

Tenacious Mom - Mark 7:24-30

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[0:00] You know, I was thinking about qualities of a mother, of a good mother this week. I was thinking about, you know, just the unconditional love that they show.!

Mothers are very supportive, always very supportive, and of course very loving. But what about tenacious? What about the word tenacious?

Is that a good word to describe mothers? Webster defines the word tenacious as persistent in maintaining, adhering to, or seeking something valued or desired.

Tenacious. Tenacious. My mom was tenacious. She was tenacious at protecting her kids. The story, when I was about 10 or 11, and friends of mine and I were out playing on the street, you know, and had our bikes, there were like six or seven of us.

And my mom happened to be standing on the stoop of our house, and the neighbor lady was standing on the stoop of her house, and I was being accused of something.

[1:31] I don't know what it was. I probably was guilty. I don't know. But I was defending myself anyway. So I'm defending myself. And, you know, the houses, I grew up in suburban Milwaukee, Brookfield, Wisconsin.

Houses were spread apart but not too spread apart. And so I was kind of defending myself. And all of a sudden the neighbor lady says, oh, that's it, Johnny.

Tell another one. To which my mom responded, oh, you shut up, you old bag.

Just shocked the whole neighborhood. It's unbelievable. Unbelievable. Tenacious. And she's that way protecting her grandkids as well.

So we were, you know what I'm going to share. We were at a parade. This was after Kathy and I had Tyler, you know, and he was, I think, what was he, one or nine months or something?

[2:34] Just a baby. And so we had him sitting on a blanket, and we're at a parade, and my mom's there. And this little kid, maybe a seven-year-old girl, comes up, and she's right kind of in the way of something.

I don't know if they were handing out candy or what. But my mom literally shoves her to the ground. Boom. Shoves her to the ground. A seven-year-old, six-year-old kid. We're all like, you know, nobody's, you know, like, what do you do, you know?

Tenacious. Yeah. Amazing. Today we're going to talk about another mom who's characterized by her tenacity. So we've been continuing through the Gospel of John.

I like to remind everybody, the word gospel, what does that mean? Good news, right? But it's not just good news. It's awesome news. It's incredible news.

It's amazing news. And it's illogical news. It's illogical because it's about what God did for us. Every other religion, it's about what you've got to do to try to appease a god, a deity.

[3:43] Christianity is all about what God did in sending his son Jesus to come to the planet, to live a perfect life, to die on the cross for our sins, and to be raised to life.

He did it all for us. It's illogical. It's awesome news, incredible news. So we've been learning more about that, going through the Gospel of Mark, the good news of Mark. And he's been revealing more and more of the Gospel as we go through each paragraph.

So today we're actually going to jump ahead to the middle of Chapter 7. The reason for that is there's a story about a mom there. And we felt it was appropriate. I actually got permission from my co-pastors to jump ahead and do this.

And so that's what we're going to do today. All right. Well, okay, so in the context here, we're going to be starting in Chapter 7, verse 24.

And Jesus is trying to get away from it all, Jesus and the disciples. Now, he's got to have time to teach his disciples. He needs a break. He's been undergoing some stresses.

[4 : 50] You know, he went to his hometown and he was rejected in his hometown just a chapter ago. He's been being harassed by the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes over a number of things.

Most recently over ceremonial washing just happened. And then Herod is taking notice of him as well. So he needs to get away. And so he decides to get out of Dodge, literally get out of Galena and head away from all this and try to get some time alone.

All right. So, again, we're starting in Chapter 7, verse 24. You know, he's been primarily ministering to Jews up until this point.

And he's actually getting out of the Jewish territory into some Greek or Gentile territory, mostly Gentile territory.

So, all right. Okay. So this is mostly a non-Jewish territory. It's a non-religious, or if you could say religious, it's godless religion that they have there.

[5 : 59] So that's where he's going. You know, maybe there we can get some rest is kind of what he's thinking. Well, it doesn't work out too well for him. So, at least as far as getting rest.

So, let's see if this is working. This guy's off yet, huh? All right. Okay. So why don't we read it together? It's Mark Chapter 7, verse 24 through 30.

And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know. Yet he could not be hidden.

But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth.

