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A Mother's Faith on Mother's Day; Matt 15:21-28

GPBC

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Introduction – The Lord's timing is always perfect. Here we are studying through the gospel of Matthew and today, on Mother's Day, the text is about a mother appealing to the Lord. There is no doubt and no argument that a mother has a special calling and role in a marriage and in the home and with the children of the home. There resides within womanhood and motherhood a nurturing and intuition and watch care that manhood and fatherhood cannot supply.

Only a mom can be a mother, and we're talking about far more than biology, even though it is true only women have the incredible, precious role to join in the miracle of bearing a child and imparting life to another. But a mother's role runs farther and deeper than bearing children. A mother has the opportunity and unique setting to bear children in even greater, eternally significant ways than being pregnant. And here in today's text we see a beautiful example of motherhood in its deepest richest expressions.

- I. A Mother's Prayer (vv21-25)
  - a. Her prayer was desperate because she knew her child was in a desperate situation.
    - i. She came crying, v22. She kept crying out, v23. She kept pleading, v25. She was tenacious and determined and relentless and persistent in her praying because her daughter was severely oppressed by a demon.
    - ii. Her child was locked and chained in a cage for which this mother had no key. Her daughter was trapped in a darkness for which this mother had no resource. There was nothing else she could do but pray.
    - iii. Her prayer was desperate because her child was in a desperate place.
    - iv. Mothers hear this plea today with every fiber of your soul. Your children need your earnest, persistent, tenacious praying today more than they need anything else. Some mothers are more concerned about making sure their daughters do and be what they never could do or be and neglect the greater need.

Some mothers have far greater concern over maintaining a friendship with their children rather than being the godly influencing mother their children need. Our children have friends. They need moms and dads to be moms and dads, holy, godly, loving, directing, guiding moms and dads.

- v. If God gets a hold of a mother's heart, her prayers will shake the very throne of heaven. No one prays like a mother who feels the desperation of her children.
  - vi. When we look at our children and see no love for Christ, no pursuit of heaven, no zeal for God, we should feel the very same desperation that this mother felt, and we should pray.
  - vii. When we see the world in which our children are exposed with all its trappings and allurements and deceptions and pits, we should feel the very same desperation this mother felt, and we should pray.
  - viii. Academic accomplishment and athletic accomplishment and notoriety accomplishment will mean nothing if void of spiritual vitality and life! Our children are often locked in spiritually desperate places while our knees are soft and our eyes are dry and our prayers are empty. We need tenacious praying.
- b. Notice that this mother's prayer pushed beyond initial obstacles.
- i. The first obstacle was the silence of the Lord. There was no answer or response from the Lord at all. And yet she continued to pray. Some of you gracious and godly mothers have been praying, and desperately praying, and it seems that God is not listening, not responding. Keep praying. His withholding is not meant for your harm. It is meant for your good. Jesus is not pushing this woman away. He is drawing her closer.
  - ii. The second obstacle was the frustrating, impatient lack of concern and empathy from the disciples. This woman didn't receive any support from the followers of Christ. Sometimes the harder we press toward the Lord, we find discouragement from very discouraging places!!
  - iii. There will always be obstacles to prayer!
- c. Not only was her prayer desperate, it was also greatly and rightly informed.

- i. She knew Jesus was God – v22 O Lord, Son of David – v25 – Lord
  - ii. She knew Jesus was able – my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon – Eph 3:20-21.
  - iii. Therefore, she appealed to Jesus on her daughter’s behalf. In essence, she brought her child to Jesus!
- d. This is not only for moms. This is for dads too. Let us take up this mother’s mantle. Let us discern our children’s spiritual situation, for they are just like this daughter. There is darkness in them if they are without Christ, and there is darkness around them. Let us discern the spiritual condition of our children, and may we too bring them to Jesus in prayer, by living example, and by speaking truth into their lives!

