

Oh Woman Great Is Your Faith

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the power of persistent faith and prayer, illustrated through the story of a desperate mother seeking help for her daughter.

Duration: 29:46

Scripture: Psalm 34:17, Proverbs 3:5-6, Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 7:7, Matthew 15:28, John 3:17, Romans 8:34, Philippians 4:19, Hebrews 13:8, James 5:16

Topics: "Persevering Faith", "Prayer Power"

Description

This sermon focuses on the story of a desperate mother who approached Jesus for help despite initial silence and apparent exclusion. It highlights the importance of persevering faith, especially in times of silence from the Lord, and the need to press on in prayer and belief. The sermon emphasizes the power of a mother's prayers and the impact of surrendering to Christ, encouraging listeners to seek God's blessings and trust in His grace.

Transcript

Both Matthew and Mark in their Gospels tell us this story of this desperate mother who came to Jesus because of a condition of her daughter. Jesus had been ministering now for a couple of years. He's actually approaching the end of his ministry.

The Pharisees are beginning to plot his death and giving him a bad time. The common people were still receiving him joyfully and were interested basically in the miracles, the healings, and the help that they received from him. Knowing that his time was limited, he wanted to spend some quality time with his disciples.

And we read that he decided that they would go across the sea to a deserted area where he could just spend some good time with them. However, the people saw the direction the little ship was going, and they ran around the upper end of the Galilee so that by the time the little ship landed on the other side, over 5,000 men beside women and children were waiting on the shore to greet him. After he had ministered to them all day, he then took five loaves and two fish and fed the multitude with those five loaves and two fish.

And then they headed back to Capernaum, but he still desired this private time with his disciples and figured that it wouldn't be possible around the Sea of Galilee, so they actually headed over into Gentile

country, knowing that the Jews would not come over into the Gentile area. And so that is why he was coming to the coast or the area of Tyre and Sidon. It was to get aside, get alone with his disciples to spend some quality time.

While he was there, he could not be hid. His fame had spread abroad. All over, people had heard of him, the miracles that he did, the healings, many, many miracles.

And there was a one, there was one woman there who had a great problem. It was with her daughter. She came to Jesus where he was, the house where he was staying, and she cried unto him and said, have mercy upon me, son of David, for my daughter is grievously vexed by a devil.

The response of Jesus was very puzzling, in that he just did not respond to her cry. And this seems so different from the Jesus that we've come to know. The psalmist tells us that his eyes are upon the righteous and his ears are open to their crying.

But Jesus was just ignoring her desperate plea. You know, the silence of the Lord is a hard thing to take. When we are concerned, when we are burdened over a situation, and we are praying, and the Lord doesn't seem to answer.

The problem seems to persist. It's a hard thing to handle, the silence of the Lord. We pray, but nothing seems to happen.

Nothing seems to change. At this point, the disciples got into the act. They came to Jesus and they asked Jesus to do something about her, because she had begun to bug them.

It would seem that they were not so concerned for her problem as they were for their own peace. But it's interesting that desperate people do desperate things, and she was desperate. She had a great problem with this daughter, a problem daughter.

She no doubt had heard of the fame of Jesus and what he was able to do, and here being so close, she wasn't going to give up on this opportunity to get his help for her daughter. But then Jesus did something else. This sounded out of character with the Jesus that we know.

When the disciples said, Lord, do something, she's driving us crazy. In her hearing, he just said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. She's out of the area of the covenant people.

You see, when she called to Jesus, she said, Son of David, have mercy on me. That was a title for the Jews. There had been promises of God to the Jews that he would raise up unto the seed of David, a king who would rule over them, a son of David.

Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 9.6, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. The government will be upon his shoulder. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.

And of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. Upon the throne of David, to order it, to establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth even forever, for the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. The throne of David, son of David, have mercy.

But you see, that was a promise to the Jews. Jeremiah prophesied, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king will reign and prosper, execute judgment and

justice in the earth. And in his days, Judas shall be saved, and Israel will dwell safely.

And this is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord our righteousness. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of David and to the house of Judah. And in those days and at that time, I will cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

But she's calling out of the covenant people. She has no covenant relationship with the Lord. That was not made possible until after the death of Jesus.

But now she's not deterred. She comes and she worships him. She calls him Lord.

And that is what he is to her. And as Lord, she has access to him. She said, Lord, help me.

