

Weekly Word

May 19, 2008

By Mary Ruth Stone

Devotion

Mothers in the Bible:

The Syrophenician Woman

Jesus had a strange encounter with a Gentile woman whose daughter was in great need. This mother was obviously desperate. She came toward the entourage of Jesus crying out to Him on behalf of her daughter who was “. . . severely demon-possessed . . .” (verse 22). Interestingly, she petitioned Him with a very Jewish-sounding prayer. She called him, “Lord,” and addressed Him as a “Son of David.” That was unusual for a Canaanite woman.

The disciples were irritated and impatient. They asked Jesus to send her away. He did not send her away, but He answered her with a statement that would have caused a less tenacious person to leave. He said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (verse 24). Instead of leaving, however, she drew closer and worshiped Him, finally crying out in desperation, “Lord, help me!” (verse 25). She discarded her prepared prayer and let the raw emotions of her mother’s heart spill out for all to hear—*help!*

Knowing the compassionate heart of Jesus, His next words are surprising. “But He answered and said, ‘It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs’” (verse 26). Was He calling her a dog? That is doubtful. Perhaps He had discerned the depths of her psyche and understood her true self-concept. Perhaps she had accepted the Pharisaical teaching that Gentiles were *dogs*. Perhaps she felt worthless and a failure as a mother. Once Jesus mentioned *dogs*, she knew He understood her deepest misgivings. She had nothing to lose and humbled herself completely. She replied: “True, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table” (verse 27). She would settle for a crumb if it came from the right table. Her faith was rewarded, and her daughter was healed.

Mother, are you desperate for your child’s physical or spiritual healing? Come to the Master’s table. He has a miraculous *crumb* for you!

Scripture

“Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, help me!’”
(Matthew 15:25).

This 'n That

“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.”
— Jesus in Matthew 15:28

“Worry accuses God of neglect. Trust remembers God’s abundance.”
— Anna Britt Chole

“I believe joy can be discovered right here in the midst of real—even raw—life.”
— Anna Britt Chole

Prayer

Lord,

Help me to trust You with my most precious gifts—the children and grandchildren You have given. Amen.

Trusting Him,
Mary Ruth