

FFWPU USA Sermon: We Stand With Her

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Good morning, North America. Please be comfortable. Thank you so much for being here. Thank you to those watching live online, and thank you to those watching the recording and sharing it with everyone you know right now.

Four hundred and seventy-five days ago, I was upstairs in this building when I got the call: “The Mother of Peace has been put on a travel ban.” But I was asked to be quiet about it. Should I be quiet today? I’m really tired of being quiet. Should we make some noise today? Four hundred and seventy-five days. I’ve been pacing. I’ve been praying. What to do?

Today, in a few hours, we will hear the final ruling in Mother’s trial. Yes, we’re praying for miracles, but it seems like they just keep piling more and more on this woman. I don’t really need any more proof that something is wrong. As soon as I got that call, “Mother is on a travel ban,” I knew something was wrong.

A couple of months later, when a thousand troops stormed our sanctuary, I’m talking about two thousand boots storming into the place where we take off our shoes to pray, I didn’t need that raid to prove to me that something was wrong. I didn’t need to hear the stories of Mother’s room being ransacked, her dignity being dashed to the wind, to prove that something was wrong. And what did she say on that day? She said, “Why didn’t they just ask me? I would have spoken with them.”

I didn’t need her to be indicted to prove something was wrong. I didn’t need Mother’s detention to prove something was wrong. I didn’t need the Mother of Peace to be put in a cell the size of a Mini Cooper, to the point of being hospitalized, to prove something was wrong. And now, hours away from the final ruling in a trial, they are asking an 83-year-old great-great-grandmother, a world religious figure who can barely walk and barely see, to stay in jail until she is 96 years old. Something is wrong. And it’s not just this. They’re coming after more and more, after hundreds and hundreds of raids.

This weekend, we celebrate the life of Reverend Sun Myung Moon, True Father, a global peace-loving citizen, 14 years after his ascension. When I think about Father, what he taught and how he lived, one thing is so clear: he was unafraid. He spoke to young people in the East and in the West. He spoke to religious leaders, civic leaders, political leaders, and heads of state, from democracies and from nations we might consider tyrannical.

Unafraid, with a smiling face, he declared to each and every one of us that God is real, God is our Heavenly Parent, and we are living in the time when all of God’s work is coming to fulfillment. He said it with a smile again and again, at the risk of his life. Jailed countless times, he remained unshakable.

So, as we celebrate his life this weekend, I’ve got to ask the question: If Father were here today, what would he do? Would he be sitting on his hands, waiting to see what the lawyers say or find before deciding whether Mother is innocent? Would Father wait for the ruling of the courts to determine where to put his heart in relation to God’s daughter, our True Mother?

Where would Father stand? Would Father stand off to the side, waiting to see what the Korean government has to say before declaring to God and the world what he wants to say about that woman? Would he wait? No. What are we doing? **What would Father do? Where would he stand? That's where you say, "He would stand with her."** Where would he stand? I don't hear you. Where would Father stand?

Really, only a coward would believe anything different. We stand with her. We stand with our True Mother. But I don't want this just to be a rally, a prayer, or a T-shirt. I want to go a little deeper into what that means.

What does it actually mean to stand with her? I believe it's as simple as this: to know and love God as our Heavenly Parent; to love and grow through our family relationships and the people God has given us to love; and to go out, be proud of it, and show the world all of it.

True Parents didn't just come to give us a system or a corporation to manage. True Mother said, "The responsibility of True Parents was to create the environment where humanity can attend God as our Heavenly Parent." She also told me, "My dream is to see the day when families are joyfully holding hands, going to church together."

Does that mean her dream is simply to see all the families in church? Or is her dream to see families joyfully holding hands on their way to church? What did she say in her memoir? She wrote that it was her favorite day. Her mother would come to her and say, "My child, would you like to go to church?" She would run to grab her mother's hand. Because it was such a long walk, she looked forward to going to church for the time she could spend with her mother.

We're talking about a young girl who, from her earliest memories, knew that God is alive and that God is our Heavenly Parent. God was her Parent, and she was therefore God's daughter. She felt God in all things. She felt God in the flowers along the way. She felt God in the warmth of her mother's hand as they walked to church. She felt God all around her, and she knew who she was.

What Mother is dreaming about is your joyful relationship with God and with your family. Institutions and churches exist to strengthen and expand that foundation, but they were never the purpose. We stand with True Mother because True Parents made the life she is dreaming of possible.

How did they do it? How did True Parents give us what it takes to make that life possible? I told you in Indiana: the 1960 Holy Wedding, the Blessing, and the Blessing Movement, the Blessed Family Movement, which belongs to everybody. The Unification Church doesn't own that. The Unification Church doesn't own True Parents. The Unification Church doesn't own the miracle God is working today. So we'd better be careful not to get in the way of what God is trying to do or what Jesus is trying to do.

