

Seven Crumbs from the Master's Table

Matthew 15:21-28

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

Nine months of nerve-racking mood swings, cravings for weird food combinations, a bladder that never stops flowing, constant back aches, swollen ankles and overall general fatigue become but a distant memory the moment you held your bundle of joy in your arms for the very first time. Gazing into those beautiful eyes you could not help but feel incredible love and see many blissful futures for your son or daughter and yet this euphoria of happiness soon dissipates



with night feedings, mending busted knees, bullying incidents, dealing with utter defiance, friends from the wrong side of the track, and your child's romantic adventures that while seem quite grand to them just keep you up late at night! In light of the trials and tribulations of parenthood that you go through you can't help but wonder, am I truly a good mother to the children God has given me? When you read the stories of Jochebed who had the wisdom to put her son Moses in a basket and then later nurse him for his adopted mother, Hannah who dedicated her child to the Lord, Elizabeth who

believed in miracles, and Mary who listened and believed the angel who told her the Holy Ghost had impregnated her with Son of God; you can't help but be inspired that being a good mom might not be out of your reach! In today's sermon we are going to review another of these great mothers in the Bible, a Canaanite woman,¹ who despite us not knowing her full identity has become a model mother of faith that is still talked about today! From her story in Matthew 15:21-28 we are going to learn that the key to being a good mom is: out of one's unworthiness and tribulations cry out to the Master for mercy and when opposition comes have the unsurmountable faith to do what God asks with the assurance that He who gave you your child will teach you how to rightly raise your child!

¹ I use the term "Canaanite woman" frequently throughout this sermon but please hear me when I say that I mean no disrespect to the opposite sex but merely am using a phrase given to me in the Bible. I honestly believe at the foot of the cross the ground is level and God loves and adopts into His family both men and women with equal and wonderful roles to play in His kingdom!

A Humble Attitude of Unworthiness and Redemption

Verse 21 begins by stating that the background of this incredible story occurred in the region of Tyre and Sidon. This journey was significant for not only would it have taken several months to complete² but its inhabitants³ were primarily unclean Gentiles!⁴ The purpose of Jesus'



visit to the Gentile region was unlikely evangelism, as verse 24 makes plain, but to retreat from the pressures of controversy and popularity experienced in Galilee.⁵ Despite being outside of the covenantal promise⁶ and a direct enemy of God's chosen people,⁷ a Canaanite woman purposely choose not to seek Eshmun, her nation's god of healing,⁸ but goes out to meet Jesus seeking a cure for her daughter.⁹ This brings me to my first suggestion in being a good mom.

Crumb #1. While there are many sources of advice on how to raise your child, they pale in comparison to the Lord who knit your child in your womb and knows everything about them (Psalms 139)!

When you approach His throne of grace for such advice never forget that while you are unclean by your own merit (Ephesians 2:8-9), by your humility and faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ¹⁰ you can boldly knock on His door, enter (Matthew 7:7-8) and be taught by your Creator

² Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 401.

³ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 288.

⁴ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 287.

⁵ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 249.

⁶ James Smith and Robert Lee, *Handfuls on Purpose for Christian Workers and Bible Students, Series I-XIII*, five-volume edition., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 160.

⁷ D. A. Carson, "[Matthew](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 354.

⁸ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 539.

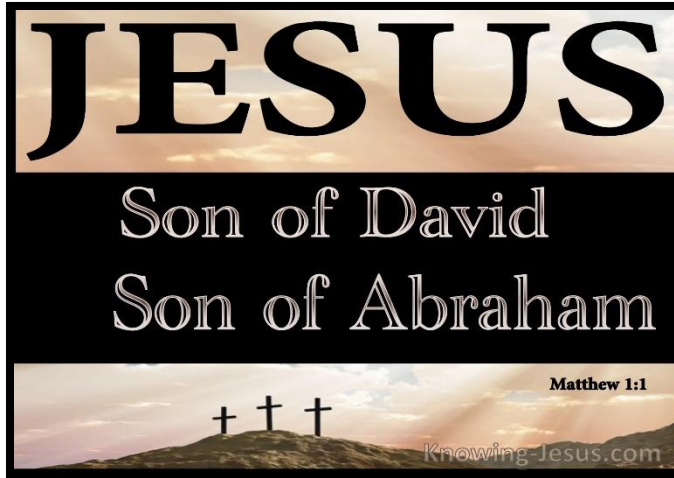
⁹ D. A. Carson, "[Matthew](#)," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 354.