But still, however, Jesus seemed to rebuff her. As he said to her, it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. A couple of things I want you to note here.

Note first of all, the children have a right to come to the table and to partake of all that the master is able to provide. As a child of God, you have wonderful rights to come to the Lord and to receive his blessings and his help. When he said, and cast it to the dogs, the Jews referred to the Gentiles as Gentile dogs.

It was a derisive term. They were using the term dog to talk about those mongrels, those scavenger dogs that were there in the country that were ferocious. They were snarling and snapping at people.

And that's the way the Jews viewed the Gentiles. And so they called them Gentile dogs. When Jesus said it isn't right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs, he used a different Greek word for dogs.

He used the word kunaria in a diminutive form, which would be translated little puppies. Now all of the household had those little puppies that when the family would sit down to eat, they'd hang around the family and eat the crumbs or when the kids had something they didn't like, they'd flip it off to the little puppy next to them. And so this is the word that Jesus is using.

It isn't right to take the children's meat and to give it to the little puppies. And she said, that's true Lord. But the little puppies eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

And Jesus said, oh woman, great is your faith. Be it done unto you even as you wish. Some of you mothers here today may be deeply concerned over a wayward son or daughter.

It may be that they are on a path that you recognize is destructive. They're not so bad that you're willing to say, well, they're demon possessed, vexed by the devil. But it does seem that Satan is holding them in his grip.

And you've been praying to Jesus earnestly for their salvation. But it seems like the Lord is silent, that he is ignoring your request. And you can't understand the apparent silence of the Lord.

This mother that we have been studying this morning was so desperate that she pressed through what seemed to be the apparent disinterest of the Lord in her plight. But desperate conditions call for desperate means. And she's not going to take a no to her request.

God said to Jeremiah, and you shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. I think that one of our problems is that we're not really yet desperate enough that we're searching for him with all of our heart. We recognize there's a problem, but we still feel, well, the solution can't be far off.

And we're not truly desperate before the Lord. And I do feel that one of the great problems in our world today is that our world is in a desperate situation. Our nation is in a desperate situation.

The Church of Jesus Christ is in a desperate situation. The world is on the verge of nuclear warfare with the attempts of the nations to develop nuclear weapons and their willingness to create a world war in order to bring their mighty Messiah into the world. We are facing desperate situations.

Obviously, we have a desperate situation within our nation. The national debt that is being developed and the financial problems that exist. The church is in a desperate situation.

So many of them are denying now that Jesus is the only way to salvation, willing to make compromises in order to gain the popularity of the people, willing to suggest that maybe there are other ways other than Jesus for salvation. We're in a desperate situation, but I don't think that we are yet desperate before the Lord. I think that we're more concerned with the condition of our economy and the fallen value of the dollar than we are the fallen condition of the world in which we live.

It may be that you feel that you're sort of excluded from the promises of God, that they were for another time and another age, that the miracles of Jesus are over. They're not for the present time. And yet the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

It could be that you feel that you're not worthy to sit at the table and partake of the blessings of the Lord. You're conscious of your own failures, your shortcomings. You know, Satan is so adept at pointing out our flaws and our mistakes and our weaknesses.

But Paul the Apostle asked, who is he that condemneth? When we feel those condemning thoughts, who planted them there? Paul assures you it wasn't Jesus. He said, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died for you. In fact, he rose again and he's at the right hand of the Father, making intercession for you.

Jesus said that God did not send him into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. And he who believes is not condemned, and he who believes not is condemned already, because he does not believe on the only begotten Son of God. But it could be that you're having that feeling of, I'm not worthy to ask God.

But you are. You're a child. The child can come and sit at the table and partake of the bounty that is there.

Just remember though, that just the crumbs that fall from the master's table is all that you need. He is so rich. His blessings are so great.

Just crumbs, Lord. That's all I need. This desperate mother did not give up.

Against the prejudice, she came. Against the silence, she persevered. Against the exclusion, she proceeded.

And against the rebuff, she won. She did not quit until she heard those comforting words of Jesus. Oh woman, great is your faith.

Be it done unto you as you will. She had passed the test of faith. I want you to look at this from just a little different angle.

The Bible tells us concerning Jesus that he didn't need anybody to tell him about other people. He knew men and he knew what was in man. He knew this woman before she called.

He knew her need and he knew that he was going to answer her request. And yet, he was silent. Yet, he seemed to sort of exclude her.

