

God's Love for Women

Jesus and Mothers

Part 4

Introduction

Wherever Jesus went, we find Him meeting the needs of people, compassionately and without condemnation. Many of them were women. In this lesson we're going to see how Jesus related to the very special needs of mothers.

Our Study

The Scripture: Matthew 15: 22-28

"A Canaanite woman...came to him, crying out, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession... [Jesus] answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel... It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.' 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

1. Briefly summarize this story. _____

The Canaanites were ancient enemies of the Jews. In the early days of Jewish history they were one of the many heathen peoples that lived in the Promised Land. Although Jesus knew He had been sent to the Jews for this particular time, He had ministered to individual Gentiles. Probably, in this case, Jesus was testing the woman.

2. What was the analogy Jesus gave her? _____

The Jews considered the heathens as "dogs", and by her response this woman shows she clearly understood Jesus' meaning.

3. What was her response? _____

In her mother love, this heathen woman was not going to be turned away by apparent insults and rejection. There was something about Jesus that caused her to believe that this man sent from God had something for her, too.

4. How did Jesus respond to her insistence? _____

5. What does scripture tell us was the result? _____

Her daughter was immediately healed!

Of the few people Jesus commended for their faith, two were heathens - this woman and the Roman centurion. Jesus seemed to be constantly amazed at the lack of faith exhibited by His own people - the very people who had reason to have faith.

To me, the most important lesson to be learned here is the fact that Jesus personally set up the obstacle to the woman's receiving her request. When she overcame that obstacle, He granted her request. He is teaching us to persist in the face of obstacles - they are one way our faith is tested.

The Scripture: Luke 7:11-15

"As Jesus approached the town gate (of Nain), a dead person was being carried out - the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her and He said, 'Don't cry.' Then He went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, 'Young man, I say to you, get up!' The dead man sat up and began to talk and Jesus gave him back to his mother."

6. Briefly summarize this story. _____

This story in particular illustrates Jesus' compassionate heart towards the needs of mothers and widows. In the time of Jesus, life was desperately hard for a widow with no sons to protect and provide for her. More than likely, this woman would have had to sell herself as a bond servant to pay her bills and just barely survive.

7. Jesus not only brought this young man back to life, but He _____

Whenever we read about instances in the Bible in which father came to the Lord on behalf of their children, we need to remember that this was at least partly due to the cultural patterns of that day. In most - not all - instances we can be sure that there was a mother waiting in anguish and hope back at home.

The Scripture: Luke 8:40-42

"A man named Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with Him to come to his home because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying."

8. Who came to Jesus? _____

9. Why had he come? _____

The Scripture: Luke 8: 49-56

"Someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. 'Your daughter is dead,' he said. Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, 'Don't be afraid, just believe, and she will be healed.'"

10. What message came to Jairus? _____

11. What did Jesus tell Jairus? _____

Jesus, along with Peter, John and James and the child's parents went to Jairus' house. Many wailers were there and Jesus told them to stop wailing.

The Scripture: Luke 8: 52-59

"Jesus said, 'She is not dead but asleep... He took her by the hand and said, 'My child, get up!' Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat."

12. What did Jesus say? _____

13. What did He do? _____

14. What happened? _____

15. This is the healing of the rabbi's daughter told from the father's viewpoint. Now using your imagination, tell this story from the mother's viewpoint. _____

How compassionately Jesus acted toward this family. What a picture this paints of Jesus, and of God, whose loving concern for our children is greater than our own. The word translated "child" here, actually means "little lamb" in Aramaic.

What is the grief or sorrow you carry as a parent? Perhaps your child is sick - perhaps, rebellious. Can anyone understand your particular grief or temptation to despair? Jesus can. How do we know this?

The Scripture: Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet without sin."

16. What is our high priest (Jesus) able to do? _____

17. What has happened to Him? _____

If we will search the Scriptures, we find Jesus undergoing rejection, ridicule, shame, humility - He has suffered it all.

Who understands a parent's heart better than God? God is at heart a father, and as a father, He has known the sufferings and anguish every parent knows.

Scripture has many promises for parents.

18. Paraphrase the promise in each of these scriptures:

"I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread... their children will be blessed." (Ps. 37:25-26). _____

"From everlasting to everlasting, the Lord's love is with those who fear Him and His righteousness with their children's children." (Ps. 103:17-18) _____

"Blessed is the man who fears the Lord and finds great delight in His commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed." (Ps. 112: 1-2) _____

"He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge." (Prov. 14:26) _____

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Prov. 6)_____

In our theology we are inclined to limit God to the masculine image that we know in our own society. This is essentially what we call the "macho" male, devoid of tenderness and compassion. Yet in Scripture, we find God depicted by images we might consider feminine today - images of caring and nourishing.

The Scripture: Matthew 23:37

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings."

19. To what does Jesus compare Himself?_____

The Scripture: Genesis 1:1, 2

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty; darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

20. What is the verb used to describe the action of the Holy Spirit?_____

Different versions of the Bible translate the word hovering as brooding, another term used to describe a hen as she sits patiently, yet expectantly, waiting for her eggs to hatch.

The God we worship is a caring, compassionate, gentle, nourishing God. Because of the mistaken and limited concepts of masculinity and femininity in our culture, we must be careful lest we mistakenly believe that God cannot/does not understand a mother's heart. He is the One who gave her that heart.

The Answers

1. Your summary
2. It was not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.
3. That even dogs ate the crumbs from under their master's table
4. She had great faith.
5. Her daughter was healed at that very hour.
6. Your summary
7. Gave him back to his mother
8. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue
9. To beg Jesus to heal his only daughter, a girl of about 12, who was dying
10. That his daughter was dead
11. To believe and she would be healed
12. That the girl was not dead, but asleep
13. He took her by the hand told her to get up.
14. Her spirit returned and she stood up.
15. Your summary
16. Sympathize with our weaknesses
17. He was tempted in every way and did not sin.
18. Your answers
19. A mother hen who longs to gather her chicks under her wings
20. Hovering

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