¹⁰ James Montgomery Boice, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 288.

how to rightly raise the children He has given you! This of course will not happen in pride or in a sense of entitlement but in humble submission and thanksgiving in one's heart!

A Cry for Mercy

As she got closer to Jesus this Canaanite woman kept cried out “Son of David, have mercy on me for my daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly!” (verse 22). Whether or not she had already accepted Jesus as her Messiah¹¹ or not is not known but what we can be certain of is she had faith Jesus was able to heal her child!¹² Mom I know you have your own “horror stories” to tell concerning child raising but can you think of any worse situation for a child than to be possessed by evil spirits? Yet this Canaanite did not give up hope but had “great faith” that despite being outside the covenant of promise the Lord would hear her cries and consider doing what she could not do ... heal her child! This brings me to my second suggestion in being a good mom.



Crumb #2. No matter how bleak your child rearing experience is or how lost you are right now, cry out to Jesus, for the Great Physician is near to all those who call upon Him (Psalms 145:18).

While your request for healing, even if given in faith, will not always result in healing (1 John 5:14), you can be rest assured that God will draw nearer to you in your time of need (James 4:8) and give you the way to handle your child that is right and a sweet fragrance unto Him! And if your child is like this Canaanite woman and has been possessed by this world, never stop praying that he/she might recognize Christ's atoning “pity,”¹³ bow a knee to the only one who can cast out his/her demons and take up residence in his/her heart!

¹¹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 402.

¹² D. A. Carson, “[Matthew](#),” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 354.

¹³ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 401–402.

Facing the Difficulties: Unanswered Prayers

Despite repeatedly crying out for help in her desperate time of need we are told that the Canaanite woman initially received only silence from the Lord!¹⁴ This brings me to my third suggestion in being a good mom.

Crumb #3. Never stop crying out for a merciful intervention for your child! Never stop asking for mercy for the moment you “secure His mercy you have lifted the sluice for the outflowing of infinite blessings.”¹⁵

To the church of Philippi Apostle Paul gave the following advice: “do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests



to God” (4:6). While the Canaanite woman could have easily believed the silence, she had received from Christ was a solid “NO” she never stopped crying out “Son of David have mercy on me” and to her delight was granting the healing of her daughter! If you want to be a really good mom, that is God fearing one, then pray without ceasing with the joyful acknowledgement that while silence can be a “NO you chose not to hear or accept,” more often it is a YES waiting to be told once perseverance has taken its course and faith strengthened

(James 1:2-4).¹⁶ And even when your prayers go unanswered for many years don’t let that get you down but instead read about Simeon who waited a life time before his prayer to see Christ was fulfilled (Luke 2:25-32) and rejoice in His perfect and righteous time He will answer your prayers too!

Facing the Difficulties: Opposition

Not only was Jesus silent to her request but being motivated by the desire to no longer hear her voice the disciples asked Jesus “to send her away, for she keeps crying out after us”

¹⁴ James Smith and Robert Lee, [*Handfuls on Purpose for Christian Workers and Bible Students, Series I–XIII*](#), five-volume edition., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 161.

¹⁵ James Smith and Robert Lee, [*Handfuls on Purpose for Christian Workers and Bible Students, Series I–XIII*](#), five-volume edition., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 161.

¹⁶ James Montgomery Boice, [*The Gospel of Matthew*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 289.



(verse 23). While it is possible that the disciples wanted Jesus to first heal the woman before sending her away¹⁷ it is more likely the disciples remembered Jesus' directive he told them and now repeated to the Canaanite woman "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (verse 24).¹⁸ Between the initial silence, the surliness of the disciples and Jesus' rejection of her request because she was not part of the covenant people of God Israel, opposition to her request could not have been greater. This brings me to my fourth suggestion in being a good mom.

Crumb #4. If you want to raise your children in God's ways, be ready to face fierce opposition by standing on the Rock of your salvation.

Mom, while the tribulations that God allows happen to you to test your faith might feel like opposition, it is the demons and the principalities of this world that are often the source of your child rearing difficulties (Ephesians 6:12). The more you teach your child about God the more the Light of your message will shine into the darkness of this world, offend and invite their prosecution (John 3:20; 15:18-25). While the evil one's attacks can be fierce (1 Peter 5:8) never forget that greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)!

Staying the Course

Despite the fierce opposition instead of giving up the Canaanite woman humbly came before whom she likely saw as her Master and said a single but provocative phrase "Lord help me!"¹⁹ Her deep reverence she had for Christ would not be easily swayed by a single "NO!"²⁰ This brings me to my fifth suggestion in being a good mom.

