

## THE HEART OF A MOTHER

Hello there Cornerstone family! I have missed you. I have been out on family leave for the summer. I will be returning a little bit later than was originally expected. I was due to be back the first of September and I will be around in September but returning on October 4. But I wanted to say hello and extend as our African friends would say, a warm greeting to you.

I know that Pastor Jerry has been talking a little bit about family. Last weekend he talked about marriage and it was just a great message. I wanted to come to you today with the heart of a mother. Our family is going through a very significant transition and I went on leave primarily because I needed the time and wanted to be there for my kids. So I thought I'd just take a couple of minutes and talk to you from the perspective of a mother's heart, and particularly my heart as a mother.

I have four children, ages 17 all the way down to 11. Three of them are biological and one of them is adopted from Ethiopia. I'm sure that all of you mothers and fathers can relate, but maybe especially as a mom, that I love my kids more than anything in the entire world. I remember when first gave birth to Kierra and I just looked at this beautiful baby girl and I couldn't believe that God had gifted this child to me to raise. Now she's a senior and will be graduating, but sometimes I just stare at her, in the same way, I did when she was a baby. That is true for all of my biological kids, and what I think is so special for our adopted son from Ethiopia. He came home when he was six years old, but you know, I look at him the very same way. Sometimes I just look at those kids and I love them so very much that my heart just aches because of my love for them. There's really nothing that compares to it.

## THE WINGS OF OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

We call God our father, and rightfully so. That is biblical. But I want to encourage us today that the attributes of God are also the heart of a mother, and there are scriptures throughout the Bible that depict what a mother's heart is. We see that in the book of Matthew. Here, Jesus is just lamenting over Jerusalem because he loved Jerusalem. In Matthew 23:37 Jesus says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!"

I just love that. Here we have Jesus and this metaphor of a mother hen gathering her brood under her wings, and that is exactly how I have felt during this season. I've just wanted to gather my kids under my wings to protect them and watch over them. I just love that picture of the heart of a mother. So maybe today you need to be gathered under the wings of our heavenly Father. Maybe you need to be protected or provided for or you need provision. Or, you just need that loving embrace.

A friend of mine, as we first entered into this difficult season, said, "Krista, I just feel like the wings of God are over you and your children, and He is protecting you, watching over you, and providing for you." I have held on to that vision that she had over my life and I can tell you that it is absolutely, 100% been true. If you need that encouragement today, I just want you to grab hold of that: the heart of a mother and the heart that Jesus has for you, to gather you as a mother hen gathers her brood under her wings.

## EXTEND THE LOVING EMBRACE

So, I cannot wait to be with you again. In about 20 min, Uber is picking me up. I'm on my way to Ethiopia. Most of you know, or some of you know maybe, that I am involved in orphan care in Uganda and now into Ethiopia. We are expanding and taking in 20 kids right from Hamza's hometown. I get to be part of that selection process for those kids. So I would greatly appreciate your prayers.

Along those lines, as the kids were very little, I was called to this opportunity to serve in a pretty significant ministry role in teaching and leading. I was so nervous because I thought I don't know how I can be available for my kids the way that I need to be. I'll never forget that God said to me in that still small voice, "Krista, if you help me take care of my kids I'm going to take care of yours." Well, that's a pretty good word I think. He certainly knows how to take care of us, he knows how to take care of our kids. In the same way that we are gathered into the arms of Jesus, we are to gather others into his arms as well. We are to extend that loving embrace of the arms of the mother to those who have no home – to the orphan, to the widow, to the marginalized, and the outcast.

So, I love you. I cannot wait to be with you again, and I'll see you very soon!