

ST. JOHN'S WEST BEND

Sermon – May 10, 2020 (St. John's West Bend – YouTube Service)

Pastor Jeff Hesse



Text: *1 Peter 2:2-10 & John 14:1-14 (ESV)*
Series: Death Defeated – Easter (5th Sunday – Mother's Day)
Theme: *Flowers for God*

Children's Message – *“Flowers for God”*

Hello boys and girls – it's time for the Children's Message! It is good to be with you again to worship Jesus!



Do you know what kind of flower this is? These are dandelions... those yellow flowers that grow all around us. I am holding some in my hand right now... I picked them in my yard as I was coming to church today.

When I see dandelions like this, I often remember my two daughters Carly and Emily... they would pick dandelions in our yard. Then they would bring them into the house and give them to their mom... Mrs. Hesse... as a gift. Mrs. Hesse would always put the flowers in a glass or vase with water. She would put the dandelions on her dresser... or in the kitchen... and look at them. Then she

would remember the love of her kids. It made her really happy because her children picked the dandelions just for her... just for mom!

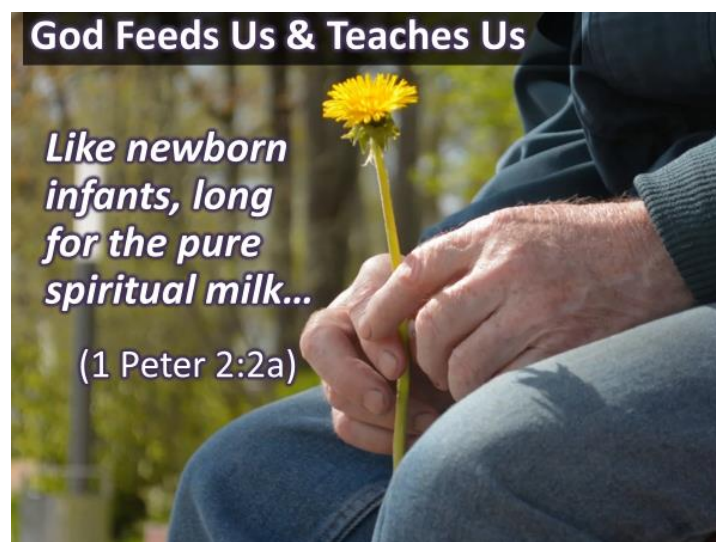
Maybe you have picked dandelions for your mom or grandma too. And I bet you did that because you love them!

Guess what! Did you know that Jesus picks flowers too? God has the most beautiful gardens... with many, many flowers and all of them were picked by Jesus. You are the *Flowers for God* that Jesus picked! Jesus knew who you were and He picked you as His special flower even before you were a baby... because He loves you and wants you to always be with Him! You are a beautiful flower... you were made that way by Jesus and He always wants you to be with Him in the garden that He has made for you... in heaven. In fact, Jesus has promised to take you there some day. What a great day that will be!

Let's pray: Dear Jesus, thank you for picking me to be a special flower and part of your garden... your beautiful garden... filled with people from all over the world. Thank you for giving me a mom who you used to bring me into this world. Please bless my mom and all moms. Let them always remember that they are your special flowers too. Amen!

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What a special day it is... Happy Mother's Day to you moms out there!



We heard the Word of God read just before... from 1 Peter, Chapter 2.

Newborn infants... spiritual milk? What milk? Who's milk? What is Peter talking about? God reminds us through Peter that we are little children... no matter if we are newly born or have been living on this earth for 100+ years. Sometimes we forget how dependent we are, like little children, on God teaching us and feeding us... spiritual milk. Martin Luther said that the spiritual milk God is referring to is the Gospel... the Good News of Jesus Christ. This is the spiritual milk that brings us eternal life through His death on a cross and His resurrection. Each of us... every day... need to be reminded of the Gospel and be taught what it means to live in the promises and presence of Jesus... as *Flowers for God.*


Take this guy here in the picture. Big, strong hands holding a spindly, common dandelion. Somewhere along the way, he probably realized that it was no longer going to go over too well... for him to go into the back yard, rip a long, yellow dandelion out of the ground... and hand it to his wife or mom as a Mother's Day gift. There is no way a mom is going to be all "oohs and ahs" about that kind of a flower bouquet from him. I mean, it's special for a 5-year-old child to do it... but it's another thing for a grown man to do it. Right?

