

A Message for Moms on Mother's Day
Matthew 15:21-28

1. Intent on Mother's Day

a. How to be a mom in 2017:

- i. Make sure your children's academic, emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual, physical, nutritional, and social needs are met while being careful not to overstimulate, understimulate, improperly medicate, helicopter, or neglect them in a screen-free, processed-foods free, GMO-free, negative-energy free, plastic free, body positive, socially conscious, egalitarian but also authoritative, nurturing but fostering of independence, gentle but not overly permissive, pesticide-free two story, multi-lingual home preferably in a cul-de-sac with a backyard and 1.5 siblings spaced at least two years apart for proper development, and, don't forget the coconut oil.
- ii. How to be a mom in literally every generation before ours: feed them sometimes.

b. Occasionally the advice is not much better in church:

- i. Pastor's standing before millions of women and wanting to be helpful
- ii. urging to fulfill some set of biblical life altering criteria that will lead to adult parental sainthood

c. Rachel at "Finding Joy" - *When Mothers' Day Hurts Just A Bit*

- i. "I think it hurts because sometimes it creates this illusion of moms and motherhood and life that seems unattainable or perfect. It's full of white sandals, kids with combed and parted hair, brunches, families, and tulips carried inside. Or at least that's what we sometimes see. There are glowing cards and chocolate fountains and rose stands set up on the side of the road. There are pictures of families that are happy, without financial worries, and kids that make the cutest handmade cards.
- ii. But real motherhood? Real life?
 - (1) It so often doesn't look like that.
 - (2) Real life has rebellious kids, fighting parents, divorce, no money for brunch much less a card, rainy days, unmet expectations, miscarriages, infertility, children that are sick, and on and on and on and on.
 - (3) Those things don't work their way onto a card very well and there aren't that many roses for the mom in the midst of those kind of journeys. Those are the things that could pick at the joy, the little things in motherhood that truly matter.

d. Today

- i. Move away from longings for perfection and statements of unrealistic expectations, regardless of how firmly grounded those expectations might be in the grace of God in His word
- ii. And rather than lay out a bunch ideals for you to live up to, I just want to share a few words of encouragement for moms on Mothers' Day from a woman who knew exactly how hard it can be sometimes to bring Godward love and mother-love to the same meeting.

2. Matthew 15:21-28 The Syro-Phoenician (Canaanite) Mother

a. Read the Passage

b. Layout meaning in context

- i. Before I share with you the message for moms from the mother in this passage, I want you to be sure to understand what this passage is really all about.
 - (1) Meaning before application
 - (2) This passage is not primarily about moms or for mothers in particular
 - (3) This passage is about Jesus, misconceptions, and the love of God for all people.
- ii. What's happening in the passage?
 - (1) Jesus has been ministering to people in the eastern shore of the sea of Galilee.
 - (2) Jesus travels back, above the northern boundary of the area of Palestine understood be Israelite/Jewish. (From Saul St Marie to Thunder Bay)
 - (3) A woman who is a resident/citizen of the region comes crying to Jesus with a request.
 - (a) This woman is not just a woman in distress; she is a mother in distress.
 - (b) She is desperate for her daughter.
 - (i) Her daughter is severely oppressed by a demon
 - (ii) I have seen this desperation before, in Haiti, when a mother and grandfather brought a demon possessed girl into a service where I was preaching.
 - (iii) I have seen that mixture of terror and hope in the eyes of someone desperate enough to ignore convention for hope of receiving help for a child.
 - (4) Jesus ignores the woman.
 - (a) He did not answer her so much as a word.
 - (b) Given that the disciples ask Jesus to send her away because she is following them and crying out, it appears that Jesus turns his back on her and keeps on walking!
 - (5) Jesus does not ignore His disciples
 - (a) Disciples complain that the woman is causing a scene and annoying them.
 - (b) Their complaint does not even register in the same ballpark as her complaint, but Jesus answers them while still ignoring her.
 - (c) Jesus says, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."
 - (i) I believe this is where a lot of people get messed up when they try to figure out what is happening here and what this passage means.
 - (ii) People think Jesus is sharing a personal truth with his disciples, that He is teaching them something they don't know, but I don't think so.
 - (d) I think Jesus is simply reflecting an attitude, a wrong attitude, his disciples already embrace
 - (i) What they have already heard about Messiah, the Son of

David.

