



Next Sunday is
Mother's Day.

There are no special lessons
for the day because what the
Bible says about mothers is
the same as what it says about
all of us. Sinful. Needed a Savior.

Saved! Moms don't need admiration

– they need salvation and the perfect and unending love
that we all need.

Day One

First Lesson: Acts 10:34-48

*Then Peter began to speak, "I now realize how true it is
that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from
every nation..."*

So NOW he realizes that God loves people from all over and
wants them to have eternal life! Just think of it. Peter saw
Jesus welcome and heal and teach Samaritans and sinners.
He knew that Jesus said, "God so loved the world..." He
witnessed Jesus' love and compassion on a daily basis, and
yet he was still stuck in an old way of thinking for a long
time. God had to put him in an uncomfortable situation to
teach him a lesson. Where are you still stuck? What do you
find hard to accept in God's word? What lesson does God
need to teach you?

*Prayer: Dearest Savior, teach me to love those that I have
the hardest time loving. Teach me to speak the truth, but to
live your love. Amen. (Pray for a foreign country.)*

Day Two

Epistle Lesson: 1 John 5:1-8

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well... Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

A friend of mine talks about "Mama Bear Syndrome," our tendency to protect those we love. "You might insult me, but if you hurt my child (parent, sibling)... then watch out!" John says that if we love our heavenly Father then we will love his children as well. But are we naturally outraged when we see God's children mistreated? Or are we only angered if they are people close to us? We want to overcome this world and its values and its despair, but it will only happen through faith in Jesus – recognizing that he is truly the Savior of the world.

Prayer: *Dearest Jesus, I love those who love me. What good is that? Teach me to love those whom you love. Amen. (Who is the person most different from yourself? Pray for that person.)*

Day Three

Gospel Lesson: John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love.

A gecko has millions of setae (microscopic hairs) on the bottom of each foot. And each setae has 1,000 smaller pads, called spatulae, that are smaller than the wavelength of

light. All these little connectors allow the gecko to stick to walls and ceilings. Even one toe is enough to hold a gecko to the ceiling. What holds you to Jesus? If you wish to remain in him, it won't be through one great act of faith, or through one worship service a week, but through thousands of daily ways you depend upon him. Jesus makes all those connections with you through his word and his sacraments.

With billions of spatulae, a gecko can overcome gravity even with just one toe. If your faith is a part of ALL your life, what trouble can you endure?

Prayer: O Father, keep me in faith. Bind me to you not just on Sunday mornings, but in every word I speak, in every beauty of your creation I see, in every song I sing, and in everything I do. Amen. (Pray for those who are hanging on by just one toe, that Jesus would hang on to them!)

Day Four

Everyone A Story To Tell

I talked to my son James through Skype today while he was waiting in an airport in Buenos Aires. He gave me a rundown of some of the things happening in the Latin American church.

He is working with pastors in Peru and Chile to produce a new theological magazine, something to help people grow and deepen in their understanding of the gospel. A creative conference is planned in Uruguay to help writers, photographers, and filmmakers in Latin America sharpen their ability to share the good news. The church in Paraguay

is hoping to help produce a movie in the Guarani language in order to share God's word in a language more familiar to most of the citizens there. And the Lutheran seminary in Argentina is celebrating their 70th anniversary with a new documentary about their ministry, and by introducing live video streaming of their classes. (James set them up with a mini-studio using equipment he brought along for them.) And pastors in Latin America are discussing plans to collaborate on writing and printing Sunday School materials that will be more affordable for the less affluent congregations there.

These projects barely touch on all the things going on in the church. All over Latin America, just like here in Michigan, Christian believers are sharing their faith, visiting the sick, teaching God's word, helping the poor. In short, they are bearing fruit, just as Jesus said. "I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

The fruit that the Spirit produced in the disciples has abided, even 2,000 years later! And our fruit also will continue, as our work leads to faith and eternal life for the lost. And, just as Jesus promised, the Father has given us all that we need to carry out this great task.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, bless the work of believers far away, brothers and sisters that I don't even know. Let us bear fruit together to your glory. Amen.