But every time he would step back, she would step closer and that was his purpose. To draw her closer and closer until there was a full expression of the faith. As a great demonstration for the disciples.

To see how that persevering faith will bring the results that you're desiring. Jesus said, ask and you shall receive. But in the Greek it is, keep on asking.

Keep on seeking. Keep on knocking. In other words, he's teaching perseverance.

In this perseverance, faith is being tested. During the silence of the Lord when it seems that nothing is happening. Faith is being tested.

Keep on asking. When it seems like, well, maybe I'm not deserving. Faith is being tested.

It's not you're deserving that's going to get it for you. Anyhow, it's his grace and his love. You can't earn the blessings of God.

So, keep pressing in. Don't give up. His silence was not a refusal.

In fact, I used to hear the saying, silence gives consent. Like the preacher that church was sort of after him and wanting to get rid of him. And so he said to the congregation, how many of you want me to stay on as your pastor? And it was silent.

And he said, silence gives consent. He said he was sent to the lost sheep. She knew that she was a lost sheep.

When he said it isn't right to take the children's bread and give it to the little puppies. She knew that the little puppies hung around the table and ate the scraps that came from the table. And thus she persevered until he said, woman, great is your faith.

I would encourage you mothers, especially those who are deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of your children. To continue to persevere until you hear the Lord say to you, oh woman, great is your faith. Be it done unto you as you will.

Only heaven will reveal the number of people who have been saved from destruction because of the persistent prayer of their mothers. On the other side of the coin, one more picture. And that is to you who are here today reluctantly.

You're here today as a favor to your mother. That you might show respect to her on Mother's Day. And because it was her desire for you to be here on Mother's Day.

You're honoring her desire, but you're hoping that I'll be through in a hurry. So you can get up and do the things that you're longing to do. Let me just say, if you have a mother who is concerned for your spiritual

welfare.

A mother who has been praying for you. In the list of blessings, I would encourage you to put that near the top of the list of blessings. A mother who is concerned for your spiritual well-being.

A mother who wants to make certain that you'll spend eternity with her in the kingdom of God. What a blessing. Godly mothers who are so concerned for their children.

They will persevere in prayer until they hear the Lord say to them. Oh woman, great is your faith. Be it done unto you as you will.

I pray that if you have not yet surrendered your life to Christ. That this might be the day that the Lord would honor the prayers of your mother. The day that the Lord would say to her.

Oh woman, great is your faith. Be it done unto you even as you will. And you will find the help, the strength, the love of God.

And the joy of fellowshiping with our Lord Jesus Christ. And that you will guarantee your entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Father, we thank you for godly praying mothers.

Whose prayers have sustained us. Helped us. Protected us.

Guided us. And on this Mother's Day we do pray Father. That many of the mother's prayers will be answered.

As their children will respond to the call of your spirit to their hearts. And take that turn to the right. The right path.

And begin to follow you. We ask this Father in Jesus name. Amen.

Shall we stand. The pastors are down here at the front. To pray for you today.

If you would like to receive Jesus Christ. As your savior. And to begin to live the kind of a life that really is meaningful.

I would encourage you to come on down when we are dismissed. Just ask them to pray for you. Maybe mothers you are a little discouraged.

Maybe it seems like the Lord is silent. You like someone to pray with you for your children. We would encourage you to come on down and just ask the pastors to join with you.

The Bible talks about agreeing in prayer. And that if we would agree the Lord would do it. And so they are here to pray for you.

And to agree with you for the salvation of your family. It could be that there are other needs. But God is able.

You can come to the tables. You don't have to just eat the crumbs. You can come to the table and enjoy the riches of God's bounty today.

They are here to minister to you and to pray for you. And we would encourage you to take advantage. And now may the Lord bless you on this special day.

And especially for the mothers. May you just experience the love that you deserve. And the respect from your families.

How we thank God for you. And praise God for your wonderful godly examples of love to us. Unconditional love for us.

May you go forth today in the love of the Lord. And experience His presence with you this afternoon. And just the joy of the Lord may it fill your heart and your life.

And may you become everything God wants you to be. As we follow Him and seek His face. And may you be rewarded by the Lord.

With that joy of fellowshiping with Him. The Lord bless thee. And keep thee.

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee. And be gracious unto thee. And be gracious unto thee.

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee. And give thee peace. God bless you.

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