke 8:19-21:

His mother came to him and his brothers also, and they were unable to get to him because of the crowds. And it was reported to him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see you." But he answered and said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

That was not a depreciation of his mother and brothers, but an exaltation of obedience. It means very clearly those who hear the word of God and do it have a more ready access to Jesus' fellowship and help than do his own family members.

In one sense it is very risky to hear and do the word of God. For the word of God is always calling us to sacrificial acts of love. "He who would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his own cross and follow me" (Luke 9:23). But in another sense there is nothing safer and more rewarding than to hear and do the word of God, because Jesus said, those who hear and do the word of God are my mother and my brothers. Loving obedience to the word of God puts us in a relationship to Jesus which is more intimate and more certain to be heard and helped than his nearest family relations.

So you can see now what a tremendous encouragement it is to our faith when Jesus makes provision for the needs of his mother at Calvary. Those who hear and do the word of God have an even greater claim on Jesus' care than she. So if he took care of her, will he not much more provide for all your needs, "O ye of little faith"?

The second reason that this word to Jesus' mother is an encouragement to our faith is this: if Jesus could provide for the needs of his own in a moment of his deepest weakness and humiliation, how much more can he provide for your need in his present power and exaltation! Not only are you, as an obedient disciple, in a better position than Jesus' own mother to receive blessing at the hand of the Lord, but he is now in a better position to give it to you than he was to her then.

According to Ephesians 1:19,20 the greatness of God's power which is working on behalf of us who believe "accords with the working of the strength of his might which God generated by raising Christ from the dead and seating him at his right hand in heaven." The satisfaction made for our sin at Calvary was so complete that God honored this sacrifice by raising Jesus from the dead and giving him incomparable glory and power and wealth of all things. And so when the apostle contemplates whether we can bank on Christ for the provision of our need, it is this wealth of glory that gives him assurance. He says, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19). The risen Christ is so full of glorious riches that he need not turn anyone away. As Paul says in Romans 10:12: "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches to all who call upon him."

Therefore the word of Jesus to his mother from the cross is a great encouragement to our faith. For if he could provide for his own in the moment of his weakness and humiliation, how much more can he meet all our needs today from the right hand of God, full of power and wealth and glory.

The third reason Jesus' word to his mother encourages our faith is that it illustrates for us the benefits of the church, the body of Christ. Notice that contrary to custom and expectation, Jesus did not admonish his own brothers to care for their mother. Whatever the reason for not putting Mary in the care of her other sons, the new relationship between Mary and John illustrates for us the provision made for us in the body of Christ.

You recall how Jesus told the rich man to sell all he had and follow him. The man turned away and Jesus said, "How hard it will be for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." And Peter said, "Behold we have left everything and followed you." And Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for my sake and the Gospel's but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Now where in this life are we going to receive 100 children and 100 mothers? Answer: in the church, the family of God.

When Jesus says to Mary: "Look on John as your son"; and to John: "Look on Mary as your mother"; he is showing us how our needs are to be met when we have left everything to follow him. Paul said in Acts 20:28 that Christ "purchased the church of God with his own blood." Therefore one of the gifts Jesus gave to us from the cross was the church: a loving, caring, sustaining, encouraging family beyond family. And it is a great encouragement to our faith that he illustrates the meaning of the church the way he did in the relationship between John and Mary.

So let us all take courage in the care and power and provision of our Lord. If he was eager to care for his mother, how much more eager will he be today to care for those who hear and do the word of God! If Jesus could provide for the needs of his own in the moment of his greatest weakness and humiliation, how much more can he provide for your need in his present wealth of power and exaltation. And if Jesus purchased the church with his own blood and ordained that in it bereft mothers find sons and sons find mothers, then no one should be without a caring family today in the body of Christ. Amen.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/john-piper/the-third-word-from-the-cross/>

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