And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

[7 : 01] But she answered him, yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. And he said to her, for this statement you may go your way.

The demon has left your daughter. And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you so much for your word.

What an awesome gift. What an awesome blessing. Awesome resource for us. The actual word of God, we have it. In our hands. The Bible. God, speak to us through your word.

Remove the distractions. Help us to focus in on what you have for us, God. I ask that you speak through me today. God, that you speak to all of us. That you have your way with us.

Help us to be different as a result of today. More like you. I pray this for the other churches around town as well. God, speak to your people. Speak to your people around the world.

[8 : 06] We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Kath, could you bring my water? I know I'm going to need that eventually here. All right.

Thanks. Okay, so. Here we see Jesus trying to get away. All right. And he has this special encounter with a special mom.

It's kind of cool. So I'm going to tell you, we're also going to be looking at a passage in Matthew. The parallel passage is in Matthew. And it's interesting to see Mark has some things that Matthew doesn't.

And Matthew has some things that Mark doesn't. So we're going to be kind of going back and forth. So we're in Mark 7, but we're also going to be in Matthew chapter 15, verses 21 through 28.

So if you have your Bibles, if you want to maybe put your thumb in both locations, that'd be great. So you might be asking, okay, why the different accounts? You know, and people sometimes will say, why is the Bible contradicting itself?

[9 : 07] It says this here, and it says this here. What's the deal? So just a suggestion. If 10 of us went outside and went around the building and just kind of positioned yourself somewhere around the building and just wrote a little paragraph describing the building or maybe a page, okay, and then we came together.

What are the odds that all those descriptions would be the same? Well, they'd be all different because you have a different perspective on things. And that's the same with Mark and Matthew here in this case. Mark, of course, is writing to believing Romans.

He's writing rather kind of a fast-paced, action-oriented gospel. And Matthew is writing to believing Jews. He's writing more detailed. He's bringing up more of the Old Testament predictions and such.

And so you've got two different perspectives, two different purposes, really. And so you're going to have that. All right. Okay.

So let's see here. First section here. So Jesus leaves Galilee and he heads to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

[10 : 18] In Matthew 15, it actually says he withdrew to the region or to the district of Tyre and Sidon. So he's trying to get away. He's withdrawing.

He's trying to get away. And a map of the area. So he's been hanging around here mostly, Galilee and the lake, you know, back and forth across the lake.

And then all of a sudden he's, hey, let's get out of here. He goes up here to Tyre. This is about 35 miles. Maybe take a few days if you're walking. But this is Jewish or this is non-Jewish territory.

This is, of course, Jewish territory. All right. So needing to get away.

You can see the verse says, and he entered a house and did not want anyone to know. Did not want. They're trying to get away. He didn't want anyone to know. Yet he could not be hidden.

[11 : 22] Obviously, he's gaining in popularity. He's been out in ministering. I mean, we're in chapter 7 of Mark. A few chapters from now, we're going to start getting ready for the death and resurrection.

So I'm not sure how much time it's been. You know, Matthew 15, kind of the same thing there. It may have been a couple of years already. Gaining in popularity. A lot of people are finding out about him.

Even in this region, people know about him. Because he's known as a miracle worker. All right. Have you heard of the miracle worker? Yeah. Wow. There he is. He's in Tyre.

Awesome. Okay. Next section. So a woman, a mom, comes and falls at his feet.

All right. Verse 26 says she's a Gentile, a Seraphonician by birth. So once again, back to the map.

[12 : 17] It's better this way. So you got Syria here, Phoenicia here. Seraphonician is this area. So anywhere from there is where she came from, which obviously makes sense.

We're in Tyre. So again, non-Jewish area, non-Jewish woman. In Matthew 15, it describes her as a Canaanite woman. It says a Canaanite woman.

Okay. And we know that the Canaanites were there. They were actually there before the Jews way back when. And so Canaanite is more of an ethnic group, kind of a Greek influence.

But again, non-Jewish, non-religious, or godless religion, that kind of thing. But apparently she knows a thing or two about Judaism and about Jesus.

And we're going to find that out. So, okay, back to the verse. Which one? There we go. Okay. So, it says her little daughter had an unclean spirit, verse 25.

