

Good morning. It is a pleasure to be able to share with you a story of God's grace and mercy today. If anyone had told me ten years ago that I would one day be on this stage sharing a testimony on the high calling of wife and mother, I would have thought they were a little crazy. You see, although I was very fortunate to be raised by a mother who valued these roles highly and instilled the same appreciation in me, I very quickly encountered a culture that would instruct me otherwise. From an early age, I can remember being bombarded with messages at school, in the media, and through acquaintances that being a wife and mom was "nice", but wasn't enough. In order to truly contribute to society I had to also pursue a successful career. This led to years of confusion about how to reconcile the two. I recall one occasion in high school when I was discussing future career plans with my Physics professor- I was explaining how I planned to pursue a career in medicine- he actually laughed at me and said "You? No, you'll get married, have a couple of kids and forget about that." Having been a Christian for all of two months, my response was somewhat less than humble. I squinted at him, pointing, and firmly replied that he was wrong- one day I would see him at our high school reunion and he would call me by the title "Dr.". Not my finest moment. 😊

Well, let's fast-forward a few years to 1997. By this time I was married, a member of Covenant Life, and I had been accepted to Veterinary School in Blacksburg, VA. God had definitely blessed my pursuit of this goal. Isaac and I had prayerfully considered the Lord's will throughout the preparation and application process; however, He had other plans for us. Shortly after we received news of my acceptance, the Lord laid it upon my husband's heart that He wanted us to stay here, rather than relocate, to continue investing in this local church. I cannot express to you how grateful I am to the pastors and members of Covenant Life Church- for the sound teaching we had received, the godly examples we had witnessed, and the personal care we experienced that really prepared us for this difficult decision. It was not easy to set aside aspirations I had held dear since I was a little girl, however, God mercifully and gently led me to lay down what the world would consider as worthwhile, a respected profession, for what it would consider as foolishness, greater involvement in our church. I have never regretted this decision. Isaac and I experienced more growth, both personally and in our marriage, that following year than we had the entire three and a half years prior. I am so thankful that my husband was faithful to lead our family in prioritizing spiritual growth over temporal gain.

In the spring of 2000, Kenneth Maresco approached Isaac and asked him to consider attending the Pastor's College the following fall. By God's grace I was able to secure a position with a large pharmaceutical company as a sale's representative, which was slightly more lucrative than the one I currently held, in order to meet our needs while he devoted himself to full-time study. Over the next three years, God gave me much favor while in this vocation- I was asked to

assume increasing responsibilities and leadership roles, and was being groomed for promotion that led to a very successful and financially generous career path. I mention this not to draw attention to myself, but to God and His kindness. In the spring of 2003, Isaac and I discerned the Lord leading that it was time for me to transition from supporting him in the workplace to fully supporting him at home. This caused quite a stir at my job; most people did not understand why we would make such a choice, but I had the awesome privilege of seeing the Gospel proclaimed to many coworkers as a result of this decision. One of my teammates, a Muslim from India, expressed his surprise and encouragement that an American woman would desire to focus her time and energy on the home as opposed to personal advancement at work. This presented a perfect chance to explain that my decision was based solely on my faith as a Christian and to discuss with him and another member of our team the hope I have in Christ, as a result of His sacrifice on the Cross. I am still humbled and amazed that God sovereignly arranged numerous such meaningful conversations.

In October of 2004, Isaac and I were blessed with the arrival of our oldest son, KJ. In September of this year, we are eagerly anticipating the addition of another son, Owen Tate. I am amazed at the joy I have received being able to stay home with KJ and look forward to the same with Owen. I have been asked at various times, "Do you miss working and do you ever think of going back?" I am grateful to God that my honest answer is "No". A hundred times the salary I was making is not worth the smile I see on my son's face every morning or the contentment and happiness I have found in serving my husband and child on a daily basis at home. What could be of more value to society than the opportunity to invest for eternity in the life of this precious little boy that God has graciously gifted us with? Every diaper, meal, load of laundry, sleep-deprived night, or child-training opportunity may not always feel like important Gospel work, but feelings lie and God's Word does not. So, are just being a wife and mother enough? Oh yes, more than enough- in God's eyes and in my own.

I must admit, I still do look forward to attending my high school reunion in a few years, and I do hope to see my Physics professor- not so I can arrogantly demand respect for a title, but so I can tell him that he was right- I did forgo career ambitions to invest in my God-given role as a wife and mother- and that decision has brought me more fulfillment than I could have ever hoped for or imagined.

So, as I stand here before you today, on the one day a year our culture celebrates motherhood, my prayer is that every Mom present would experience a sense of God's delight in the vital investment you are making every day in the lives of your children. Thank you and Happy Mother's Day.