

“The Faith of a Christian Mother”

Matthew 15:21-28

Today, we will look at the meeting of the Canaanite woman and Jesus. This woman displayed the faith that Jesus longs to see in all our lives. This woman's faith is the faith of a Christian mother. Her faith, in this story, is seen in five ways: through her reverence, her love, her humility, her optimism, and her perseverance.

I. A Christian Mother is Reverent

In vs. 22, the Canaanite women address Jesus by two names: 1. "Lord" meaning "Teacher" or "One in Authority"; 2. "Son of David" - His Messianic name - "The Anointed One of God"

This is remarkable for she is a Gentile - a Greek from the area known as Phoenicia.

This woman, having heard that He was in the area came to Him, believing that He is from God, for no one can do the miracles that He does. She therefore acknowledges Him for Who He is - the Anointed One from God Who has authority over all things.

She does not treat Him with contempt, does not take him for granted, is not demanding, nor does she curse or blame Him for her daughter's condition. Instead, she reveals two things by uttering these names: she reveals what is in her heart - Jesus is Lord, and through this attitude, she worships Him.

Mothers, your attitude toward God has a tremendous influence on your children's attitude towards Him. If you are indifferent towards Him, more than likely, they will be also. Influence is powerful. Mothers, your children usually catch more about Jesus through your actions than they do through your preaching.

II. A Christian Mother Loves Her Children

In vs. 22 and again in vs 25 we see this woman pleading with Jesus to heal her daughter. This indicates two things: First, she loves her child and second, because she loves her child, she fights for her.

In vs 22 the Canaanite woman tells Jesus why she needs help. She does this not to call attention to herself, but to relate that her daughter is the one who needs help. She is not bashful nor hesitant, she does not wallow in self-pity, but she is bold to tell Christ the problem.

Even Christ's apparent repudiation of her in vs. 24 does not deter her. She knows that by not being a Jew, she is taking a risk of being rejected. She kneels in front of Jesus, anyways and pleads, "Lord, help me." Even the disciple's impatience with her in vs. 23 does not deter her from her mission.

Mothers, fight for your children. You do this first by wrestling with God in prayer. Second, you may need to intercede for your child on the human level also.

III. A Christian Mother is Humble

In vs. 26, we see Jesus continued apparent repudiation of her. This statement parallels his earlier statement about His coming only to the lost sheep of Israel. This statement refers to a typical household that had small dogs as pets. In all households, the children eat first, and then, what is left over, the pet dog would get.

On the surface, then, Christ seems to be saying that it is not right for him to share the blessings reserved for Israel and give it to the Gentile "dogs." Christ meant nothing more than a literal dog, but remember,

the Jews considered all non-Jews as unclean. The Jews used “dogs” as slang to represent the unclean Gentiles. Dogs were scavengers. They ate carrion and garbage. They even ate their own vomit. The Jews saw the Gentiles as “dogs.”

This woman accepts her inferior status. In vs 28 she accepts her status as a “dog”? Why? The goal is not her well-being, her feelings, or her rights - the goal is her child’s well-fare.

Christian mothers, in your child’s life, you are the example of self-sacrifice and humility. You are your child’s first example of what Christ is all about.

IV. A Christian Mother is Optimistic

Look at vs. 26 again, but this time with vs. 27. Notice that even amid what appears to be a very humiliating situation, she remains focused and optimistic.

Jesus’s words here, like in vs. 24, gives all hearing Him the impression that he will not help her because she is a Gentile. Yet she is undeterred. She appears to accept her humiliating position, because she is not the one whom she is concerned about. If she must be humiliated to see her daughter healed, then so be it.

In Jesus this mother through faith, sees through the apparent humiliation to the heart of Jesus - Jesus is a good master. Even the outcasts of society can find a place at Jesus’s table. She knows that Jesus is good. He will not turn down anyone who cries to Him for help. She believes this without question.

Mothers, when adversity strikes your child, regardless of their age, keep your focus on Jesus. Don’t allow the world’s pessimistic and fatalistic attitude deter you from seeing the good that can come for the adversity.

V. A Christian Mother Perseveres

Because of her answer, Jesus commends her for her faith. This mother, again, is like Jacob, who wrestled with the angel and refused to let the angel go until he was blessed. She will not leave until Jesus has acted. She will not go away like the disciples’ desire. She will not leave even though she suffers humiliation. She perseveres even when hope seems to be fading. Why? Because she knows Jesus is good, and she trusts Him.

Mothers, when you wrestle with God in prayer, don’t let Him go until you have an answer. It may take years, but don’t let Him go until He answers you. Be reverent in your prayers but be bold and undeterred. Even though you cannot control God, and even though you are not privy to His plans and purposes, He tells His people to ask, seek, and knock, and then He will answer. Do not give up. Keep hope alive by believing that God can do all things.

In this world of pain and uncertainty, our faith in Christ, the hope He provides, and the love that He is, will sustain us to the end.

One last thing. Why this story? And why does Jesus treat this woman the way He does? (Not as cold and unfeeling as it appears) *Jesus was teaching His disciples that the Kingdom of God is not only for the Jews, but for all peoples, regardless of their national origin, or their social or economic status. It is dependent on faith in Him, Jesus Christ. He wanted the disciples to see that faith in Him allows an individual into the kingdom. Even Gentile women could come in if they believe in Him.*