

Introduction:

On May 8, 1914, President Wilson designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day and for displaying the American flag and for the public expression of love and reverence for the mothers of this country. Hopefully on this Mother's Day recognition will be made and encouragement given to the precious mothers of our land! God bless you Moms, and may your Mother's Day be sweet and special in every way.

Real mothers are not perfect. Simply having children does not make one a mother-which is as absurd as believing that having a piano makes one a musician. The most important occupation on earth for a woman is to be a God fearing mother before her children. It does not have much glory to it; there is a lot of grit and grime. But there is no greater place of ministry, position, or power than that of a mother.

Sometimes mothers feel frustrated because they are limited in what they can do for their children. Sometimes in this frustration mothers pray; they pray out of the feeling of disappointment, they can always pray--and your prayers are among the most cherished gifts of all. Yet Moms can have an awesome hope and faith that moves mountains.

The Lord refers to the Canaanite Mother as one with great faith. There is much we can learn from this Canaanite mother. Indeed she was worthy to be called "mother". She needed help for her demon-possessed daughter and she refused to take "no" for an answer.

I Jesus was Approach by a Persistent Mother (v. 22).

1. A "woman of Canaan came from that region" to ask help of Jesus. Mark 7:26 says she was a Greek or literally a Gentile of Syro-Phoenician by birth." She was in no way a Jew. She had none of the promises of God's covenant people, but she came to Jesus anyway.

2. What makes this woman's faith seem so much greater than that of many of the Jews is that it was based on very little spiritual lite. She had been raised in a pagan culture. She descended from people that the Israelites were told to "utterly destroy" (Deut.7:2). She didn't have God's Word to follow...

3. It appears that she realized that the idols of her people were useless to help her "grievously vexed" daughter. No doubt, she had heard of Jesus' miraculous abilities through others. The words "grievously vexed" are a translation of one Greek word that means evil. It indicates that the girl was suffering torment because of demon possession.

4. We don't know why the daughter was demon possessed...mom helps. She "cried out to Him" **krázō**, is a primary verb; to or scream (as a raven) to call aloud. The grammatical tense suggests that she didn't say this once but kept on saying it. Note the disciple's response in v. 23, "Send her away for she cries out after us." She called on Jesus to "have mercy upon me." She would not be discouraged when Jesus did not respond to her cry for mercy: Though she knew she was unworthy of Jesus' help, she trusted in His "mercy" to save her daughter.

5. She called Him by His messianic title "O Lord, Son of David." No normal Canaanite would have known that title. Someone told her about Jesus and she believed. She had faith in Him and expressed her need.

Application:

1. Faith means continuing to call on the Lord persistently like this mother. She was not some bigger than life figure. She was just a mother who loved her daughter. So she came to the only person that she knew could help—Jesus Christ.

2. Walking by faith means we express our needs to the Lord and step out believing He will meet those needs ... be persistent don't give up. When you go through trials your children are watching and being trained on how to handle obstacles, trials, hard times; how to be believers and Christian parents. Keep these observations in mind as we walk through this incident of a mom and her daughter, and try to think about what the daughter was learning from this crises. (Phil. 2:19; Heb.11:6).

II. Persistent Faith Sees Beyond the Problems (vv. 23-24).

1. This Mother believed in spite of three big problems. First, she wasn't Jewish. She was "a woman of Canaan". She was a Gentile. She spoke a Gentile language, lived in a Gentile culture, and practiced the Gentile polytheistic religions. In most Jewish eyes, she was no more than a dog. Despite all this, she believed Jesus would help her.

2. Second, Jesus ignored her. V.23 says, "He answered her not a word." He was acting in accordance with traditional Judaism. To the typical Jewish rabbi, this woman would be less than human. When He did speak, His response seems exclusive and distant, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Still she pressed Him for mercy and help.

We get a picture of Jesus who ignores someone in need, who is indifferent, who says not a word. If we would quickly read this passage and go on to next, to the casual reader, that is the impression that we might be left with.

3. Third, the disciples tried to discourage her. They "urged" Jesus to "send her away, for she cries out after us." The disciples don't really care for her. They see her as a nuisance and they just want her gone.

Application:

Even though Jesus seems not to care, He cares much more than she knows. Someone said it this way, "Faith is daring the soul to go farther than it can see." Moms; here is a little advice from a great book of the Bible to help you cope with the stress of family. We must learn to view events around us from God's perspective not ours. The attitude of Jesus was intended to test the faith of this mother and her great faith resulted in the healing of her child. Testing faith is God's right.

Illustration:

Geffrey Gorsuch writes about flying his small plane in the midst of a horrible storm in 1989: "I could barely see 20 feet in front of the plane. I was forced to rely solely on my navigational instruments. These instruments guided me through the storm to the runway. There were moments when the confusion in the clouds could have been fatal, times when all my senses seemed to indicate that the instruments were lying, making panic and pilot error inevitable. But

I had been trained to trust the instruments. And I did... as we broke out of the clouds 100 feet off the runway and in a perfect altitude for landing, all that remained to do was to ease back the power and the stick and let her settle onto the runway. As the emergency vehicles approached with their blaring sirens and flashing lights, I knew they would not be necessary. I had trusted the instruments, I was a pilot and that was the day I knew it for sure." God endows each believer with the faith to see him through the storms of life. (The Christian Reader, Spring 1990)

III. Persistent Faith Trusts the Character of God (vv. 25-28).

1. Even though Jesus seemingly rejected her plea, the woman didn't give up. She wouldn't allow herself to believe that Jesus would turn her away. In fact, she "worshiped Him" (prostrate oneself in homage, kiss his hand) and cried to Him, "Lord, help me!" She persist (Luke 11:5-8).

2. Jesus' pungent attitude seems to get worse. Using the analogy of Gentiles as "dogs" He spoke roughly with racial overtones, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." The term "little dogs" does not refer to wild mongrels, but house pets. For most of us that would have been it. We would have got up and gone home defeated. However, genuine faith perseveres. She admitted her condition and continued to plead for mercy by saying, "Even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She gladly accepted the role of a little dog, waiting for a scrap from her Master.

3. I'll bet Jesus' smile broke through at that moment. The power of heaven couldn't restrain it! Like the sun breaking through the clouds after a storm, Jesus' words rewarded her faith, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire."

V. 20 says that her prayer was answered instantly for "her daughter was healed from that very hour." Heb.11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." We might also add that nothing pleases Him like genuine faith.

Conclusion:

This mother relentlessly followed this course of action and, as we can readily see, achieved the result she so desperately desired. The mom who understands the grace and mercy of God will raise her children different from one who doesn't. Maybe this needs to be your prayer. "Lord, you know my inadequacies, now take my meager effort and use it to bless my family.