

## Home Front

May 10-11

Mother's Day: Fighting for the Future

### Introduction

Hey everyone, I'm Mark and I want to welcome you to the start of a brand new series on family called, *Home Front*.

In the battle to raise Godly families, many parents and grandparents feel outgunned, outmanned, and outmaneuvered.

More and more young people are surveying the battlefield and deciding this is one draft they'd rather dodge. Marriage rates are dropping. Birth rates are at a historic low. And honestly—who can blame them?

The economy feels rigged, the internet unhinged, and our culture stuck in a constant feedback loop of outrage. Is it any wonder why many are hesitant to enlist?

And the casualties of this war are all around us. Marriages are collapsing under fire. Generational trenches are dug deeper with every misunderstanding. And far too often, friendly fire turns homes into war zones instead of havens.

And in midst of the turmoil it can feel like the whole world is against us! It's the education system, it's all of these crazy new laws, it's the government! But as former First Lady Barbara Bush so wisely put it,

*"Your success as a family... our success as a nation... depends not on what happens inside the White House, but on what happens inside your house," (Barbara Bush).*

That's why we as the Church want to focus our firepower on the target where it will make the biggest impact — the Home Front.

### The Israelites

You see before Barbara Bush, there was the burning bush.

By every visible measure Israel had lost the war. They didn't have a land, a throne, or even a temple. They were conquered, scattered, and exiled. Their cities were destroyed, their leaders taken captive, and their worship disrupted. From Babylon to Persia, Greece to Rome, it seemed like everything that made them a "nation" was stripped away.

And yet, even though the battle seemed lost out "there", they never stopped fighting where it mattered most. Sure, the enemy had destroyed their houses but they couldn't destroy their homes because those were built on an unshakable foundation laid by God Himself,

*<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. <sup>5</sup> Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates," (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).*

For the Israelites, this passage (The Shema) was more than a prayer — it was a battle plan. It trained them for survival. One that depended not on political power or military strength, but on parents training their children to love God, grandparents telling stories of God's deliverance by the fireside, and homes becoming sanctuaries of worship, truth, and identity.

In Jewish culture, the home was your primary classroom, your Father and Mother your primary teachers, and the dinner table was your first sanctuary.

Fast forward to 1948, and after nearly 2,000 years without a nation, Israel becomes a recognized state again — against all odds. After 2,000 years without a nation, the people of Israel maintained their faith, their culture, and their identity. How? They held the line on the Home Front.

Today, we find ourselves in a strange reversal. Israel was without a nation, yet they kept their identity. We in the West have a nation but we've lost our identity. We have more and more freedoms but fewer formation. We have the house but not always the home. So by all means, let's pray at the Capital, let's make our voices heard in Senate Hearings, but let's first take back the place where it all started — the Home Front.

### **Moms: God's Secret Weapon**

This Mother's Day, as we talk about the battle for our homes, we want to honor and acknowledge some of God's greatest warriors in the fight — Our Moms.

Don't let the yoga pants and the minivans fool you, these women are covert operatives in the Kingdom of God! Moms have superpowers the rest of us only ever dream of. Eyes in the back of their heads, that spidey-sense that goes off when their kids are up to no good, and the uncanny ability to always know best. Kids, no truer words have been spoken than, "If at first you don't succeed, do it again the way Mom told you the first time!" (Mona 3:16).

And let me tell you something I've learned: When it comes to their kids, Moms do not take "No" for an answer.

Moms will always go the extra mile for their families. My Son Judah was born 7 weeks early and had to stay in the NICU for two weeks before he could come home. My mentality was, "Well, see you in two weeks dude!" My wife? She slept in his NICU room every night. She practically lived in the hospital those two weeks! I would've but someone had to stay with our oldest daughter at home (yeah right).

Moms have so much to teach us about that unrelenting boldness and tenacity — especially when it comes to their family. Today, I want us to look at one of the boldest, most surprising encounters in all of Scripture. It's the story of a mother who refused to take "No" from anyone...not even Jesus.

*<sup>24</sup> "Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet He could not keep His presence secret," (Mark 7:24).*

This entire account is full of moments that seem uncharacteristic of Jesus. First, Jesus leaves the familiar towns of Galilee where He had been doing much of His ministry and journeys into foreign territory to the Gentile city of Tyre. Tyre was outside of Jewish territory so it would've been viewed as pagan — unclean and hostile. So why is Jesus there? He's tired. He's been healing the sick, feeding the poor, confronting religious leaders, and training His disciples nonstop. He's lying low, trying to keep His presence a secret. This is why Pastor Earl goes to Japan so often. Jesus is tired so He retires to Tyre and His disciples are thinking, "Ah, flat tire."

But just as Jesus and His followers are about to unwind, a Mother crashes the retreat with a request that won't be ignored.

*<sup>25</sup> In fact, as soon as she heard about Him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at His feet. <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter," (Mark 7:25-26).*

### **The Spiritual Battle**

Here we have a Mother who is fighting for her little girl. And this un-believing Gentile was able to discern something that most people in Church today miss: My daughter's problem is not behavioral, it's not emotional or hormonal, it's spiritual!

How did she know her daughter was demonized? I don't know, the Bible doesn't say. Maybe she caught her crab-walking down the stairs backwards or speaking in a voice that sounded suspiciously like Linda Blair. Or maybe she'd reached the point where she realized this wasn't just teenage angst or a passing phase. Maybe she'd tried medicine or therapy but now she was left with one last hope — Jesus.

