

# The Nameless Mother with Great Faith

Matthew 15:21-28

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## INTRODUCTION:

Lesson Text: **Matthew 15:21-28** - Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup> A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."

<sup>23</sup> Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

<sup>24</sup> He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

<sup>25</sup> The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

<sup>26</sup> He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

<sup>27</sup> "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus answered, "Woman, **you have great faith!** Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

In the NKJV: "Mother" appears 240 times . . . "Mothers" 8 times for a total of 248 times.

**PRESSURES ON MOM TODAY** are greater than ever many would suggest. Its got to be the toughest job in the world. Just think of what's expected of her in our success-driven society . . . . .

- Have a successful career
- Keep the house spotless
- Rear perfect children
- Be a great cook
- Look like a model
- Be a charming hostess and conversationalist
- She cooked the breakfast first of all,
- Washed the cups and plates.
- Dressed the children and made sure

- Stockings all were mated.
  - Combed their hair and made their beds,
  - Sent them out to play;
  - Gathered up their motley toys,
  - Put some books away.
  - Dusted chairs and mopped the stairs,
  - Ironed an hour or two;
  - Baked a jar of cookies and a pie,
  - Then made a pot of stew.
  - The telephone rang constantly,
  - The doorbell did the same;
  - A youngster fell and stubbed his toe
  - And then the laundry came.
  - She picked up blocks and mended socks,
  - Then she polished up the stove;
- And when her husband came at six  
He said, "I envy you!  
It must be nice to sit at home  
Without a thing to do!"

THERE WAS A STUDY by attorney Michael Minton on the monetary value of a wife's services in the home. First he listed the various functions she performs:

- Chauffeur
- Gardener
- Family counselor
- Maintenance worker
- Cleaning woman
- Housekeeper
- Cook
- Errand runner
- Bookkeeper
- Interior decorator
- Caterer . . . dietician . . . secretary . . . hostess

Using this impressive list of housewife's work in today's labor market,

He came up with \$985/week. That's \$51,220/year!

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN conducted a nationwide survey several years ago in which they asked thousands of girls between the ages of 11 and 18 what they would like to be in adult life. A surprising **80%** expressed a desire to be like their mothers!

It has been said that no other force in the life of a son is as strong as the influence of a mother.

**ILLUSTRATION: “A Lesson on Magnets”**

A teacher had just given her 2nd grade class a lesson on magnets. Now came the question session. She asked the class, “My name starts with an M and I pick up things. What am I?” A little boy shot up his hand and said, “A mother!”

Hey moms! Have you ever thought of going on strike? There was a story on TV about a woman who did just that. She was tired of all the chores around the house, done on behalf of her spouse and children with no offer of help and no thanks. After warning them, she finally decided not to lift another finger until the rest of the family pitched in. It only took a few hours to get action.

Did you hear about the fellow that wrote the following lament to his wife on Mother's Day?

**M** is for the mink coat you want, dear.

**O** is for the opal ring you crave.

**T** is for the tiny car you'd love, my sweet.

**H** is for the hat that makes you rave.

**E** is for the earrings you'd admire, love.

**R** is for the rug on which you'd tread.

Put them all together, they spell bankrupt,

So I'm giving you this handkerchief instead.

**Illustration: “My Mother is the Light of the World”**

A little boy forgot his lines in a S. S. presentation. His mother was in the front row to prompt him. She gestured and formed the words

silently with her lips, but it didn't help. Her sons' memory went blank. Finally, she leaned forward and whispered the cue, "I am the light of the world." The boy's face lit up and with great feeling and a loud and clear voice he said, "My mother is the light of the world."

**POEM: Mother o' Mine** by Rudyard Kipling

If I were hanged on the highest hill,  
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*  
I know whose love would follow me still,  
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,  
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*  
I know whose tears would come down to me,  
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

If I were damned of body and soul,  
I know whose prayers would make me whole,  
*Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!*

**YOU KNOW THIS THING ABOUT PRESSURE FOR MOMS IS REALLY NOTHING NEW.**

**EVE** was blamed for the first sin and denominationalists blame her for their doctrine of original sin and she had one son who killed his brother.

**HAGAR**, Abraham's handmaiden, had a son by him. She was sent away by Abraham with her boy, Ishmael—and they almost died in the desert.

**JOCHEBED** was the mother of Moses; Egyptians were killing all male Hebrew babies to curb population; placed Moses in a basket and let it lose on the river.

**MARY**, mother of Jesus: no room for her in the Inn; had to flee to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath; Jesus was missing; His trial and crucifixion.

Mother in our text: she had a daughter who was demon-possessed.

**HAVE YOU EVER KNOWN A PERSON WHO'S CHARACTER COULD BE SUMMED UP IN 4 WORDS?** In **verse 28** of our Lesson Text, Jesus said to a Gentile mother: **“You have great faith.”** She was a Canaanite woman who came from the country north of Palestine—a country hostile to the Jews—and she was presumably married. She had at least one child, but that's all we know about her. We don't even know her name!

