

A Mother's Prayers Making All The Difference **Matthew 15:21-28**

Introduction:

One of the sweetest things that one can experience as a parent is the love that is felt and expressed toward a child. As parents, we want what is best for our children. When they hurt, we hurt; when they are sick, we empathize; when they are excited, we rejoice; etc. In Matthew 15:21-28, we read the story of a mother whose daughter experienced some very heavy spiritual oppression. It says she was "*grievously vexed*" (vs. 22). Satan's minions of spiritual wickedness were at work in this girl's life. Today, he is still roaming the earth, seeking to get into people's lives, destroying and making havoc of marriages, homes, children, and families (1 Peter 5:8).

Satan hates anything that brings stability and unity within this life. Therefore, he really hates the home because it is a pillar of any community. Satan wants nothing more than to destroy the structure of the home (John 10:10). So, what is the solution that God has given every believer to proactively counter Satan's attacks (2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:18)? As well, the greatest person you could introduce your child to is Jesus. Jesus liberates them and allows them to fulfill God's purpose for their lives. And as a parent, the mother in our story demonstrates different aspects of prayer.

The Focus:

- **Every believer must understand that prayer is the answer to Satan's attacks. How should we pray?**
 - **With intercession.**
 - **With persistence.**
 - **With complete faith.**

Jesus had left Galilee with His disciples to get some much needed rest in the town of Tyre. Tyre was an ancient seaport city north of Israel. In this city, news had traveled that Jesus, the miracle-worker, had come into their city. Because of His fame, many people from Tyre and the surrounding areas came to where He was to witness His renown (Mark 7:24). Having heard of the great things that Jesus did, this mother seized the opportunity, entered the house where He was, and cried out to Him on behalf of her daughter (vs. 22). Being a mother with discernment, she clearly understood that her daughter was under some serious spiritual bondage.

In her petition to Christ, she laid out the issue that her daughter was facing. She interceded for her daughter because she was unable to get to Jesus. Intercession is praying for someone who cannot or doesn't see the need to pray (1 Timothy 2:1). You are standing before God in their place, asking the Father to move on that person's behalf or to meet some need. How much more Christ-like can one be (Luke 22:31-32)? Parents, from the time your child is conceived, you should be standing before the Lord interceding for their souls in prayer. If you don't, who will?

This mother came to where Christ was, yet He didn't give her an answer. Initially, He did not respond to her plea. So, why did He refrain from answering her? I think Christ was exercising

wisdom and discernment within the situation – listening to and thinking upon her every word. During Christ’s assessment of the circumstances, His disciples come to Him, and they ask Him to send the woman away because she kept following them wherever they went and while she was following them she was screaming out of control. The disciples just wanted to be rid of her.

Traveling with His disciples, Jesus began to talk about the group that the Father had sent Him to reach, and it wasn’t to the Gentiles (vs. 24). Still she persisted and said unto Jesus, “Lord, help me.” (vs. 25) Jesus then replied for the first time to her directly by telling her something that she would understand. Jesus said that Israel was God, the Father’s children, and that they were to be nourished and taken care of before any dogs would be fed. Jesus was saying that Israel would be taken care of first, before the Gentiles were given an opportunity to be fed.

This mother recognized God’s plan for reaching Israel and the nations, and she used Jesus’ own words to call Him to action on her and her daughter’s behalf. She said to Jesus, “I get that, and understand God’s plan, but the dogs (Gentiles) usually get something to eat, something beneficial, even if it is the scraps that fall off of the table (vs. 26-27). She was implying that the little that He could give would be enough, and Israel would still be taken care of. What Jesus said would have ended most conversations. But she didn’t leave. Instead of hanging her head in dejection and walking away, she continued to seek His help. She could have gotten bitter and angry, but she was persistent and wouldn’t let go. Seeking God and praying to Him in faith, we must never stop. We must refuse to give up.

It was on the grounds of her persistence and faith that Jesus granted her daughter healing and liberation from the bondage of the evil, spiritual oppression (vs. 28). Her prayers were answered (Mark 7:30). Because of this mom’s great faith, her daughter was healed. Parents, as we pray and seek God’s help, we must pray believing that God is going to do something in our child’s life (Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6; 1 Timothy 2:8). More than any money or material possessions, children need the prayers of their parents, praying persistently in faith and interceding for them in prayer. The Bible says that God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him. We need to seek God in prayer for our children.

Response to the Sermon:

The call to every believer is that we must pray and seek God’s face for others on their behalf. As parents, we must seek God, talking and communicating with God in the place of each child God has given us. Our faith can truly make the difference. Oftentimes, we, our children, or others are faced with challenges and obstacles in this life. We encounter and go through different struggles – physical, emotional, spiritual, etc. Even when you feel like you’re not getting through, keep bringing that need to God until He answers. And, like this woman, petition God on the grounds of His Word. Keep seeking His face until He responds. Keep asking, and keep seeking, and in His time, He’ll hand you down a crumb of answered prayer! Don’t quit praying for your children!

Bible Study Thoughts & Questions:

Prayer happens when we move beyond ourselves and are completely persuaded of the value it brings to our lives. When we see the value or the potential worth of something, we tend to be more intentional with our investment in it. Another thought to consider is that prayer is less frequent or without intention because of our unbelief (Matthew 17:20-21). If we “feel” disconnected from our Father or from Jesus or His Spirit, it’s not on the part of the Godhead – they have never left, and they have remained faithful. No, it is we who have taken our eyes off of Him who is able and worthy to guide us and direct our every word and action. It is our lack of faith and our unbelief. Do you want to hear from your Father? Do you want God to move in a situation or through your life? Then you must see the value in taking the time to talk with Him. There is no other way to interact with Him, except to communicate your heart’s needs with Him. Our Father delights in hearing His children.

1. According to 1 Timothy 2:1-2, what should every believer be doing and for whom should they be doing it? Doing what verse 1 states allows for us to enjoy what in our lives?
2. According to 1 Timothy 2:3-4, when we communicate with God regularly, how is it viewed by Him and what happens as we continue to engage in conversation with God in our lives and the lives of others?
3. According to 1 Timothy 2:8, how should we come to God and what must we avoid in our hearts and minds when talking with God?

Application Questions:

Pastor Dan highlighted three principles and actions that this mother exhibited in her communication with Jesus Christ, and it is her example and model that we should seek to employ in our own lives when we talk to our heavenly Father. She was proactive. She heard where He was and she went. For us, God is always near and present; we can go to Him anytime and anywhere. She was persistent in getting Jesus to move on her daughter’s behalf. She boldly proclaimed Jesus’ own words to cause Him to act on her behalf. She was full of faith, trusting that what Jesus could provide was enough to take care of the problem. As parents, we must seek to do what this mother did. Seek and know He is faithful to reward those that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

1. According to Mark 7:25, what attitude did this mother demonstrate when coming to Jesus? Why is that important for us to understand and reflect in our own lives (James 4:6)?

2. According to Mark 7:26-30, when we come to God and when we submit to Him, He will hear us, but the fact that He didn't answer the mother's initial petition demonstrates to us that God wants us to show the seriousness of our faith and dependence upon Him before He provides an answer. According to verse 30, when God gives us an answer, what does it bring in our lives? How does this relate to your life and current circumstances?

Prayer:

- Pray that you would remember to come to God first, and when you come that you would humble yourself before Him (Mark 7:25).
- Pray that you would be spiritually in tune with the state of each of your children (spirit, soul, and body) – (Matthew 15:22).
- Pray in faith, using God's Word, to ask Him to act or move in a way that is aligned with His character and His Word (Matthew 15:26-28).