**5-12-19 (Mother’s Day)**

 **Quickening**

**By Rev. Sheryl Stewart**

Acts 9:36-43 Revelation 7:9-17 John 10:22-30

RR: Psalm 23

**Summary:** No matter the limits to what I think is possible or what the world understands, Mother’s Day is a day about me and each of you.

 Today is Mother’s Day Sunday; so, I am going to confess to you the most personal, most lasting, and most intense desire of my heart. Being a woman is just the start of it, and even being a woman pleasing in God’s sight does not say it all. On this Mother’s Day, I confess that I always wanted to be one.

 I wanted, still want, to share with God in the creation of life. I wanted to feel “quickening,” the moment when a mother feels for the first time the movement of the, yet unborn, child within her. I know this experience will not be mine on Earth, short of a miracle that I can see no purpose for, other than to please me.

 Even so, my physical barrenness made me aware that, despite all expectation and experience, I am not “a dry tree.” I am a mother, and not just by marriage. Look at Tabitha, known to her Greek neighbors as Dorcas. The Bible takes the time and space to tell us that “Dorcas” translates to “a deer.” At her death, she was well beyond menopause and could not have expected to become a new mother.

 One of my favorite scriptures is Psalm 29:9. In the New American Standard translation, it reads: “The voice of the Lord makes the deer to calve (to become pregnant), and strips the forests bare, and in His temple, everything says, “Glory!” The nicknamed Dorcas was a giver. At her wake, women were displaying all the wonderful clothes she had made and given away to anyone in need. The power of God brought her back to life; so, these women believed in the Name of Jesus. They were born again, and so Tabitha and Paul were both new mothers that day.

 You can see where I am going, can’t you? In Revelation, we see a great crowd: not a mere 10,000 elect, but a throng so vast that none can number them. Every race, tribe, nation, and language is singing glory to their saving God. How can any crowd so diverse be born again without someone telling them of Jesus? And, this telling is what my whole life and our whole church is about.

 How can I, how can any of us, fear being “a dry tree?” I feel the quickening of new life stirring as I sing hymns of praise. The Gospel lesson brings us to that lake in Galilee where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loves Him. With each “Yes,” Jesus replies, “Then feed my sheep.”

 If we care for Jesus’ sheep, even for a few of them, it will not matter if you are male or female, have a viable womb, or cannot offer them literal mother’s milk. Mother’s Day is your day.

 Each of us has been fed by spiritual mothers of every gender. We, in our turn, can help others be born again and can nourish them with the spiritual food of God’s Word. We will eat and drink with them during Holy Communion. Like all children, our spiritual kids will worry us, and their choices and fates can break our hearts. Yet, like every mother, we cannot stop loving them.

 So, let’s leave here with another promise: Psalm 113: 5-9. “Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord.” Let us go forth and experience the quickening!