We learn things... sometimes we learn the hard way... but God teaches us. There is a big difference from being CHILD-LIKE than being CHILD-ISH. We make mistakes... all of us sin. We are often child-ish... when God wants us to be child-like – dependent on God, trusting God with a child-like faith and hope. Even you little kids and young adults think you know better than God and your parents... only to find out you have more learning to do. Sometimes God uses the hard knocks and pain of life to teach you and bring you closer to Him as His little flowers... as His children.

... and We Grow Up!

...by it you may grow up into salvation — if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

(1 Peter 2:2b-3)

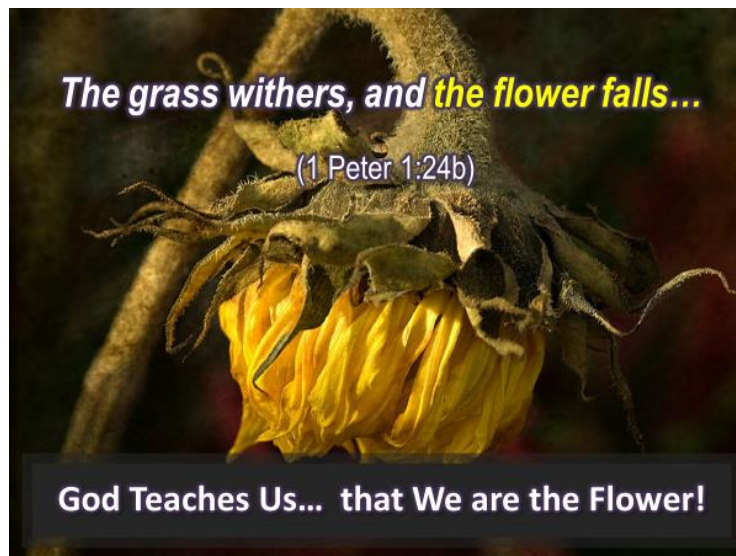
A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and looking at each other. The woman is holding a bouquet of red roses wrapped in white paper. They appear to be in a happy, intimate moment.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13: *"When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways."* How did Paul give up "childish ways"? By faith in Jesus... by God's power and goodness... the waters of Holy Baptism that turned him from being against the Church of God into being a Child of God speaking the Gospel as part of the Church. What did Jesus say in the Gospel of Mark?

"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

We learn as we grow up. We realize that gifts for Mother's Day, birthdays or special occasions take thought... love... attention, some planning and always sacrifice. A son or husband makes a special trip... brings flowers – showing the "mom" in their life how much they love them. This love and affection are truly the gifts... the flowers are secondary to the forethought, love, planning and sacrifice for a special relationship.

It's the same way with spiritual things... with faith. Except God is the one who does all the work... the forethought, the planning, the love, the sacrifice for a special, eternal relationship with you.



Because the truth is that when it comes to human beings and flowers... we fall. And we fall hard. God speaks reality to us, but we often ignore it, pretend it's not true. We fight against it trusting in our own wisdom or strength.

To be sure, we do live in the blessings of God, that are too many to count. Blessings that we take for granted. One of these tremendous blessings... that we all experience... is God's creative work, yet even that is denied by child-ish ways instead of child-like trust in our Creator. In fact, God's acts of creation is profoundly seen in Motherhood.

Check this out...

Mother's Day Video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XDKRTEayvfkLdr4mRnbZLCWDGLmWn9AP/view>

Being a mom is a tremendous honor and blessing... it's a calling from God Himself. But it is hard to be a mom... and it is impossible to be a faithful mom without child-like trust in God. God tells us that we are to long, to crave like infants the spiritual milk of God's Word, His promises. It's a picture of God not only as our Father... but also as our Mother... that each of us are to cuddle up to God and nurse from His breast and drink in the spiritual milk that we need to learn the spiritual truths of God and to grow as *Flowers for God*.



