

A Mother's Plea

Matthew 15:21-28

Mothers are natural nurturers and protectors of their children. A mother will face fierce opposition to protect her children. The lion may be considered king of the jungle, but it's the lioness, not the lion, that does most of the hunting for her pride.

In our text we see a mother who is concerned about her daughter's well being. The woman is not a Jew but is said to be a Canaanite in the book of Matthew and a Syro-Phoenician woman in the book of Mark. There is no contradiction in describing her ethnicity. The writers simply use different terms referring to the same ethnic group. For example, someone may refer to me as an African American woman, and someone else may refer to me simply as a Black woman (my preference). Both are correct.

This woman's daughter was demon possessed, and as a mother she wanted her daughter free of this satanic affliction. Obviously she heard about the healing power of this young Rabbi named Jesus. This was during the time when Jesus' ministry had become very popular. Everyone desired to see Him or receive something from Him. Although she likely would not have approached a Jew, this woman was no different than others—she wanted something from Jesus.

At first it seemed that Jesus was going to ignore her pleas for help by remaining silent. Jesus may have wanted to see if the woman would give up easily or persist. Sometimes when we pray God does not answer our prayers immediately, instead He makes us wait. Waiting tests our ability to trust God's timing. Jesus continued to test the woman's determination by saying that He was only caring for the lost sheep of Israel. But, this was a desperate woman in need of a Savior who could free her child from a tormentor. She was not going to give up easily or be discouraged.

This woman demonstrated humility by kneeling at Jesus' feet while begging Him to help her child. Then Jesus said something that many of us would consider an insult. He said it is not good to give the children's bread to the dogs. The children He was speaking of were the Israelites, and the dogs were the gentiles. Jesus' remarks didn't deter this woman. She replied, "Even the dogs eat the crumbs from the children's table." Wow, what a response! She didn't get angry and walk away without having her request fulfilled. Sometimes we get discouraged easily and give up instead of persevering when situations seem hopeless.

Jesus was so moved by her response that he said to her, "Woman, great is your faith. Let it be unto you as you will." Her daughter was made whole that very hour. Mothers, don't ever give up praying for your children, even when it seems as if God is not responding. My mother had ten children and she called out each of our names and needs every time she prayed. Her consistent prayer was that God would not allow any that she bore into this world be lost. Her children's salvation was always a priority in prayer. May we all follow the Canaanite woman's example and plead with God on behalf of our children.

Happy Mother's Day!

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