

Mommas Say the Darndest Things  
Matthew 20: 20 – 24  
May 10, 2009

Some years ago, Art Linkletter and Bill Cosby had a show on Friday nights called, “Kids Say the Darndest Things.”

Well, I believe mommas also can say the darndest things. Imagine what some of the mothers of famous people may have said to their children at times:

1. Napoleon Barnaporte’s mother: “If you aren’t hiding your report card inside your jacket, then take your hand out of there.”
2. Jonah’s mother: “That’s a nice story, but where have you really been for three days?”
3. Columbus’ mother: “discovering a new world may be all well and good, but you could have still found time to write your mother.”
4. Mona Lisa’s mother: “After all the money your father and I spent on braces, the least you could do is smile for the nice painter.”
5. Pastor Dan’s mother: “What do you mean, you were hit by a baseball? Don’t you know enough to stay out of the way of a little ball?!”

But in our Scripture today, the mother of brothers James and John says a truly outrageous thing in front of her sons and all their comrades: She asks Jesus to make them number one and number two in His coming kingdom. In doing this, she managed to embarrass her sons and infuriate the other ten men. But I also believe the passage teaches us a lot about motherhood.

**1. A Christian mother goes to God on her child’s behalf more than they realize (Matthew 20: 20a).**

**A. While our modern moms cannot go face to face with Jesus, she can certainly pray on our behalf.**

1. If you are a Christian mother, you know how many of your prayer time is devoted to your children.
2. Your child gets sick; you immediately start talking to God about him or her.
3. Your child gets into a problem; immediately you begin talking to God about them. The type of prayer will be dictated by the situation; but the impulse to go to the Father on behalf of your child is the greatest, most important emotion you feel.

**2. This mother can be best described not by what she asked for, but by what she did not ask for (v. 21).**

A. Notice she asked for a favor for both her sons, but nothing for herself. She put her needs and wants last.

1. Most mothers sacrifice in quiet, unnoticed ways for their children. Often, children will be oblivious to the sacrifices mom makes for them, because most often she will never point to those sacrifices.

B. This tendency on the part of mother’s to put their children’s needs and welfare before their own needs can be seen in the first point of which I spoke: moms will usually pray for their children before they pray for themselves!

1. I ask you: When was the last time you thanked your mother for the sacrifices she made on your behalf? Have you ever thanked her? Maybe today should be the day to correct that oversight?

**3. A mother never stops acting like a mother no matter how old her children become (v. 20 b).**

A. James and John were two grown men – their nicknames were “Sons of Thunder” for Heaven’s sake – and here is their momma going to Jesus to make this outrageous request.

1. I can imagine them saying, “Please, Momma, we can handle this ourselves!”

2. But we all know what she was thinking: “This is too important to sit silently on the side. Jesus will hear me out.”

B. Listen, it matters not if you are 50 years old. If your mother thinks are not getting what you deserve, you can bank on mom getting involved to plead your case.

1. Now, moms, let me say right here that the secret to effective parental support is to apply the old Kenny Rogers song lyric, “You gotta know when to hold them, and you gotta know when to fold them.” There are times parents can get involved in their children’s problems, but there are also times when we need to stay on the side, and let our child wrestle with a problem, and learn a valuable lesson in the bargain. The secret lies in knowing when to step in and when to stay out!

**4. A mother will lead her children by her example (vs. 22 – 23)**

A. Notice how Jesus asked, “Are you able to drink from this cup” – in other words, “Are you up to what will be required of you?”

1. But I see that Jesus’s question is directed not just at the two brothers, but also to the mother who asked for the favor.

2. By answering in the affirmative, this mom was leading by her example.

B. I want you to understand an important detail about this particular mother.

1. **This mother’s first name is Salome (Mark 15: 40 – 41; 16: 1).**

2. She was there when Jesus was crucified; she helped prepared the body of Jesus for interment. Now that is leading by example!

C. Mom, your children will pick up the importance of following Jesus as Savior if they observe you following Him.

1. Any Christlike character trait you demonstrate, they will be more likely to emulate those traits in their lives.

**5. A mother has great expectations about her child, and nothing can break those expectations** (v. 22b).

A. The most universal “Mother’s Trait” is that every mom has unconditional faith in her little angel. It matters not that her little angel is in fact a little terror in other people’s eyes!

1. I was a little scamp as a boy – always getting into trouble of one type or another. But to my mom I was her boy with the untapped potential; all that was lacking was for someone to turn on the switch of my capacity to achieve great things. When a teacher would criticize my lack of initiative, or lack of ambition, she would set them straight out of hand.

2. My mother died still waiting for that potential to be realized. She believed in me, warts and all.

B. James and John were blessed with a mother would not allow any obstacle stand between her boys and the expectations she harbored for them.

1. The rest of the story is that Salome may have pursued the wrong dream for her sons, but she was correct about their potential in the Kingdom of God. Both men would become elder statesmen in the infant church; their names have been on the lips of Christians for two thousand years as examples of people who turned the world upside down for Jesus.

One last thing I want to point out to you:

**6. Say anything you wish about me, but don't talk negatively about my mother (v. 24).**

A. It is interesting that the mother of James and John did most of the talking, but the other disciples were upset with the two brothers, not their mom.

1. There was, and is, a high level of respect granted to mothers who speak up on behalf of their children.

2. They would never criticize Salome for her actions; she was just doing what mothers do!

Moms, I salute you on this special day. I charge you, as a Christian, seek to embody Christ's love and care to those lives God has entrusted into your care. Remember this, motherhood is the highest calling and the most unappreciated part of your life. Trust God to provide the wisdom, insight, and patience for the job. We love you!

Let's pray!