

A Mother Who Helps Her Child

by John McGregor

The sermon emphasizes the importance of perseverance and faith in seeking God's help, even in the face of rejection and adversity.

Duration: 38:36

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 9:20-22, Matthew 13:31-32, Matthew 15:21-28, Philippians 3:14

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man who couldn't afford to pay for his groceries but was surprised when someone else paid for him. The message emphasizes the importance of perseverance and faith in God, using examples from the Bible and personal anecdotes. The speaker encourages listeners to remember that victory will come if they persevere. The sermon also highlights the story of a mother who had great faith and believed for the impossible, even when her son was far from God.

Transcript

Brad Redd for us from Matthew 15, 21 to 28, and we'll think about that a little bit. But let me just mention something of next weekend. Francisco Beltran will be with us.

You'll hear him preach next Sunday morning. He is an adjunct professor at the Theological Seminary in Peru. He's a personal assistant to the president of the alliance in Peru.

He's become a friend over the years and translates when I happen to be in Peru to preach. And we're grateful for him and for Esther in so many ways. So we look forward to that.

He'll be preaching next Sunday morning on the church that God blesses in missions. And then in the evening, although the meeting is at Heritage Alliance Church, it's actually sponsored by Glencairn Alliance Church. So you won't want to miss it since we sponsored it.

And I believe we'll have a wonderful time again thinking about God's hand upon his church and the church that he blesses. Well, here we are on Mother's Day, and there's some nice treats once you get finished. So that ought to be enough to keep you kind of saying, help them, my Lord, to get done this morning so we can get to the treats and the good things.

A mother helping her child is what we see here in chapter 15 of Matthew. And throughout the scriptures, we see women who demonstrate courage and faith, love for God, and for their households. And that's exactly what we get a picture of here as well, isn't it? She had to be courageous because she's approaching somebody from a different race, and she's approaching someone who might not necessarily accept her at all.

And yet we see the courage to do that, and we see the faith, and we'll look at that in a little bit. So the text is a remarkable series of lessons, really, for us on this special day. And what can we learn from this incident? It's one of those incidents in scripture that makes you stop and think.

I mean, how many people did Jesus call a dog? None. So it's a unique incident, isn't it? And as you just think about it, let's consider just a few things from the text this morning. Let's first of all consider the perseverance that was in this woman.

Now, we don't live in a society that reveres perseverance, but perseverance is one of those absolutely necessary things, isn't it? Perseverance is what we see in this lady, and we only see a little portion of it. Just think about the pain and the frustration that must have led this woman to the action that she took. This child must have been in all kinds of situations over the while, and as a parent, what is it that you do when your child is struggling or suffering? Anything and everything that you can do that would bring some help and some peace into that situation.

I imagine she must have whisked that daughter off to see the specialists of the day, don't you think? Whoever was in the area who was knowledgeable, well, maybe this person can help. Let's get a hold of somebody who knows how to fix this, this problem. Now, I got an email this week from my daughter Margaret that said my little grandson had to go to the principal's office the other day.

And I thought, aha, I know where that came from. And you see, we have, do we not, seen situations where there are problem children. Maybe some of us like me could say, yep, that was me.

I fit that bill. I fit that criteria. But you see, as you think about this and just consider all that led to this woman coming to Jesus, we know just in looking around that she would have tried many things to find an answer.

But isn't it interesting that the child didn't need a doctor, the child needed a Savior. And, oh, my friends, this is ever true from generation to generation. There are so many things that we try to fix people and to change people, but people need a Savior.

And as we see this lady, as she comes and the Bible tells us that she is crying out, you would think, you know, when you come into the presence of the Lord and His disciples, the cream of the crop, the people who are walking with Him and learning from Him and being mentored by Him, you would think they would just long to pick this lady up and say, here's a girl with a problem. Let's get her over here to Jesus. It doesn't happen.

In fact, the disciples have sort of rejected her cries, haven't they? When you look at the text and it says that they're saying, you know, can you quiet her down? I mean, it's kind of embarrassing. She just keeps on crying out after us. And sometimes perseverance is kind of embarrassing when people say, are you still expecting something? Even after all this time, you still think that something is going to happen? But there's no response from the disciples, and then there's that sense of rejection.

I mean, she has to be a loser. I mean, who in public is going to cry out like that? But you've got to love the perseverance in this woman. And then there's no response from Jesus.

