

Mothers Day

Scripture used: [Esther 4:14 \(NLT\)](#), [Joshua 1:9 \(NLT\)](#), [Galatians 6:9 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Dr. Rhonda Hamilton delivered the Mothers Day sermon for the first time in 2019, and her testimony clearly explained why she has been so busy for the last four years. Dr. Rhonda spoke from the heart about the shared joys and sorrows of motherhood. She reminded us that we are here to celebrate the women who love and support us so selflessly, and at the same time we are here to grieve the mothers and children who are no longer with us. These are uncomfortable emotional extremes, but they are also essential parts of being a mother. Mothers are stretched to the absolute limits, and yet God carries them through the seemingly impossible. Dr. Rhonda's testimony illustrated this by sharing her experience over the last three and a half years as the Chief of Primary Care for the Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Medical Center. She accepted this role right before the pandemic, when all she wanted to do was step back in her career. She had been looking forward to semi-retirement for years and had no interest in taking on a new administrative position that would require three times more work while taking her away from the patients for whom she loved caring. And yet, God quickly made it clear that this was a part of His plan, so Dr. Rhonda accepted the position just in time to lead the organization through the chaos of the pandemic. She shared the three scriptures that carried her through this incredibly difficult period.

KEY POINTS

1. **Seek wise counsel and align with God's purpose - [Esther 4:14 \(NLT\)](#).** After trying to find someone else to take the job, Dr. Rhonda agreed to take one week to prayerfully revisit her decision. She immediately texted five women she trusted who shared her life experiences and perspective. All of them were professionals, mothers, and Jesus followers. Dr. Rhonda expected them to say "go ahead and retire so you can dedicate more time to church!" Instead, all five told her that God wanted her to take the position, including the final woman who quoted the same verses from Esther that Dr. Rhonda had been reading!
2. **Courageously use all your gifts - [Joshua 1:9 \(NLT\)](#).** Dr. Rhonda loved being a physician. She enjoyed spending time with patients, and knew that her two main gifts from God made her a truly great doctor. These same gifts made her hesitate to take the promotion, though, because the role was primarily administrative. But all that changed when the pandemic hit. The entire hospital system was in chaos. About 50% of the nurses quit, and many of the staff were burnt out. It was then that God reminded Dr. Rhonda about her third gift: being calm in the storm. She had learned this from her experience running an ICU in Boston, but hadn't used it for years. Now she was perfectly placed to lead the entire organization through the pandemic!
3. **Don't give up - [Galatians 6:9 \(NLT\)](#).** About a year into the pandemic, Dr. Rhonda was ready to give up. She was working 7 days a week, 16-18 hours a day. She had no time to spend doing anything but running the hospital. She had to change her management style to delegate more responsibilities (even at home with Pastor Hurmon!) and also seek inspiration for her most difficult challenges. Watching her daughter Lauren on Zoom, for example, sparked the idea of using students to help manage the hundreds of patients who needed assistance setting up and logging blood pressure tests. Eventually a small team of local students helped over 800 patients get the care they needed to improve their health!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Dr. Rhonda immediately refused the promotion when it was offered to her, and reluctantly accepted only when it became clear that God was calling her to the role. Has God ever called you in a direction that you were reluctant to go? How do you try to hear God's voice and receive direction when you have a challenging decision to make?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - We often find ourselves dreaming about some perfect future. It can seem like everything will be wonderful as soon as we get that job, or that partner, or that home, or that pension. This can be a trap. God often calls us to do uncomfortable things that stretch us beyond where we think we can perform. What's God calling you to do? What has been your response?
- 3) **DO** - Listen for God's calling. Read the three scriptures that Dr. Rhonda shared with us: [Esther 4:14 \(NLT\)](#), [Joshua 1:9 \(NLT\)](#), [Galatians 6:9 \(NLT\)](#). Commit to God to answer His call.