[13:23] Verse 26 refers to this as a demon. All right. What we're talking about here, and we've talked about this before, but we're talking about fallen angels. When Lucifer rebelled in heaven, he took a third of the angels with him.

You know, Lucifer became Satan. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about one of those fallen angels, a demon. Okay. And apparently they have the ability to take control of a person's body kind of thing.

I've never seen this. I don't know a lot about it, but it's a thing. And that's what we're talking about here. All right. So, the next section here, Mark doesn't include the initial dialogue that takes place.

It's actually not in Mark's gospel, but it is in Matthew's gospel. So, I'm just going to tell you, we're going to jump into Matthew for a little bit here, just to kind of gain more perspective on what's going on here, on the dialogue that takes place.

So, I'm actually going to show that up here in kind of a putrid green color, I think. Let's see if I can get to it. Yeah. It's kind of green. So, when I'm in Matthew, the text is green, just to kind of help you to follow me, stay with me.

[14:35] All right. So, what's interesting about this dialogue is she approaches Jesus. He's silent. So, then she turns to the disciples, and they're annoyed by her, and they turn to Jesus and say, hey, you know, can you do something about this?

And then Jesus responds to them. You know, so he, up until now, he hasn't talked with her at all. He's silent. So, that's what it says. So, I'm going to read this. Matthew 15, 22.

And behold, a Canaanite woman from the region came out and was crying, have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

Can you imagine what this young mom, it's a little daughter, probably a young mom, had been going through? You know, just imagine that.

I mean, it's not like she can call a babysitter so she can go and take care of some things. You know, how does that work? Oh, by the way, she has a demon. You know. Can't do it.

[15:40] This is an extremely serious and difficult situation. But notice Jesus' response. Matthew 15, 23.

But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, send her away, for she is crying out after us. He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Very interesting exchange there. So she comes. She's crying out, help me. Jesus says nothing. He's completely silent.

Says nothing to her. Why was he silent? Why did he not say anything? We're going to come back to that. So because of this, she turns to the disciples.

All right? And she's talking to them. And, Bob, that's not captured here, but look at their response. What do they say? Disciples came and begged him, saying, send her away, for she is crying out after us.

[16:43] And what they're really meaning by that is, give her what she wants so we can get rid of her. Jesus, give her what she wants. That's what they're really saying. It doesn't say that here, but here's how you know that.

Look at his response. He turns to them and says, well, I can't give her what she wants because I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He's talking to the disciples there.

Very interesting exchange there. So he's silent. And they're bothered. She's talking to them. He tells them, I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But she's tenacious. So finally she comes back and approaches Jesus again.

What does it say? But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord, help me. She comes back to Jesus, kneeling before him. Lord, help me.

[17:43] You can almost feel her desperation, can't you? Desperate. She knows this is her only chance to take care of this. This is the only chance.

And what a basic prayer to pray, isn't it? It's about the most basic prayer that we could pray, a prayer of faith.

Lord, help me. Lord, help me. Lord, help me. All right.

So what does he say? All right, so I'm going back to Mark now because Mark and Matthew are very similar for this part. So we're going to go back to Mark. All right, the next passage there, 27 through 28.

And he said to her, let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. It's hard to believe he said that, isn't it?

[18:46] But she answered him, yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Powerful, powerful exchange.

Very powerful exchange. So at first blush, that's what we're thinking. Did Jesus really just say that? Did he really just call her a dog? I mean, did he really call her a dog?

And then the other side of that is, who does she think she is to approach him this way, to argue with him? Does she know who she's talking to?

So first of all, Jesus is demonstrating to us and to the disciples and to her the priority of the Jews.

Jesus, he isn't saying, I only came to the Jews, but he said, I came to the Jews first. What does he say? Let the children be fed first. For it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

[19:49] Sent to them first. In the Old Testament, in Isaiah, it says this, kind of makes reference to this.

This is Isaiah 49, verse 6. It says, I will make you as a light for the nations. He's talking to the Israelites. He's talking to Israel. I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

And we see that throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. God's purpose was always that the Jews would point us, point Gentiles, to God as well.

First for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. I think of Romans 1, 16. You know, for I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes.

