

A Mother's Heart

Matthew 15:21-28

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

May 12, 2024 p.m.

Introduction: This evening we take time again to honor Mother-hood. Here in Matthew 15, we see a mother's heart. Jesus has left Galilee in northern Palestine to travel to the region of Tyre & Sidon, Gentile territory. What on the surface seems to be a *chance meeting* between this woman & Christ with His disciples was in reality a *chosen moment* in the sovereignty of God. The disciples are about to learn of Christ's regard for all mankind (including Gentiles), while this woman will learn of God's reward for faith (without respect of persons). Consider with me this evening the woman's **trial** of faith (:21-22), her **test** of faith (:23-26), & her **testimony** of faith (:22, 25-28).

I. Her **trial** of faith (:21-22)

"Trial" - "the fact or state of being tried by suffering"

A. Her **person** (:21-22)

1. "A woman of Canaan" (cf. Mark 7:26, "a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation") – a Gentile.
2. Not only was her ethnicity “against” her (Gentile, not Jew), but her sex (most Jewish rabbis paid little attention to women – A prayer of a rabbi: “Lord, I thank Thee that I am not a woman”); the disciples against her & it seemed even the Lord (at first) against her.

B. Her **plea** (:22)

1. The basis of her plea - "*have mercy*"
 - a. Mercy - "the withholding of what one deserves (punishment)."
 - b. Grace - "the bestowing of what one does not deserve (blessing).""She pleads not merit, but depends upon mercy" (Henry).
2. The belief in her plea - "*O Lord, Thou Son of David*"
 - a. "*O Lord*" - out of respect? or true worship? see verse 25
 - b. "*Son of David*" - recognition of Jesus as the Messiah - the "Anointed One" (familiar with the O.T.? expecting all the mercy & grace as was foretold of the Messiah?).

C. Her **plight** (:22)

1. Her anguish - a demon-possessed daughter:
 - a. "...she uttered a persistent & pathetic cry, the cry of all human cries most calculated to arouse pity in those who hear it, the cry of a mother pleading for an afflicted child" (Tasker) "She makes her child's case her own" (Henry).
 - b. "The vexations of children are the trouble of parents, & nothing should be more so than their being under the power of Satan" (Henry).
2. Our application - the physical & spiritual well-being of our children:
 - a. "It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, & to be earnest in prayer for them, especially for their souls" (Henry). For their salvation, surrender, etc. Do you put “feet” to your prayers: By having your children in all the services & activities of the church?
 - b. See II Timothy 2:25-26 & compare Ephesians 6:4 & see III John :4.

II. Her **test** of faith (:23-26)

"Test" - "an examination to prove the value or ascertain the nature of something."

A. The Lord's **silence** to the woman

1. The expectation - Christ would help her at once (yet compare Mt. 9:27-28).
2. The explanation - Christ's delay was to test her faith (to develop, not destroy her faith).

Application: “Sometimes God seems not to regard His people’s prayers, but it is to prove, & so improve their faith... Every accepted prayer is not immediately an answered prayer.”

B. The Lord's **statement** to the disciples

1. Their reaction - "*send her away*"

- a. They were bothered by her & wanted privacy?
- b. They wanted Christ to grant her request & then send her away? [He has never refused to help others.]
- 2. His response - "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*"
 - a. His submission to the Father - John 5:30 & 6:38.
 - b. His mission for the Father - Matthew 10:6 & John 1:11.
- C. The Lord's saying to the woman
 - 1. Her reaction to Christ's earlier statement (:24-25)
 - a. She worships - & Christ accepts her worship (for He is God).
 - b. She wails - "*Lord, help me*" (she drops the Messianic title; comes as a sinner in need).
 - 2. His response to the woman (:26).
 - a. "*Dogs*" or "little dogs"?? Scavenger, pariah mongrels or pet puppies (house pets)?
 - b. A term of reproach used by Jews of Gentiles & by Mohammendans of Christians. "We must first see ourselves to be as dogs, less than the least of all God's mercies, before we are fit to be dignified & privileged with them" & "Those whom Christ intends most signally to *honor*, He first *humbles* & lays low in a sense of their own meanness & unworthiness" (Henry).

III. Her **testimony** of faith (:22, 25-28)

- A. The request in faith (:22, 25, 27)
 - 1. Her prayer > for mercy (:22).
 - 2. Her position > of humility (:25) - humbling of self, honoring of Christ ["Those who are conscious to themselves that they deserve nothing, will be thankful for anything; & *then* we are prepared for the greatest of God's mercies, when we see ourselves less than the least of them" (Henry).] Compare the story of the prodigal son ("*I am no longer worthy to be called thy son*").
 - 3. Her persistence > for compassion (:27). "*Truth, Lord*" - Yes, what you say is true; "I am a dog & have no right to the children's bread" (Henry). She seeks just a "crumb" of God's mercy.
- B. The recognition of faith (:28a)
 - 1. "*Great is thy faith*" (compare & contrast > greatness in the eyes of the world) [She could have been noted for her wisdom, humility, meekness, patience, or perseverance – but it is her faith that is commended (all the others are the product of such faith).]
 - 2. Note the only other recognition of great faith > Matthew 8:10-13, *centurion*. [both Gentiles]
- C. The result of faith (:28b)
 - 1. The child's deliverance from the devil.
 - 2. The child's dedication to the Lord (implied).

Application: "Let us imitate the persistence & humility of the Canaanite woman's faith. When the Lord is not answering your prayers, acknowledge your unworthiness but cling to Christ all the more."

Conclusion: What do you want for your children? Are you content to see them just free from enslavement to sin, & therefore not under the devil's power? Or do you want them to not only make you proud, but to make the Lord pleased? Do we truly desire to see our children saved & also serving the Lord? Are we more concerned that they be holy rather than just happy? Would we rather see them wise more than wealthy? That is possible, according to our faith to believe & our faithfulness to obey. Are you trusting God to save your children? Are you obeying God as you raise your children? Our parental effectiveness will be manifested in our sons & daughters. But it must begin with us, our relationship with the Lord. G. Campbell Morgan once said, "What I want my children to be, that I am!" John Storer put it this way: "Your children will be what you are." We teach by both precept (exhortation) & practice (example). It is often said, "More instruction is caught than taught." Mom (& Dad), what kind of influence are you having upon your children, your grandchildren? May God give us Moms (& Dads) with the faith to believe God's promises & the courage to obey His precepts!