

Mother's Day

Miranda Lambert's song, "The House that Built Me" captures a deeply rooted emotion in us to return home. A few years ago my family took a vacation to St. Louis, with a side-trip to my childhood home in Columbia, Missouri.

Everytime I visit Florida I enjoy driving past my home there ... but I've never knocked on the door, like Miranda Lambert did, and asked to go in to capture some memories.

But, Miranda is right, "you really can't go home again." It's the past, and we need to be moving forward, not backward.

Miranda is stuck in this song. (play snippet #1)

You leave home, you move on
And you do the best you can
I got lost in this whole world
And forgot who I am

I thought if I could touch this place or feel it
This brokenness inside me might start healing
Out here it's like I'm someone else
I thought that maybe I could find myself

If I could walk around, I swear I'll leave
Won't take nothing but a memory
From the house that built me

I know how she feels. I suspect we all do. And she's hoping to reconnect ... to somehow get back on track by going home. It's mother's day today when we remember and appreciate the care and nurture we've received.

What Miranda needs in this song is something we could all use, a tighter connection with the LORD who nurtures us. There's an emptiness to this song, almost a sad emptiness, hoping that going home will fix the hurt ... but my experience is that only the Love of Christ penetrates deeply enough to fix "the brokenness inside me." Finding myself requires, not a trip to Columbia or Winter Haven; but a journey deeper with Christ.

I want you to know something ...God Himself mothers us. Even though we pray to God as "our heavenly Father", God's character and actions often resemble what we might rightly assign to a mother.

In fact, one of God's names, El-Shaddai, points to this important part of His character. El-Shaddai is translated as "Almighty God." The root meaning of "shaddai" is "maternal breast." Remember that in Bible days there was no such thing as a baby bottle filled with mixed-up formula. Every baby was fed, nourished, supplied, satisfied, at his mother's breast.

The Hebrew language is very poetic and emotional. So, when God chose to reveal Himself with the name "El-Shaddai" He was saying, "I am the God who satisfies your deepest needs, nourishes you completely, and supplies you with every good thing."

Don't misunderstand what I am about to say...but really...God is our "BIG MOMMA."

It is God who meets our deepest needs. He is our almighty satisfier, our almighty nourisher, and almighty supplier. God is our El-Shaddai, God Almighty.

So, today I want to talk with you about how God mothers us. And how His “mothering” can heal the brokenness that today’s song mentions.

Let’s first look at some background verses for those who might be skeptical about thinking of God in motherly terms. I’m NOT saying God is a woman. I’m NOT saying that God is some sort of cosmic Mother Earth figure. I’m NOT promoting some weird feminist political agenda. But, I AM saying that God is the ultimate source of nourishment, satisfaction, and supply in our lives. He mothers us at our deepest level.

So, some background verses.

Paul the Apostle knows something about mothering: *1 Thessalonians 2:7-8*, “...but we were as gentle among you as a mother feeding and caring for her own children. We loved you so much that we gave you not only God’s Good News but our own lives, too.” That sounds like a mom.

Jesus wants to mother us. *Matthew 23:37*, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me.”

Jesus is mirroring an Old Testament theme about the character of God: *Deuteronomy 32:11*, “Like an eagle that rouses her chicks and hovers over her young, so he spread his wings to take them in and carried them aloft on his wings.” A truth to learn here is that fathers are the best fathers when they take time to mother.

That’s what God did with His people: *Hosea 11:3-4*, “It was I who taught Israel how to walk, leading him along by the hand. But he doesn’t know or even care that it was I who took care of him. I led Israel along with my ropes of kindness and love. I lifted the yoke from his neck, and I myself stooped to feed him.”

For a vivid picture of God’s mothering look at *Isaiah 66:10-13* when you get home. And God is like a mother in other ways:

- God has to deal with whinny kids
- You think your kids don’t mind too well? God does too.
- You think your kids take you for granted? So does God.
- You don’t think you get any help around the house? Ditto with God.

So, mom, God understands your frustration.

How Does God Mother Us?

1. God nourishes us.

Colossians 2:7, Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done.

Mothering involves taking little ones and helping them grow!

Miranda Lambert talks about little hand prints, homework, and learning to play the guitar:
(play snippet #2)

I know they say you can't go home again
I just had to come back one last time
Ma'am, I know you don't know me from Adam
But these hand prints on the front steps are mine

Up those stairs in that little back bedroom
Is where I did my homework and I learned to play guitar
And I bet you didn't know under that live oak
My favorite dog is buried in the yard

The Lord is eager to take our little hands in his. Eager to help us learn. And the Lord would be delighted to put a song in your heart!

2. God satisfies us.

Psalm 63:5, You satisfy me more than the richest of foods. I will praise you with songs of joy.

I can remember all the good food my mom and granny cooked for me at home! Yummy! Very satisfying indeed. I wish I had that old dining room table we ate at. Oh the memories that would flood in. Miranda had a similar idea ... if I could just “touch or feel” the old place, things would get better: (play snippet #3)

I thought if I could touch this place or feel it
This brokenness inside me might start healing
Out here it's like I'm someone else
I thought that maybe I could find myself

If I could just come in, I swear I'll leave
Won't take nothing but a memory
From the house that built me

Psalm 63:6-8 tells us how to achieve what Miranda was longing for ... getting healed by our memories ...

Psalm 63:6-8 I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night. I think how much you have helped me; I sing for joy in the shadow of your protecting wings. I follow close behind you; your strong right hand holds me securely.

It's not the handprints, homework, or guitar lessons. Nor is it the nails and boards that heal. What heals us is ...

- Think of God.

- Rehearse God's goodness.
- Sing praise.
- Follow closely.
- Enjoy God's firm, loving embrace.

3. God supplies us.

Philippians 4:18-19, At the moment I have all I need—more than I need! I am generously supplied with your gifts...they are a sweet-smelling sacrifice that is acceptable to God and pleases him. And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

Miranda Lambert talks in the song about the care and planning that went into the home: (play snippet #4)

If I could just come in, I swear I'll leave
 Won't take nothing but a memory
 From the house that built me

Mama cut out pictures of houses for years
 From "Better Homes and Garden" magazine
 Plans were drawn and concrete poured
 And nail by nail and board by board
 Daddy gave life to mama's dream

One of the sweet-smelling gifts God provides his children is a beautiful blueprint for life ... The Bible is our step by step guide ... it's books and verses are the nails and boards that build godliness into us. NOTE: A key principal to getting un-stuck in life is getting into God's word through an intentional plan for reading and study.

Philippians 4:11-13, Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to get along happily whether I have much or little. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything with the help of Christ who gives me the strength I need.

So...God nourishes us, satisfies us, supplies us.

What is our response to God's mothering us? *1 Peter 2:2-3, "You must crave pure spiritual milk so that you can grow into the fullness of your salvation. Cry out for this nourishment as a baby cries for milk, now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness."*

A closing prayer ... "Dear God, help us to crave more of Your nourishment, to be more satisfied in You, and to depend even more on Your supply for our life. Lead us, Lord, to respond to Your influence in our lives with wholehearted devotion to You. Amen.