**Spiritual Milk
Tastes So Good!**

*Oh, **taste and
see** that the
LORD is good!
Blessed is the
man who takes
refuge in Him!*

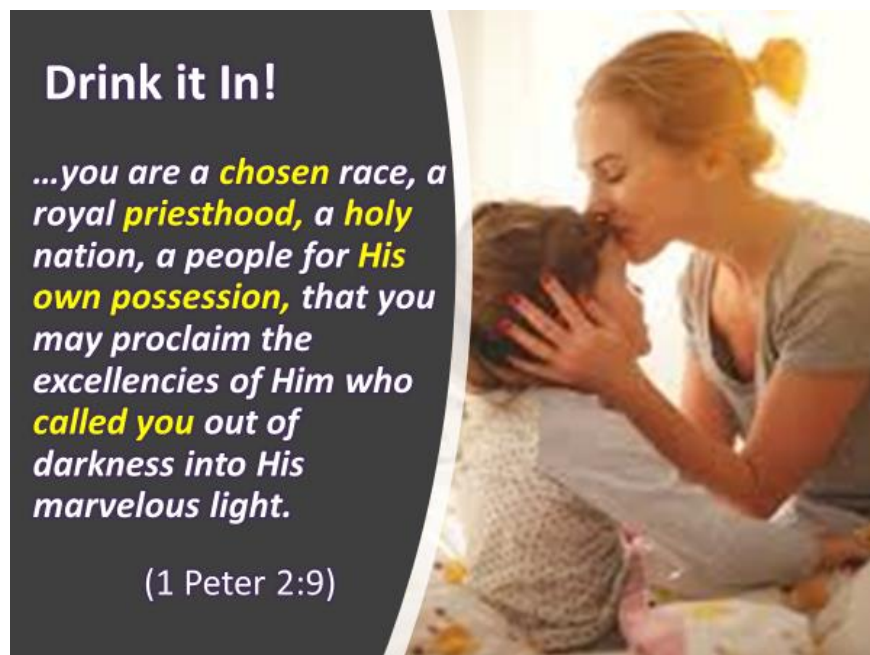
(Psalm 34:8)

This is the picture of relationship... it's a picture of flowers in God's garden that the psalmist spoke of in Psalm 34.

Jesus... is the spiritual milk we all need to taste and see... for the refuge we need from the devil, the world and our own sinful, child-ish ways.

I want to remind each of you... just like I told the little children in the Children's Message - **that Jesus picked you. You are *Flowers for God*.** Jesus knew who you were and He picked you as His special flower to take before His Father in heaven. **He did it with love, sacrifice, planning and forethought.** And the Holy Spirit has opened His Word to you so you might believe and know the Gospel... the saving spiritual milk of Jesus. He wants you to trust in this reality with a child-like faith, completely and utterly dependent on Him.

It's ok to be vulnerable about this... it's ok to realize that apart from Jesus you can do nothing – that you need Jesus to be truly part of God's garden promises!



Garden promises revealed to you as you drink in God's Spiritual Milk.

Jesus chose you... even before you were a baby... because He loves you and wants you to always be with Him!

You – are a priesthood. You are to pray, pray for yourself, your family, your community... your country. God wants to hear from you and He wants you to represent Him, study and speak His Words to all the people He puts in your life. And moms... on this Mother's Day... you are reminded to be God's royal priest for your children!

You are holy. This means you are sinless, blameless, forgiven through the sacrificial blood of Jesus which means you are also freed to serve God by loving others.

You are God's own possession. You can have complete confidence that nothing can take you from God's ownership. Not your mistakes, not your sicknesses, not your fears or broken emotions or even your death. God won't let you go!

You are called out of darkness into His marvelous light! And life is pretty dark right now. We all know what's going on in our world today... Satan wants us separated from God and each other. But Jesus wants you to come with Him and live, forever in His marvelous light!



In God's mothering work of birthing, feeding you with spiritual milk – teaching you about the love of God in Christ Jesus, you indeed have life! You have a place secured for you in Paradise... the dwelling place of Jesus... and He will lead you there... as *Flowers for God!*

I know that life is not easy. It's not easy to be a child... or a mom... or a dad... or a citizen... or a worker. But never forget that you are a child of God... a *Flower for God* that Jesus wants in His Garden... now and for eternity. You are learning, you are growing... as you drink in the spiritual milk of God's Word and His grace. Forgive yourself for your shortcomings knowing that God has already forgiven you. Don't be afraid to learn, to grow, to pray, to trust in what God says.

Be child-like, not child-ish.

Focus on how good and wonderful the spiritual milk of the Lord tastes... the refuge and strength that God offers to you... and the promises of never ending love and joy in the place Jesus has prepared for you, your children and all who believe.

Happy Mother's Day moms... and happy every-day to all God's children... *Flowers for God* in Christ Jesus! Amen.