- 1) Messiah will be thoroughly Jewish from the line of David
 - 2) Messiah will restore the nation of Israel
 - 3) Messiah will help the Jews find their place in the world again
- (ii) I think Jesus is setting up his disciples to learn an extremely valuable lesson about Himself and about God and this woman with her request is giving Him the perfect opportunity to make a point they will one day not forget.
- (6) They have just come from doing ministry in non-Jewish territory.
- (a) They are currently wandering through non-Jewish territory.
 - (b) Suppose I said to my Sunday school class, “God only sent me to minister to the lost people south of the Mason-Dixon line,” wouldn’t you expect someone to say, “Ok. What are you doing here?”
- (7) The woman catches up falls to her knees and begs
- (a) “Lord, help me.”
 - (b) Purest intercession
 - (c) Love poured out in hope, hope poured out in faith, faith poured out in action.
- (8) Jesus quotes a common cultural proverb that points out the value and priority of children to parents
- (a) “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”
 - (i) No need for offense
 - (ii) Of course it isn’t right!
 - 1) Jesus is not calling the woman a dog
 - 2) Jesus offers the conventional wisdom as an answer because, I believe, He intends to counter cultural assumptions with divine truth.
 - (b) Jesus is teaching his disciples that their idea the Messiah comes only for the benefit of Israel is inadequate and shortsighted, not to mention, loveless
- (9) The woman responds with faith not offense
- (a) Accepts the value of proverb but in faith adds the equally true value of compassion
 - (b) Even if God’s grace is preferred or intended solely for Israel, as the disciples might surmise, God who is compassionate and merciful would not withhold a little overflow from anyone who needs it any more than a human master would deny crumbs to the family pet.
 - (c) She understands who God is and how God is!
 - (i) The disciples don’t get God
 - (ii) But she does!
- (10) Jesus acknowledges her faith and sends her home to a healthy, healed

daughter.

- (a) On the basis of faith the woman experiences the mercy of God
- (b) It is not ethnicity or religious history that opens the door to God's mercy; it is faith.
- (c) **God moves with covenant love on behalf of all who come to Him in faith.**

3. Message for Moms on Mothers' Day

a. God doesn't play favorites.

i. Ephesians 2:11-22 (19)

- (1) Gentiles once "far away, without God and without hope in the world"
- (2) "Now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near"
- (3) v. 19 ***"So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God . . .***

ii. God loves His children equally, fully, completely, and when you come to Him in faith you will find you will find his arms and heart wide open to you

b. Expect God to make the most of your life experience for His glory.

- i. God does not waste sorrows or dismiss joys.
- ii. Man born blind: not because of sin but that God might be glorified in Christ

c. Don't let lesser authorities keep you from Jesus.

- i. They present obstacles but Jesus calls you in
 - (1) Blind Bartemaus: Hush and leave Jesus alone; Jesus called him to him.
 - (2) Parents with Children: Take the children away. Jesus: suffer the little children to come unto me
- ii. Sometimes our own fear would keep us separate
 - (1) Woman with the issue of blood
 - (2) Jesus still calls her to himself for her sake
- iii. Misplaced pride can present obstacles
 - (1) Paul: persecuted the church as if protecting God
 - (2) Christ stopped in him in his tracks to remove pride as an obstacles to relationship
- iv. Bring your cares, your troubles, your sickness, your heart

d. Faith is the key to the storehouse of love.

- i. **Heb 11:6 *Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.***
- ii. Come to God in faith this morning
 - (1) Bring your need
 - (2) Bring your heart
 - (3) Find His compassion