

## A MOTHER'S FAITH MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

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**Mark 7:24-30**

Today is the day we celebrate the women who sacrificed much, who gave so that we might have, who encouraged and taught us. We praise God for mothers whose presence continue to be a blessing us. We remember mothers who believed when we didn't know how; we celebrate mothers whose faith has made a difference. Some of us wouldn't be saved or in our right minds if our mothers hadn't prayed for us and dreamed great dreams for us. Mothers are like the Lord; they will love you forever. They will pick you up when you are down. You know that a mother's faith will make a difference.

In our text today, we see that Jesus had just had another heated discussion with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law about ceremonial cleansing. Certain foods were considered unclean. Certain people were considered unclean. Jesus said it was not what entered the mouth that made a person unclean, but what came from within, from the heart.

Jesus went to pagan territory where the people were considered to be unclean. By this act he was showing that all people are important to God. The gospel of the kingdom is not limited to Israel. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He was making a bold statement as he crossed over to Phoenicia. He was there for a rest, but his hope for seclusion was spoiled. His fame had preceded him. A woman came to him whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit. Mark said the woman was Greek. Matthew said she was a Canaanite woman. All this meant was she was a gentile; outside the covenant of the kingdom. She was also a woman and Jews had no dealings with women in public. Jesus was not typical of his time. When God sent his son to earth he could have sent him in any number of ways. Paul tells us in Gal 4:4, in the fullness of time God sent his son, born of a woman. Jesus exalted womanhood. But he did not view woman as only capable of being wives and mothers. He was honored by the woman who pressed through the crown just to touch the hem of his garment to be healed. Jesus responded to, accepted, and affirmed women. He opened up a whole new world of possibilities for us. Jesus is on the mainline everytime a woman calls his name because he loves women and especially mamas.

Jesus deliberately associates with this Gentile woman. The woman was a mother of a sick child. Demons don't care about who they are attacking. Children have so much to contend with today. They have to dodge bullets rather than balls. They deal with abuse and homelessness and hunger. They struggle with the same things you and I struggle with. Children were designed to depend on loving mothers, adults and others. Children don't deserve to hurt. We have to be careful how we take care of our children. Her child was suffering so her mother was suffering.

While I realize there are many fathers who take part in raising their children, in most cases it is the mother who provides most of the care. Mothers are team moms and members of the PTSA. If there is trouble in school, mother is the one who gets the call and has to take off work. Mothers stay up and never go to sleep until their child is safely in the house. Mothers are always pushing and making sure their children have everything they need. There is no telling what this mother went through as she watched her child being taunted by this demon. Demons cause children to have low self-esteem and act out.

This woman is a sterling example of the single parent. They make the sacrifices that are needed; doing whatever it takes to provide for their children. Sometimes they have to cry in their pillows at night. But they keep on finding resources; they keep on dividing resources to take care of their children and others.

When the woman came to Jesus she fell at his feet. Matthew's gospel tells us that she called him Lord indicating that she recognized his authority and deity. She fell down at his feet as an act of adoration and prayer. The woman came to Jesus begging and pleading for her daughter. She knew that he cared for her but initially he didn't show it. Why did Jesus turn his back? Some of us have been there when we have cried out to God and God said nothing. Jesus said, men and women ought always pray and not give up. When you love your child you don't give up until you get it. The disciples told Jesus to tell the woman to go away.

The children Jesus was referring to were the people of Israel. They were the ones to whom he was sent. Why was he denying this woman's request? Jesus' remark is representative of the kind of opposition some mothers face every day of their lives. What I have discovered about mothers is: mothers are persistent. She had come to Jesus because she believed that he could heal her child. Her faith would not let her take no for an answer. Faith is persistent. Faith trusts God when God is silent. Faith sees the impossible. Faith keeps on dreaming and moving ahead in spite of the adversity. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Faith causes us to push ahead. The woman's response to Jesus was remarkable.

She was creative and obviously a quick thinker. She knew that she was not a member of the covenant family, but she said, I'll take a few of the crumbs. A few of the crumbs that fall from God's table will bless your entire life. Jesus looked at that woman and said, "you have great faith." Your request is granted. And her daughter was healed from that moment. I'm wondering if we have some women who will not take no for an answer. Who will fight for your children, fight for your families, fight for your husbands?  
A mother's faith makes the difference.

Peace.

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