**How Much Do Parents Give Up?**

By Bill Strom

Share: Covenants are about loyalty, not equity

“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother …. When Jesus saw [her] there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.” John 19:25-27

The scriptures share little about Mary’s relationship with Jesus, but in the book of John we learn that in Jesus’ darkest hour Mary stood faithfully beside him. Mary may have anticipated Jesus’ horrible death, for the righteous man Simeon had told her, “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

According to Simeon, Mary had fair warning—a sword will pierce your soul too. A mother’s heart carries burdened love for her children; how much more for Mary as she knew that Jesus would grow up to stir up the religious leaders of the day. Yet she remained faithful, even to Jesus’ difficult end.

Have you ever considered the price of parenthood? How much do parents ‘give up’ in hours, convenience, energy, income, heartache, and opportunity? If we stacked it all up against the ‘returns’ of our children, the comparison might be laughable.

But consider Jesus’ loving gesture, at the cross. In his most desperate state, he looks at Mary and entrusts her care to John, his beloved disciple. He returns Mary’s “giving up” with caring devotion.

Sometimes we miss the connection between investing in people and their subtle responses of appreciation. Are you “giving up” your life with the hope to be repaid, or are you willing to let that go?

*Dear God, thank you for family, friends, and colleagues you have placed around me. Help me pour into them things that matter, and may I hold, with open hands, my expectations for payback. May I know your grace in showing loyalty and love.*