Now, in our instant society, we are accustomed to everybody jumping through the hoops and getting things done right now. Isn't that where the saying comes from? When I say jump, ask how high on the way up? It's kind of the demanding series of things that we see in our culture and in our world. But Jesus gives no response.

And then he gives a discouraging response. Well, you know, when you think about this woman and the perseverance that she had, you have to really applaud the fact that she was not going to be denied. She was not going to be put off.

She was going to persevere. I have a couple of Pentecostal friends in Northern Ireland, Robert and Linda Ginn. Robert is a Pentecostal pastor.

And, you know, their first boy was called Robert. But the doctors told Linda when Robert was born, this boy will never be able to walk. He'll never be able to communicate.

He'll never be able to participate. He'll never be able to do any of those things. And Linda said, yeah, but that's without God.

And so sometimes she would carry her little boy on her back. And when his legs wouldn't work, she carried him on her back. And Linda is a tiny little bit of a thing.

Now, Robert, young Robert, as we would call him, because his dad is old Robert, we don't actually say that to him. But today, young Robert is on Facebook. And he has a girlfriend.

And he's finished his education. And he's working for a living. And I wonder, where are all the experts? But I know this.

Here was a mother who was determined that she would put everything she could into that boy. And God responded to her heart's desire. You see, that's exactly what's going on here with this mother.

And, you know, the Lord is saying, there's no place at the table. There's no bread that I can offer you. There's seemingly no way to gain an answer.

But would you just notice, she knows there's no other one to go to. And she knows that this is a spiritual battle, not just a physical. And I would submit to you, we get war night far quicker in the spiritual battle than we do in the physical one.

We get discouraged and cast down and say, well, he's not listening to me. But, oh, friends, you just consider what is going on here. It would have been so easy for her just to quit.

Years ago, in a crusade in Calgary, we were led through a series of circumstances, which we won't go into because it'd take too long on this Mother's Day, to do a prayer walk. And there were over 9,000 people who engaged in the prayer walk. But Bob Gowell, who was head of Concerts of Prayer, he went to City Hall to get a permit for this walk.

And everybody said, you'll never get a permit. So Bob sat outside the person's office all day the first day, didn't get to see that person who issues the permits. Sat outside the office all day the second day, still

didn't get to see the person who issues the permits.

Sat outside the office all day the third day. And just at the end of the day, he managed to catch that person leaving the office. And Bob said, I've sat here all day for three days to talk to you to get a permit for this prayer walk that we want to do.

And the person said, if you think that I, as a person from another religion, I'm going to give you a permit to walk on the streets of Calgary and speak about Jesus, think again. And my friend Bob said, well, okay. I guess if I can't get the permit, I'll just head on over to the Calgary Herald and we'll make an article that says City Hall is biased against Christians.

That permit got written out really fast, thrown across the desk at Bob. But you know what? Perseverance pays. Doesn't it? So when you think about the perseverance that we see in this lady, there is so much there.

There are times when we just need to think about the fact that we press on with God. Isn't that what the Apostle Paul told the Philippians? Forgetting those things that are behind, I press on toward the mark of the high prize in Christ Jesus, he said. Secondly, let's consider her faith.

Now she began by calling out to the Lord, Son of David. But you know, not being from Jewish background, she had no foundation to stand on there. And he didn't answer.

And his response is that I'm sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Faith, you see, is going to be greatly tested, but wonderfully rewarded. That's why I believe Scripture says this about those end times.

When the Son of Man comes, will he find love on the earth? Will he find peace on the earth? Will he find--some of you scholars are itching to correct the pastor, come on. Faith! Will he find faith on the earth? All of those other things are not mentioned, but faith is. Because faith is always going to be tried, tested, but wonderfully rewarded.

And when you think about her faith, it is placed in the Lord Jesus Christ. It wasn't what the disciples could do. They weren't going to do anything anyway.

It was just focused on Jesus. And I think about this faith that is in the heart of this woman, and it makes me just pause, because I like to stop and think about what was going on elsewhere. Elsewhere, the forces of hell must have been quite happy and content.

How well we got this little girl, you know, we can do whatever we want with her. We can just turn her any which way we want, because that's the way we like to operate. But this faith that this lady has confines all of that.

It must have baffled all the powers of hell that day when Jesus said, you have what you want. Boom! Boom! Sorry, I think I resonated the woofers or tweeters or whatever they are in there. If necessary, I'll pay for the damage.

