A MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER’S HERITAGE
(II Timothy 1:5, 7; 3:14-17)

INTRODUCTION

One day four ministers stood talking and, as so happened, the conversation soon drifted to their favorite version of the Bible. "I prefer the King James Version of Scripture," said one, "for its eloquent use of the English language." A second minister gave forth that no Bible could match the New American Standard for its faithfulness to the original Greek and Hebrew text. "That may well be," said the third, "but I prefer the New International Version for its contemporary language and easy readability." There was a thoughtful period of silence, and then the fourth minister said, "I like my mother's translation best." It was with some surprise that the others said: "We didn't know that your mother had translated the Bible." "Yes, she did," he replied. "She translated it into her daily life, and it was through her translation that I came to faith."

On this Mother's Day I want us to remember a mother and a grandmother in the Bible: Lois, who was the grandmother of Timothy, and Eunice, Timothy's mother. In particular, I want to honor the heritage given Timothy because his mother and grandmother loved him enough to give him their most precious possession: the gift of faith.

Timothy’s training by his mother and grandmother equipped him for his life’s work. That work was to be the faithful associate of the Apostle Paul and one on whom Paul could put a lot of responsibility.

Paul mentions Timothy as co-sender of six of his letters. He also spoke highly of Timothy in his letters to the Philippians and the Corinthians. In Paul's final letter to Timothy, written near the end of his life, he speaks without reserve, calling Timothy "my beloved child."

Let’s look at the heritage Lois and Eunice gave to Timothy.

THEY TAUGHT HIM TO HAVE FAITH IN JESUS

What did Eunice and Lois teach Timothy? They taught him to have faith in Jesus. They taught him the importance of coming to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior.
2 Timothy 1:5 NIV  I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Teaching a child to trust Christ is not easy, nor without cost. Susannah Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, is said to have prayed one hour every day for her children. She had six rules for teaching her children the priority of the Savior:

1. Subdue self-will in a child. This is not easy to do, is it?
2. Teach him to pray as soon as he can speak.
3. Give him nothing he cries for, and only what is good for him when he asks politely. (Modern child psychiatrist would have difficulties with this one)
4. Punish no fault confessed, but let no sinful act to go unnoticed.
5. Reward good behavior.
6. Strictly observe all promises you have made to your child.

In essence Paul said: "Timothy, I know your grandmother, and her faith is authentic. It is the same faith I have observed in your mother, and after having watched you all this time I am convinced of your faith also."

To describe that faith, Paul called it “genuine faith” or “sincere faith.” He used a word which means literally, "without hypocrisy." Lois and Eunice showed Timothy by word and example what it means to live a life of authentic faith; a faith from which hypocrisy is totally absent, the real thing, genuine, sincere. What higher accolade or greater tribute could be given any mother or grandmother on this Mother's Day than for their children to say: You gave me authentic faith!

THEY PREPARED HIM FOR THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN HIS LIFE

Paul not only saw a sincere faith in Timothy that he received from his mother and grandmother he saw that they trained him for the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. This work is to give him the power of love and self-discipline. In verse 7 Paul goes on to say:

2 Timothy 1:7 NIV For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Where did Timothy get this these virtues? From the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit uses what we receive in our training for life to focus on love and self-discipline.
There is something to the old saying: *The hand that rocks the cradle (rules the world).* *This is a saying which means women are very powerful because they have the most influence over the way in which children develop into adults.*

Men like to think that they run the world. They don't. Mothers do. Mothers are the molders and makers of each day. We remember the ways that Mother helped us prepare for the new day: counseling, advising and shaping our attitudes each morning. (E. Stanley Jones) explains the power of a mother this way: "The mother usually hoists the sails of the family ship every day. We determine whether those sails shall catch the breezes of God's love and understanding, or the winds of bickering and discord."

Where do children learn of the Spirit's power, love, and self-control if not from their mothers? Think for a moment what we learned from our own mothers. Was it not they who taught what it means to be a loving person, or what it means to be loved?

*Here is an interesting bit of trivia: William Frederick Dunkle Jr. has pointed out "that of the 69 kings of France only three were really loved by their subjects and that these were the only ones reared by their mothers instead of by tutors or guardians. Whatever ability most of us have to make others love us is largely due to the love our mothers put in and around our lives."*

Timothy's everyday life was molded by his grandmother and mother. Paul reminds Timothy that he has been the sincere faith transmitted to him by his mother and grandmother. And a training where he was open to the world of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of power, love and self-control.

**THEY TAUGHT HIM THE SCRIPTURES**

Another part of the heritage that Timothy’s mother and grandmother gave him was knowledge of the Scriptures. Over in chapter 3 of II Timothy Paul writes:

2 Timothy 3:14-15 NIV  *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, (15) and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Mothers, take note! Grandmothers, take note! Scripture is God's powerful tool to influence children's lives for good when parents and grandparents do the teaching!
A certain politician a few years back said that it takes a village to raise a child. It does take more than one person to raise a child. But it depends on who the village is. If the village is the ‘world’ then we need to understand that the world will not teach the right values to our children. Where does that “village” teach except through TV, movies, higher education teaching our children?

The world is teaching them that the ultimate values are - money, position, power and fame. What does that village teach about morality? Morality is relative. Morality is based on what pleases you.

But where should we be getting our values and morals? From the Scriptures. This is why God gave us the Scriptures. Paul goes on to say in the very next verses:

(2 Tim 3:16-17 NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, {17} that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

It takes the Christian village to raise a child. The Christian village is made up of the family, the church, and special people along the way. It starts with the family. Mothers, if you want your sons and daughters to survive out there in that jungle of drugs, moral decay, and selfish living, then teach your children the sacred writings! Don't leave it only to the Sunday School teacher to do the job.

Training for righteousness takes place when mothers and grandmothers consistently and conscientiously impart scriptural knowledge. It takes place when young people continually hear from their mothers and grandmothers that the most important thing in life is to keep a right relationship with God.

Eunice taught her son the scriptures starting at a very young age. Jewish boys start formal instruction in the Scriptures at age 5; younger than that is not too soon.

Lois and Eunice gave Timothy the heritage of faith in Christ, of how to love, how to be self-disciplined, and a knowledge of the Scriptures. What a heritage!

**CONCLUSION**

We should never underestimate the influence of a godly mothers and grandmothers.
Someone has said, "Mothers write on the hearts of their children what the rough hand of the world cannot erase”

For EXAMPLE;

John Quincy Adams said, "All that I am my mother made me."

Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am or hope to be, I own to my angel mother."

Dwight Moody said, "All that I have ever accomplished in life, I owe to my mother."

A godly mother has a profound influence on her children. It was Lord Shaftesbury who said, “Give me a generation of Christian mothers and I will undertake to change the whole face of society in twelve months.”

Mothers, make it a priority in your life to lead your children to the Lord in salvation, to teach them the Scriptures, that they may grow up to give a life of service to the Lord and live before them a life of love and faith.

And children, you honor your mother and grandmother by living up to their example and teaching.

Amen? Amen!