First for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. All right. Okay, so what about this children and dogs thing?

[20:51] You know, what's going on with that? So the children he's referring to, of course, are the children of Israel. Children of Israel. Children of Jacob. Jacob, Israel.

These are his descendants, the Jews. Okay. The children of Israel. And so Jesus is sharing a parable, kind of a metaphor. He's trying to help for people to understand what he's saying.

Powerful stuff. So he does refer to her as a dog, though, doesn't he? Calls her a dog. It's true that both the Old Testament and the New Testament refer to dogs in a very negative way, a negative sense.

Commentator James Edwards said this. He said, dogs were associated with uncleanness because they ate garbage. They ate carrion. They ate corpses.

And he makes reference to verses in Exodus and in 1 and 2 Kings that talk about that. Dogs. Remember, Jesus, in Matthew 7, he says, Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls to swine.

[22:01] Again, dogs in a pejorative, in a negative sense. And even the Apostle Paul, in Philippians 3, too, he refers to his opponents as dogs. Very negative, right?

Very negative. So it's kind of hard to believe that Jesus would do that, that he'd refer to this woman as a dog. However, the words are different.

In the other places where they're talking about dogs, the Greek word actually means a scavenging canine. All right? He uses a different word here. The word here that he uses, it means little dog, puppy, or house dog.

So it's an entirely different word. A little dog, or a puppy, or a house dog. He's talking about something like that. All right? Those are our dogs.

That's Tessa and Addie. Tessa is, what, seven years old? She's the white dog. She's a Bichon Frise. And then Addie is her daughter.

[23:04] She's, they were bred, Kathy used to breed dogs and bred with a Shih Tzu, I think. Those are our dogs. This is what he's talking about. And really, you know, it's a different word.

It's entirely different altogether. So Kathy and I have been watching the grandkids the last few weeks. We had Gavin's kids over this weekend, and we had Tyler's kids for a little while last weekend, and then we had Tiana's boys all weekend, two weeks ago.

And, of course, you know, the common thing is, you know, the one in the high chair, the dogs are right there, you know, just. And they're looking for crumbs. But they usually get more than crumbs, because a lot of times the little kids, I don't like this, you know.

And so they know they're going to get food, you know. That's what we're talking about. We're talking about this, actually, a picture like that.

Okay, so he's referring to a little dog. He's referring to a house dog, a puppy. Okay. And it's obvious that she was not offended in the least, right?

[24:12] What did she say? Got to go back a couple here. What did she say? Yes, Lord, she says. Yes, Lord. No offense.

Yes, Lord. And she also understood the way of things. She knows some things. What did she say? Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. And, again, she was not about to let this opportunity go.

Jesus was conveying something here that is easy to miss. It's easy for us to miss. It was easy for the disciples to miss.

But she didn't miss it. She didn't miss it. He's referring to his relationship with the people of Israel. But he's also referring to his relationship with Gentiles, with non-Jews.

All right? You know, I think of a father, a mother, whose responsibility is to make sure that the kids get fed. All right?

[25:16] But her responsibility is also to make sure that the little dogs get fed, too. But the kids come first. Right? That's what he's talking about here. It's a matter of priority.

The kids come first. See, the good news is not just for Jews, but eventually it's also for Gentiles. And this woman, of all people, a Canaanite woman, demonstrated that she actually understood this truth better than the Jews.

I mean, Jesus was just in Jerusalem, and they were harassing him for these law things. They didn't understand. She actually understands better than the Jews, maybe even better than the disciples.

She understands the good news. Recall, she addressed him in Matthew 15, 22. She said, O Lord, son of David. This is a Canaanite woman, but she knows, she understands who Jesus is.

She understands the gospel. O Lord, son of David. She must have known a bit about the word of God. As I said, you know, Jesus had just left the Jews, the Pharisees, the scribes, are criticizing him for not washing their hands correctly.

[26 : 33] And now this unclean Canaanite woman, Jesus shouldn't even be around her. A good Jew wouldn't even be around her. Here she is.

She knows the gospel better than they do. And I got to tell you, this blew Jesus away. It blew Jesus away. Let's see.