Faith that is tested and rewarded. It shows her belief that God is willing to heal her child totally. She believed that she could not leave without the desire that she came for.

That's perseverance and faith and persevering in faith. Faith opens the way to eat that forbidden bread that Jesus spoke of. Even a crumb will do.

And would you notice with me that it's when she came on the foundation of, Sir, help me. It's at that point that Jesus begins to respond. Her faith is that foundation that he is speaking to.

Help me. You'll recall there are others in the New Testament. There is the man who says, Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief.

And Jesus moves and works in that sphere, doesn't he? To bring the help that is necessary and the strength that is necessary and the touch that is necessary. Faith. Persevering in faith.

Dr. E. V. Hill, great big black preacher, used to be on the Billy Graham Board. And when he was young, one of a family of eight, his mother couldn't feed them all. So one day after church, he went home with another lady whom he called his mama.

And she was a praying, believing woman. And when he finished grade nine, they said, well, Ed will be able to go to work now and look after you. And she said, no, he's going to finish grade 12.

And when he finished grade 12, they said, great, now he'll look after you. And then she said, no, Ed's going to Bible school. And I dearly love this story because it so fits with exactly what we see here.

He went to Bible school and on the bus on the way, he bought a burger and fries. So when he got there, he had a dollar and 80 cents. And it said first semester fees, \$180.

And E. V. Hill got in line. Would you? Now you're sitting beside your wife, so be truthful this morning, pastor. Would you? It'd be tough.

Would I? I don't know. That's a true answer. Would we? We don't know.

But as he stayed in the line, he got beat up because faith is always tested. It was as if there was a voice whispering in his ear, get out of that slang. You haven't got \$180.

But he stayed in line. And when he came to the cashier and there was just him and her, suddenly he felt a hand on his shoulder. And the man said to him, have you finished paying yet? And E. V. Hill, as only E. V. could said, not quite.

And the man said, good, because your four years here is all paid for. And to the day that he died and went home to be with Jesus, he never knew on this side who it was that paid the bill. All he knew was that faith that is tried in perseverance is rewarded by the master.

And that's, again, what we see in the life of this woman, this mother, as she is helping her child. There is that sense of just trusting in him. And let's look and consider the Savior in our text.

Notice with me, Jesus never says to her, stop. We get tired asking before he gets tired of listening. We get discouraged to the place of quitting before he stops listening.

He never once said stop. I love it, don't you? Now you think about your needs and mine this morning, whether we're parents or single people or whatever, we face sometimes incredible challenges, sometimes overwhelming sort of odds and things. And think about what we see in this text.

Is there not every reason for us to press on and to press on into the heart of the Lord Jesus? He never told her, don't you call out to me anymore? And he responds when she says, Lord, help me. But would you

also notice that when he says, it's not right for me to give the children's food to the dogs, how does she react? She agrees with him. This is not an Irish woman.

Don't you think if that statement was made to you or me that we would respond and say, well, if you're going to be like that about it, I'm out of here. Go find somebody else. We'll get another answer.

There'll be another way. But this lady doesn't do that. Instead, she says, true.

What did she just do? She agreed with Jesus. It's true. That's right.

What you say, Lord, is right. What is the biggest obstacle that stops people from coming to Jesus? Pride. And you see, if I agreed with Jesus, I would have to admit that I am a, yeah, I'm so proud of you.

I could hear it coming out there. A few people were right along with me. Sinner.

And this word seems to bother us for some reason. And yet the apostle Paul, as he writes to Timothy, says this, I am the chief of sinners. You see, he knew what old John Newton did just before John Newton, the man who wrote Amazing Grace.

This is what he said. They said to him, do you have anything to say? He said, only two things I remember. I am a great sinner, and Jesus is a great Savior.

You see it? As she agrees with Master. What does that tell us about this woman? That her heart and his were in agreement. She was saying, God, I don't deserve this.

My child doesn't deserve that touch. It's true. We're not worthy of the bread that's on the table.

Wow. Wow. What a position.

What a place to be in before the Lord. No wonder that we see the moving and working that we see. When our desire is right and unselfish.

When we see Christ alone as the source of our supply. I'm hoping to get a little tax refund. And I was moaning to myself on Friday, hasn't come.

Maybe Canada Post had thought. No, couldn't be. That's not the problem.