¹⁷ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 249.

¹⁸ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 539.

¹⁹ James Smith and Robert Lee, *Handfuls on Purpose for Christian Workers and Bible Students, Series I-XIII*, five-volume edition., vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), 161.

²⁰ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 404.

Crumb #5. Despite the opposition or the bleak circumstances your child might be going through stay on the righteous path and persistently and humbly keep on asking God for aid and wisdom to raise your child in a manner that pleases Him!

Do not become so busy and self-confident²¹ that you stop praying for the absolute best of God's discipleship and spiritual blessings in your child's life! When your answer to prayer is silence



read how the widow through her persistence got justice from the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8. When you have no idea how to best help your child ask God and if you believe and do not doubt you shall receive from the Master bread that can fill the soul (James 1:5-8).

While your child does not come with an “earthly” manual on how best to raise him/her do not forget you have access not only to the Creator's instruction manual that has much to say about child rearing, but also to the Spirit of truth who knows the deepest things of both you and your child's very soul. If you

rely on God by reading His word and persistently ask for His help in raising the children God gave you then you will one day hear the words “you were a great parent to the children, I gave you!”

Unworthy and yet Justified

Since Jesus was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel, he responded to the Canaanite woman's request for help by stating, “it would not be right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs” (verse 26). While dogs in the Old Testament were often scavenging and predatory, there were also working dogs who had a minor place in the extended family²² but even then not fed at the expense of the children going without food!²³ Since “dogs” in the Old Testament was a Jewish term of abuse for Gentiles,²⁴ Jesus was in essence suggesting that Gentiles, who were

²¹ James Montgomery Boice, [*The Gospel of Matthew*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001), 291.

²² Leon Morris, [*The Gospel according to Matthew*](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 404.

²³ John Nolland, [*The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 634.

²⁴ R. T. France, [*Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 250.



not part of the covenant promise (1 Samuel 17:43; Psalms 22:16; Proverbs 26:11),²⁵ had no rights to receive aid from the Master.²⁶ To His argument the Canaanite woman, who I believe had already acknowledged Jesus as her Messiah by calling Him “Son of David,” said even the dogs had a caring relationship with their master²⁷ and as such “eat crumbs from their table” (verse 27)! This brings me to my sixth suggestion in being a good mom.

Crumb #6. While you are not worthy to approach God’s throne of grace, through your belief in the atoning sacrifice of His Son you can do so boldly because you are an heir of His family!

While you must never forget it was by grace and faith you were saved (Ephesians 2:8-9) neither should you see yourself as a “Gentile dog” to be starved at the Master’s table. You are a redeemed masterpiece of God’s grace, grafted into the vine with all the honor and privileges of being a son or daughter of your Lord, Savior and King (John 15:1-11; Galatians 4:7)! So, like the Canaanite woman bow exceptionally low in deep reverence when you make your request known to God but do so with the glorious expectation that God will always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28)!

Unsurmountable Faith

What happened next in this story truly has solidified this nameless Canaanite woman forever into the canals of history and our hearts! You see when Jesus used the term “dog” to mean all Gentiles He was not doing so to degrade or exclude them from His kingdom, for He truly died once and for all (Romans 6:10), but “with compassion in His eyes that robbed His words of any perceived insult and bitterness”²⁸ Christ was merely testing the woman’s faith! Jesus was her Messiah and even if she was yet to be in the covenant her Master was more than powerful, loving and kind enough to grant her food in the form of a spiritual victory over the

²⁵ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 539.

²⁶ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 635.

²⁷ Michael J. Wilkins, *Matthew*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004), 540.

²⁸ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: W.B. Eerdmans; Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 405.

demons who ravaged her daughters mind and body! This brings me to my seventh and final suggestion in being a good mom.

Crumb #7. Have faith that Christ can teach you how to raise your child in a manner that is holy and pleasing in His sight!



Mom you will go through trials and tribulations that will ravage and torment your soul. There will be many times, especially when your child is defiant or physically ill, that you will not know how to be a good parent. When this happens bow low and in reverence an awe, not as one entitled but as one grace filled, look up and in faith ask for a crumb from the Master's table. Not all prayer requests will be answered with a YES or in the manner you might like but whatever answer you receive will be beneficial if embraced in faith. Like the Canaanite woman may your

epitaph from God one day read "woman you have great faith," welcome home!