## II. A Mother’s Response (vv26-27)

- a. First, we note the great humility of this mother, for she cried for mercy in v22. She understood she stood before the Lord as one undeserving of His grace. She knew neither she or her daughter merited or could claim any right. She threw herself upon His mercy.
- b. Second, we note she asked Him for help in v25. She knew the situation was beyond her, but not beyond Him. If He would lend a helping hand, He could deliver her daughter. He could do for her child what she could never do for her child.
- c. She was asking the right person for the right thing in the right way.
- d. Third, knowing her place of unworthiness and His nature of sufficiency, she put herself into His illustration in a remarkably, insightful and faithful way.
  - i. Jesus had already responded that His primary calling and mission was to the Jews. It wouldn’t be right for Him to withdraw from His primary mission.
    - 1. Now, He says this not to totally dismiss and dissuade her but rather to draw her to the place of humble, seeking faith.
    - 2. I don’t think Jesus is calling her a dog. His point is to demonstrate the focus of His mission. A good parent would never feed the dogs while his children starve. That would be an outrage!

- ii. She then takes Jesus' illustration, and she places herself in the role of the dog. She picks up on the social stereotype and is saying this is not just how I am seen, this is who I am – a sinner. Essentially, she replies she wouldn't dare ask for the children's bread, but she would be satisfied with the crumbs that fall from the table.
- iii. In other words, how she just expressed her faith is in the same vein and expression of the faith expressed in Gennesaret in 14:36. They "implored Him that they might only touch the fringe of His garment. And as many as touched it were made well." Fringes and crumbs.

### III. A Mother's Faith (v28)

- a. Her faith received the same reply as those in Gennesaret.
- b. A faith that is humble. A faith that is desperate. A faith that understands on its own it is undeserving, but yet also knows and believes Jesus is not only able, He is merciful.
- c. When a mom's faith is like that and expressed in prayer like that, you would be hard pressed to find a greater force on this earth.

Conclusion – \*Many of our great heroes in the faith have credited their conversion and ministry to the prayers of their mothers: John Newton, John Gresham Machen, Christopher Yuan, William Bordon, Charles Hodge, John Piper, Charles Spurgeon, Augustine, Timothy.

But I want to tell you a little about Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China. Hudson Taylor was born on May 21, 1832, in Barnsley, England, the firstborn child of James and Amelia. When Hudson was 15, he took up employment at a bank, and it was in this environment that he first encountered people who openly mocked the Christian faith. He soon joined them in scoffing and swearing. When he reached 17, he found himself despondent, short-tempered, and rebelling. Amelia was convinced that the best thing she could do for her son was to commit him to prayer. During a short holiday that took her away from the family home, she felt compelled to increase the length and earnestness of her prayers. One day that compulsion grew to such a degree that she determined to pray for her son until she came to a sense of assurance that God would save him. She locked herself in her room and for hours pleaded that God would extend mercy to

Hudson. And then, all of a sudden, she believed that God had answered her prayer. Her heart turned from pleading to praise, and she worshipped God that he had, indeed, saved Hudson.

Meanwhile, Hudson had been at home. Bored and discontent, he began looking for something to do. He wandered into his father's library and, though he pulled book after book from the shelf, found nothing of interest. Finally, he spotted a tract titled "Poor Richard." He read the story, then came to the simple words "the finished work of Christ." In that very moment, Hudson understood that Christ had done all that was necessary for salvation and the only right response was to accept that work by faith. Right there, he fell to his knees and committed his life to the Lord, promising to serve him forever. He soon learned that as he was on his knees praising God for his salvation, his mother was doing the very same thing, though many miles away.

A few days later, he and his mother were reunited, and he immediately exclaimed, "I have some news to tell you." Before he could say anything more she replied, "I know what it is! You have given yourself to God."

Taylor's life was forever transformed. He soon committed his life to missionary work, trained as a doctor, began to preach, and at last departed for China in 1853. His mother was there to say farewell, and his description of their parting tells of their love and of her earnest prayers.

My beloved, now sainted mother, had come over to Liverpool to see me off. Never shall I forget that day, nor how she went with me into the cabin that was to be my home for nearly six long months. With a mother's loving hand she smoothed the little bed. She sat by my side and joined in the last hymn we should sing together before parting. We knelt down and she prayed—the last mother's prayer I was to hear before leaving for China. Then notice was given that we must separate, and we had to say good-bye, never expecting to meet on earth again.

Hudson Taylor would spend 51 years in China and found the China Inland Mission (now known as OMF International). Hundreds of missionaries would follow him to China and thousands of Chinese would come to know Christ. Rightly would he be known as one of the great Christian missionaries. And his story cannot be told without giving due credit to the power of a praying mother.

\*illustration from [challis.com](http://challis.com)