I got to get to the right place here. Okay, we talked about dogs. Okay, the last couple of verses there. What does he say? And he said to her, for this statement, you may go away.

The demon has left your daughter. And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. For this statement, for this statement, you may go your way.

The demon has left your daughter. I think Matthew captures the emotion even better. Listen to this. Then Jesus answered her, oh, woman, great is your faith.

[27 : 35] Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. Oh, woman, great is your faith. Jesus was blown away by her faith. This is awesome.

Incredible. Amazing. And illogical. Just like the good news. She's a tenacious mom.

Tenacious mom. So I asked earlier, why was Jesus silent? Why did he say nothing? I believe Jesus was very purposeful in doing that.

Kind of like, you know, sometimes an instructor, a professor will kind of withhold information. Sometimes, you know, a preacher will do that. Kind of withhold information or not say anything for effect to try to prove.

Perform a purpose kind of thing. I believe he was very purposeful in this entire exchange. He was testing her faith. He was going to demonstrate the depth of her faith to her and to the disciples.

[28 : 42] Because he saw this coming. So he was very purposeful in what he said and how he said it. And he was also demonstrating to his disciples the infinite value that God has toward every person.

Even this unclean Canaanite. Infinite value. He has infinite value toward each one of us. Every one of us is infinitely valuable in his sight.

Infinitely valuable. That's huge. So I'd like to ask you to bow your heads. Close your eyes if you would. I'm guessing we've got at least three different groups of people here today.

Some of you are interested in finding out about God. But you don't really know a lot. I'm just going to lead you in a prayer today. And the prayer goes like this.

Lord, help me. Just like this woman said. Lord, help me. Show yourself to me. If you're real, show yourself to me.

[29 : 58] Amen. Keep your eyes closed, your heads down. Another group here. You've heard the good news. You've heard about Jesus.

You've heard that he died on the cross for your sins. That he paid the price. Yet you haven't decided to trust him yet. You have not made the jump to receive him as your savior.

I'd like to lead you in a prayer as well. Dear God, I thank you that you sent Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. Thank you that I have the opportunity to be forgiven.

To be cleansed. To be made new. I ask that you forgive me of my sins. And I ask you to come in and make me different.

Make me like you. I thank you for your forgiveness and for eternal life. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Please keep your heads down.

[31 : 03] Eyes closed. One thing that you'll notice when you read through the gospel and you see these incidents where Jesus heals somebody and he talks about them having great faith.

This situation here. I think of the woman that was dealing with bleeding. Remember she came up and touched his robe. He didn't even know about it until she touched his robe and power went out.

Remember what he said? What great faith you have. What you notice is the people that have great faith that are commended for their faith. It's accompanied by an action, by something they are doing.

Pastor John Hopkins and I were talking about this this week. You think of the verse in James where it says faith without works is dead.

Faith without works. Faith without action is dead. If you really have faith it's going to be accompanied by something, by some action. And you see that in all these instances.

[32 : 06] You see the action of this mom. So what does it look like?

What does it look like to trust God and to act? It could be different. It's different for each one of us. Maybe we're trying to overcome an addiction.

Trust the Lord and ask him to help you to overcome that addiction. Or maybe you're struggling with a temper problem. Self-control. Or some other emotion.

Self-control is a fruit of the spirit. Trust God to help you to overcome that. Or maybe you're going through a major trial in your life right now.

Maybe it's health related or family member related or something. Some major trial. Trust God to help you with that.

[33 : 03] Trust God and step forward. Trust God to help you with that. Trust God to help you with that. Or maybe he's leading you to start a ministry of some sort somewhere. Maybe here. Maybe somewhere else. Trust the Lord and step forward.

Do that. I'm just going to lead you in a prayer as well. Lord Jesus, I thank you that you live in me.

I thank you. I thank you. You live in me. In the personal Holy Spirit. You empower me to have victory in all these things. Have victory over sin. Victory over addiction.

Victory over self-control issues. Over emotions. Over emotions. Thank you that you live in me. You help me to trust you through trials, through difficulties.

Thank you that you live in me and you desire to empower me. Perhaps to do something involved in your gospel and your work.

[34 : 02] Lord, I pray that you help me to trust you and to move forward and to do what you want. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. You can open your eyes.