I believe that because of the Blessing, we've been given everything we need. Everything is within reach. Some of you might feel that you don't have what it takes, that you don't have enough, or that you're really lacking. Think about your family. Think about the people God has given you to love.

It brings me to the story in 2 Kings 4 of a woman, a mother, who loses her husband. All she has left are her two sons and a house. She seeks the counsel of Elisha, and he asks her, "What do you have in your home?" She answers, "I've got nothing but a little jar of oil."

She is under threat because the creditors are coming to take her sons in exchange for her family's debt. She has lost her husband, and now she is going to lose her sons. What on earth is she going to do with a little jar of oil? Elisha guides her: "Go to all of the neighbors, ask them for empty vessels, and bring them here."

They bring as many empty vessels as they can find. "Now take your oil and pour it into these empty vessels." And she pours. The oil flows from that little jar into every vessel until the last one is full. Only then does the oil stop. Then he says, "Now go and sell this oil, pay off your debt, and keep your family."

How is it possible that from one small thing we can do so much? It's because of God. I feel sorry for those of us who deny God, who deny the Blessing, the power and Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit that gives us the strength, even with nothing, to make everything. That's God.

So don't worry. I especially want to say to our Unification Church families: don't beat yourself up. I believe you have everything you need. Take a moment to shut your eyes and reflect on everything you have, the family you come from and the family you are building or will build in the future. No matter the challenges, you have everything you need right there, brothers and sisters.

We are the builders of the Kingdom of Heaven. What did our True Father teach us? He taught us that we enter Heaven as a family. But what does that mean? Do we have to die before we get there? Or do we have a whole lifetime, and then maybe when we get to the spirit world we'll figure out how to enter Heaven by finally agreeing with our spouse about something?

What is the Kingdom of Heaven if not exactly what Mother said is her dream: families holding hands, joyfully attending God? That means you, and you, and you have the power to do that. Father was never dreaming of a far-off Heaven in the spirit world. Jesus was not dreaming of a peaceful world 2,000, 3,000, or 6,000 years away. **Right here, right now, within reach, the Kingdom of Heaven happens in your family.**

The Kingdom of Heaven means living joyfully with Heavenly Parent and with one another. If that's true, then the family is where the Kingdom of Heaven is realized. So who can take that away? Who can stop you? You say it's hard. But isn't it true that we learn love by living it?

When Yumiko and I were getting ready to have our first child, Timothy, we had never done it before. We didn't know what to do, and so many people came out of the woodwork to give us advice. "Oh, morning sickness. You've got to do this. You've got to eat this. You've got to walk this way. Breathe this way." It took me a few months to realize that all this advice didn't add up. Everybody was doing their best to help, but they didn't even agree with one another about the right way to raise a child.

I remember that day. Timothy hadn't been born yet, and Yumiko was probably four or five months pregnant, already huge because he had a swimming pool to train in. I made a determination: "You know what? When it comes to IKEA, fine. But when it comes to raising my child, I don't want to raise my child with a manual."

I didn't want to raise my child according to a cheat sheet someone had given me. I wanted to learn how to raise my child by welcoming him into my life, paying attention to what was actually happening, and allowing him to teach me how to be a father. I wanted to learn love by living it.

Now, I don't know if Timothy regrets that I didn't read more books about how to be a great parent. Look, we can take courses. We can read books. I get all kinds of emails from members saying, "The church needs to put together a course on problems X, Y, and Z." I get it. Let's do it.

But don't sell your agency for a course, a book, or someone else's advice about how to learn love by living it in your own family. I believe there's no better school and no better learning environment than your own family, custom-fit for you. You'll come across videos, books, and online courses that claim to tell you everything you need to know about your wife. Join a men's group. Join a sisters' group. Those things can be comforting, but maybe that's only 20 percent.

I'm telling you, 80 percent is showing up in your family, standing with one another, paying attention, listening, even when it's uncomfortable and even when you don't have time because you're so busy leading the providence. Pay attention. I believe God has a custom-fit Ph.D. course in how you will grow to be the perfect you by listening to your spouse and your children and by showing up for one another.

This is our work. This is how we build the Kingdom. The family is not merely where we apply what we learned somewhere else. "I just got back from the workshop. Here's what I need to tell you how to do to fit into my view of how this family is now going to work." No. **The family itself teaches us exactly what we need to learn. It's custom-fit.**

So I, for one, want to learn love by living it. I'm sure Yumiko would have preferred that I read a couple more books on the topic. Studying is fine. What is not fine is exchanging our agency, giving away our power, and thinking that someone else is going to do a better job than the one institution God made: our family. That is the center.

My question to you is: Can we stand with her by loving one another in our family? Yes, we're going to go out to pray. Yes, we're going to hold rallies. But the real strength will come from standing with God and loving one another. Aju.