You see, what we have comes from him. It's not our ability, not our smarts, not our work. It's about him as the source of supply.

And when our hearts seek his glory, I cannot help but wonder what the disciples might have thought after that day. I cannot help but wonder as they walked away what they must have thought of the Word of God. Did she actually see the miracle? No.

She was there looking at the miracle worker. But she had his word. His very word.

He could not deny her faith in him. He says, great is your faith. I thank God for women and men and young people and boys and girls in whom God has placed great faith.

I thank God today that I can think back to a mother who believed for the impossible even when her second son was a criminal and far away from God. In the tough times, would you just remember one little thing

from this small message this morning? Victory will come. Persevere.

Persevere. I have an old friend who's long gone to be with Jesus who had the Victoria Cross for valor. That's Britain's highest military honor.

I said, why did you, how did you get it? What did you get it for? He said, well, in the Korean War, we were surrounded and nowhere to go and no ammunition. And our colonel said, fix bayonets. And the guys looked at him and said, you mean we're giving up? We're going to run? He said, no, we're surrounded.

So we're just going to attack in a different direction. He got that Victoria Cross for perseverance. Perseverance.

Friends, isn't it interesting when she says to Jesus, just a crumb. Just a crumb. Don't we see that all the way through Scripture as well? Just a crumb.

If I can just touch the hem of his garment, it's all I need. If, Lord, there's just a crumb, it'll be enough. Jesus taught about the mustard seed, the smallest of all seed, and yet it's enough.

It grows much bigger. He did not go to her daughter's presence, but he healed her daughter. Let me just move us to consider the life application.

And it is just as good today as it was for this lady when she stood before the Lord Jesus those years ago. Our prayers for our family are not always instantly answered, are they? Sometimes there is a journey that we go through that we would not desire were we the one in charge. Our faith will be tested, but we need to learn to persevere.

Who is it that enables us to persevere in the tough times? It's the Lord. It's the Spirit of the living God. It's that indwelling Holy Spirit who picks us up.

I'm reading through Ezekiel in my personal devotions just now, and I'm again amazed at how many times it says, and the Spirit of the Lord lifted me up. Am I speaking to someone this morning, and there's discouragement, and there's a lot of stuff going on, and there's a lot of unanswered prayers. Could I say to you today, just come to the Lord who is able to fill us with his Holy Spirit and lift us up? Our lesson from this mother is that faith placed in Jesus Christ will be rewarded, and we know that's true both here and in eternity as well.

We cannot be passive about some things. What would happen if this woman, when she heard, it's not right to give the food from the table to the dogs. What would happen if she just said, well, I guess that's the answer.

I guess we'll just leave it there. Isn't that so often our human reaction? But as she presses on, Jesus in effect is saying to her, you have whatever you want. You have whatever you want.

Brad, how long would the list be if Jesus said to you this morning, you have whatever you want? Yeah, this is it, isn't it? Just look at this incident. Consider it. Think about the issues of life, the things that we so easily and readily let go of and give up on.

That husband who doesn't know Christ, that son, that daughter who've walked away from the faith, that health issue that just will not let go, that discouragement that seems taller than the mountains, but she persevered. Great is your faith. On this Mother's Day, could I just finish with this simple little thought? She

just had his word.

Don't you and I? Isn't it sufficient to trust in them? Are not his promises just as strong today as they ever were? But do we not often need that gentle reminder? I haven't changed my mind. I'll still honor my word. And again, there's every reason for us just to bathe in it and to hold on to it and to trust in it.

Some of the promises of God linger over the years, don't they? But they're still his promise, and he'll still fulfill them. Father, we want to stop and thank you for your word on this Mother's Day Sunday. Thank you for this one who was willing to persevere, willing to trust you beyond her circumstances, willing to press on even when there seemed to be nowhere to go except to you.

And Lord, like this lady, we want to come this morning, and as we're bowed in prayer before you, you know the issues of all of our hearts. Everything is open before you. You know the great needs that sometimes overwhelm us.

Father, like this lady this morning, we cry out to you, Lord, help me. Help us. We will trust you regardless of what this world says, regardless of what discouragement, even those who should know better, bring our way.

We will trust you. Help us, Father, to grow in faith, in grace, and in knowledge of who you are and how you meet us, rock of ages, cleft for me. Let us, Lord, hide ourselves in thee.

For Jesus' sake, we ask in God's people's sin. Amen.

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