All we know is that in her single encounter with Jesus, He said to her, “You have great faith.” Only 4 words, but they were enough to enshrine her as one of the greatest mothers of all time! And these 4 words tell us everything we need to know, and we can trust them because they were spoken by Jesus. Amen?

**JESUS IS AN EXPERT ON FAITH.** The Bible tells us that He searched for it as a gem collector searches for fine jewels, and when He found it He was filled with joy. He didn't always find it in His disciples. Not once did He say to Peter, John, or James, “You have great faith.” But He said it to this nameless mother from outside the house of Israel!

What did this woman do to deserve such praise from God? **SHE DID THREE REMARKABLE THINGS.**

### 1. **SHE CROSSED GREAT BARRIERS**

- She was a woman . . . Considered as a second class citizen in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century.
- She was a Gentile
- She was a Canaanite

Here was a mother who in her need was prepared to cross any obstacle to turn to Jesus for help. **Faith still requires that we make the effort to cross whatever barriers may stand in our way.** What barriers, you say?

**TIME:** We're often too busy with the things of earth to pay attention to the spiritual. Then there's the issue of trusting One who lived 2,000

years ago . . . the time gap!

**CULTURE:** Does God really understand the problems I face in this modern world? And what about this politically correct society?

Christians are often accused of being too exclusive.

**PRIDE:** The greatest barrier of all—many today are like a

person who is drowning but refuses help—even fights the rescuer.

**TECHNOLOGY:** This is the age of the technocrat. Text . . . Tweet . . . Email . . . Update Facebook . . . Shop online, etc.

What exactly was it that drove this mother to cross her barriers and get to Jesus? I believe it was 3 things:

1. **DESPERATION:** She knew that she wasn't doing all right by herself. She had tried other ways and they had all failed. Now she would seek help from Jesus, regardless of the cost.

2. **LOVE: LOVE FOR HER CHILD.** Love made her accept Jesus' silence and yet still appeal to Him; love made her suffer apparent rebuffs from the disciples.

3. **VISION:** She saw in Jesus a compassion that would not turn her away. She believed in His ability and willingness to help. The measure of our faith is conditioned by what we see in Jesus.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.

2. The second thing that this mom did to illicit such praise from Jesus was that . . . . . **SHE PERSISTED**

This mother refused to be put off or intimidated. She was not going to take criticism or silence as an answer.

There were at least 3 intimidating factors that could have kept her from her persistence:

1. **SILENCE OF JESUS** (v.23). She didn't perceive it as indifference.

She reached behind it and spoke to the great heart of God.

2. **REBUKE OF THE DISCIPLES** (v.23). She went over their heads to the Lord Himself!

3. **BEHAVIOR OF JESUS** (v.24). What He said in effect was, “Sorry Madam, but you don’t belong to the right group; you have no claim on me.” She didn’t try to analyze His response. She simply refused to be put off by it. She let her need speak for itself. She fell at His feet and cried, “Help me, Sir.” That’s the essence of all great faith—to stretch out your hand to Jesus in desperation.

**ILLUSTRATION:** “Young Man Crawls to Become Eagle Scout”

A story on the news told of an 18-year-old young man who had multiple sclerosis. He was trying desperately to become an eagle scout. All he lacked was a 16 mile hike, but he was in a wheelchair. He wheeled his chair for 10 miles. When his arms became too sore to continue, he crawled the remaining 6 miles!

Now that’s persistence! That’s the kind of straight-forward determination that this mother possessed in the earthly presence of Jesus.

**Washington Irving:** “The love of a mother is never exhausted. It never changes—it never tires—it endures through all; in good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world’s condemnation, a mother’s love still lives on.”

Persistence is the hallmark of godly-motherhood.

3. The third quality of this mother that caused Jesus to praise her was . . . . . **SHE MADE NO CLAIM** (v.27)

She relied on the GRACE of Jesus. When our Lord told her that it didn’t seem right to take bread from the children of Israel and throw it to the little dogs of the Gentiles, she didn’t burst into tears and walk away. Instead, she gave Jesus an answer that must have excited Him!

She said, “True, Sir. I admit that I have no claim on You, but there

must be some extra grace—some grace that I don't deserve, and I'm appealing to You for that."

No wonder Jesus replied, "Woman, you have great faith." No wonder from that moment her daughter was made whole. This mother possessed great faith because she won over her difficulties and over the devil. Every obstacle and opposition may be conquered by faith through prayer.

So, don't despair when faced with a problem. Cross the barriers to Jesus. Persist in your belief. Receive His grace which He offers freely to all who will approach Him in true humility, asking of the Father in His name.

### **CONCLUSION:**

- A. In **verse 28** of our Lesson Text, Jesus said to a Gentile mother: "**You have great faith.**"
- B. This unnamed mother did three remarkable things.
  - 1. She crossed Great Barriers: Woman . . . Gentile . . . Canaanite
  - 2. She persisted.
  - 3. She made no claim.
- C. These are lessons from this unnamed mother to the named mothers of our congregation.
- D. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**