We will stand with her not only like this, but also by being the fire and spreading that fire. There is enormous loneliness in the world. I've met a lot of people who tell me, "When I meet you guys, I don't feel like you are lonely." But there are a lot of lonely people out there. So what should we do? Should we stay inside, or should we go outside?

When we're all sitting next to one another, measuring one another by how well we think they fit the standard of true love, life, and lineage, there are people outside who don't yet have someone to love or don't know how to love one another. They don't know that God is alive and that God is our Heavenly Parent. There are still people who haven't been saved by Jesus. There are still people who haven't received the Blessing. What do you think God wants us to do about that? Spread the fire.

We can build organizations, invest in newspapers, and build buildings, businesses, programs, and courses. All of this can serve the mission. But the institution is not the fire. You are the fire. We are the fire. The church is not going to do our work. The course is not going to do our work. The online video series is not going to do our work. We are the work. We are the miracle waiting to happen.

Can we stand with True Mother and be proud of what she and True Parents have given us to share with the world? Final thought: I want you to think right now. What is Mother? Mother is alive. She may be lying in a bed or sitting in a chair. She may be alone, with a doctor, or with a lawyer. What is she thinking? Is she praying? If she's praying, what is she praying for?

Do you think Mother, the Mother of Peace, is praying for her release? "Oh, please let them free me today." Is she praying for the lawyers to do a good job? Is she praying that the Korean government changes? And what if they say she's guilty? Then she will stand in a long line of people like her, not only in Korea. Father was found guilty. Dr. King was found guilty. Jesus was found guilty. But the jail cell did not stop Father's victory. The bullet did not stop Dr. King's work for equality. The cross did not stop Jesus Christ from giving salvation and everlasting life to humankind.

Why on earth would she be praying for those things? I believe Mother is praying for something else. God cannot be jailed. I'm sure Mother isn't worried about what is to come. Father, if he were here, would not be afraid. I know Mother is not afraid. So what must she be praying for? What is Mother? What is God's daughter praying for right now?

I imagine God's daughter is over there praying that eight billion people can know that God is alive, God is our Heavenly Parent, God is here, God loves you, and God is with you. God is carrying you. God's got your back. God is here and alive, the Spirit has your back, and your entire life is being carried by God. We can go nowhere without God, our Heavenly Parent, our Parent, not a cold, distant, perfect God.

I imagine God's daughter is praying that we can find joy in that relationship. Joy in the relationship. Your job and my job, right now, in this minute, is to feel joy that I'm alive, that God is alive, that God made me, and that I'm God's son. You're God's daughter. Can you feel joy in that? That is your mission: to feel joy and return that beauty and joy to God.

Don't make it more complicated. If you want to take the course, take the course. You'll find it on slide number 36, but it's right here in your pocket. **I believe Mother is praying that we truly find joy in the relationship with our family.**

We know it's hard. Some of us may feel we don't have enough, that our household is empty, and that we don't have the magic stuff to make it work. I'm telling you, that is a lie. That is not how God sees you. That is not how Jesus sees you. That is not how True Father sees you. He lived his entire life and sacrificed everything to show you that. And that is not how Mother sees you.

Why does Mother sell ridiculously expensive furniture in those stores in Gapyeong? It's not because even Korean apartments are big enough to hold it. It's because Mother wants you to know that you are princes and princesses, sons and daughters of God. She doesn't see you like this. Mother sees you as powerful, tall, and strong, and she longs for you to love one another like this.

In your family, everything is within reach. You have a big family, so you've got a lot of reaching to do. But you have everything within reach. You're going to learn quicker because you've got more kids. As important as your job is, the most important one is to listen to your spouse and be there for your children. That's the quickest way to grow.

Mother believes it can be joyful. It doesn't have to be difficult. We might need to cut one another some slack. And I believe, finally, she is praying that you not only love God and one another, but are proud of it; that you stand up for it; that you understand who she is; that you believe in her; and that you don't just love her, but are proud of her.

If you're proud of her, proud of True Parents, and proud of Jesus, then you've got to go outside and tell the world. Tell them with your songs and your prayers, and with the beautiful smiles of your family as you love one another.

I know we don't know exactly what's going to happen today, tomorrow, or next week. I know we have been staying up late, getting up early, fasting, and praying for miracles. But I believe we have to claim it right now: **We are the miracles we've been praying for.**

If we can do these things and realize the dream Mother is longing and praying for, then you are the miracle. We are the miracle. Stand up, people. We are the miracles. If we can love God, love one another, and go out and tell the world that we stand with her. We don't know what's going to happen.

We don't know if Mother will be sent back home tomorrow or many months later. The question is: Where will you be? Where will we be when she comes out? She's free already. She's praying for us, that we can be free, that we can be loving, and that we can be proud.

So, I'm asking you the question: Where do we stand? Say, where do we stand? You say, **"We stand with her."**