Listen, do I think Counselors are helpful? Absolutely, my wife is a Christian Counselor and we have many wonderful Christian counselors in the Church. Do I think Doctors are helpful? Absolutely, I'm so grateful for our Doctors, and Educators, and even Pastors. But there comes a point in every Parent's life when you have to realize, there is a very real enemy who preys on the weak and vulnerable. The Devil is no respecter of age! Your child's greatest enemy is spiritual and their greatest hope is Jesus!

We have to come to the end of ourselves and all other earthly wisdom because, while helpful, they will never be the answer. This battle won't be won by louder arguments, tougher punishments, or stricter rules. It must be fought in the Spirit — on our knees. We need to take spiritual authority over our homes through prayer, intercession, and the promise of God's Word.

*"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms," (Ephesians 6:12).*

Like this Mother, we need to recognize the nature of our true battle, fall to our knees at the feet of Jesus and confess, "This battle is bigger than me! I can't save my child, but You can!" This woman didn't come for parenting tips but for a touch from Jesus. One touch from Jesus will do more than all of your best parenting attempts.

### **Fight Through Resistance**

At this point in the story you would think Jesus' response would be, "Oh woman of great faith! You are a gentile and yet you recognize my authority! Go, your daughter has been healed." But this brings us to uncharacteristic Jesus moment #2.

*"Jesus did not answer a word. So His disciples came to Him and urged Him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us," (Matthew 15:23).*

How does Jesus respond to this woman's faith? With dead silence. Seizing on their Master's unresponsiveness, the disciples urge Jesus to send her away. "Jesus, can you get her out of her already? This is supposed to be *our* time!"

As if silence wasn't enough, Jesus offers one of the most uncharacteristic responses yet,

*24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."*

*25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.*

*26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs,"*  
*(Matthew 15:24-26).*

Wait a minute? Is this Jesus we're talking about here? A woman is begging for the healing of her demonized daughter and Jesus' response is to call her a dog? Wow, He must be more tired than I thought! Or, He's using this moment to teach us a powerful lesson. This woman was facing numerous obstacles to her miracle. The first was spiritual,

*21 "Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to Him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly," (Matthew 15:21-22).*

Matthew's choice to call her a 'Canaanite' was deliberate for His Jewish audience. Canaanites hadn't technically existed as a people group for centuries so Matthew wasn't implying that she was literally a Canaanite but was essentially saying that she was a pagan of the worst kind. Calling her a 'Canaanite' implied that she was the wrong ethnicity, religion, culture, and had no part in God's Kingdom.

*26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter," (Mark 7:26).*

Mark, who was writing primarily to a Gentile audience does not use connotations but reveals the woman's ethnic and geographic status as a Greek Gentile from the Roman province of Syria-Phoenicia. The citizens of this region were known for their pride, paganism, and hostility toward Israel.

Another obstacle was her gender. In that day, for a woman to approach a Rabbi in public was socially unacceptable.

So with all of these things in mind, let's try to paint a picture of what this Mother was facing and put ourselves in her shoes.

Your child is tormented. You've tried everything — healers, rituals, but nothing has worked. Every day your daughter is tormented. Neighbors whisper, friends and even family distance themselves from you. The shame is crushing but the fear is worse.

Then you hear rumors. There's a man named Jesus — a Jewish healer, a miracle worker. And to your shock He's here in town. What's He doing here? But this is your chance so you run.

Along the way you wrestle with your doubts, "I'm not Jewish, in fact, I'm the wrong everything — the wrong race, the wrong religion, wrong neighborhood, and oh yeah — you're a woman. No respectable Rabbi would hold an audience with me. But your daughter is dying inside and this might be your only hope.

So you find Him. You cry out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!" His disciples look annoyed. Maybe this isn't a good time. They try to shush you and urge you to try another time. But you keep crying out to Jesus. Why isn't He answering? He's just sitting there silent. Now the disciples are talking to him. They gesture toward you and are whispering in hushed voices.

Jesus approaches you. You fall to your knees before Him and tell Him about your daughter. Finally He speaks, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” Translation: You’re not on My mission list. You get it, you’re not part of the club. But you don’t care what the rules say. You beg Him to make an exception. Then comes the line that stings, “It’s not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.” There it is. Your fears have been confirmed. You don’t belong here, you shouldn’t have come. This was all a mistake. You should just give up, you should be offended, you should leave. Then what? What other hope does your daughter have? So you step out in radical faith, you throw off all dignity, you swallow your pride and say,”

*“Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table,”*  
(Matthew 15:27).

You’re not asking for a loaf. You don’t need a seat. Just one crumb. Suddenly, you sense a shift in Jesus’ demeanor. A wide grin breaks out across his face. There is love flowing from His eyes.

*28 Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment,”* (Matthew 15:21-28).

The disciples stare dumbfounded. Perhaps this moment was as much a lesson for them as it was for her. Jesus wasn’t being cruel — He was being deliberate. He gave voice to every unspoken prejudice in the room — every assumption about who’s in and who’s out. Yet despite all of their assumptions about this woman, she demonstrated more faith than their own religious leaders, their priests, and most of their own people. Her desperate, humble, determined belief broke through every barrier and reached the heart of God.

Because faith like that... *is never denied.*

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. The Mother of this story understood that her family’s battle was not flesh and blood but spiritual. What can you do to take greater spiritual authority in your home?
2. Which of these Mother’s obstacles can you relate to most? Do you wrestle with feelings of unworthiness, inconvenience, or rejection? Have your prayers been met with silence? What does this woman’s story teach us about resilient faith?
3. What breakthrough are you currently fighting for in your home? How can we support one another to keep breaking through the obstacles to our miracle?