

MATTHEW 15:22-28 – “O WOMAN, GREAT IS YOUR FAITH!”

11/28/15 Sat Morn Prayer – ptwente@gmail.com

Mat 15:22-28 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." [23] But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." [24] But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." [25] Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" [26] But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." [27] And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." [28] Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Introduction/Biblical Background:

- Question #1 **Would you like your faith to be stronger, to prevail?**
- Question #2 **How do you respond to unanswered prayer?** Here is such an example.
- A woman goes from unknown to one who is known by “great is your faith” in very few words! (34)
- *Mat 15:21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.* - Jesus, again tired-context to get away earlier-fed 5000-walked on water-argued with the Pharisees about defiled hands, wanted to be alone(Mark 7:24).
- **When you’re tired, are you open to be used** by the Lord? "Let us always plow to the very end of the field, and serve our day and generation to the extreme limits of our sphere." (Spurgeon)

Mat 15:22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." - Culturally a woman, a Greek (Phoenecian) would never speak to a Jew; let alone a man; let alone a Rabbi!

- In a **desperate situation** – daughter demon possessed-requires **desperate measures!**
- Woman’s request - **Have mercy on me! Address to Messiah-desperate situation**
- *Have mercy on me - My daughter is severely demon-possessed:* This woman came to intercede for her daughter, and she provided a picture of an effective intercessor - her great need taught her how to pray. When she came to Jesus, she made her daughter's needs her own.
- *Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!* This Gentile woman also understood who Jesus was. Many of Jesus' own countrymen didn't know who Jesus was, but this woman of Canaan knew.

Mat 15:23 But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

- **Rebuke #1-Was her prayer not good?** The situation not needy? Did she **not feel the need enough?** Not earnest enough? Her faith not strong enough? But no answer to her prayer!
- **How about you?** --Have you ever had times when doing the right things, but no response? Nothing happening! The disciples pipe up- “send her away!”
- **Would you have folded up your tent and quit?**
- *But He answered her not a word:* Though the Gentile mother interceded for her daughter, Jesus did not immediately give her an encouraging reply. His reticence drew a more energetic and faith-filled response from the Gentile woman.
- *Send her away, for she cries out after us:* It is likely that the disciples meant, "Send her away by giving her what she wants." It is entirely possible that they just wanted her to go away, and the easiest way was for Jesus to fix her problem.

Mat 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

- I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: **Jesus defined the focus of His mission to His irritated disciples and to the Gentile woman.** He made it clear that He was not sent to Gentiles like her.
- Rebuke #2--not sent except to the lost sheep of Israel.
- God’s covenant was with the nation of Israel. And He had promised to send a Redeemer, Savior, but **God’s covenant with Abraham was beyond Israel, it was to all of the nations of the earth** would be blessed by his seed. But **Jesus, first of all, had to fulfill the promises of God to Israel and be rejected by Israel and through that rejection, then the Gospel opened to the whole world.**
- She knew she was a Gentile – **not worthy, not credentialed.** Ever feel that way?

Mat 15:25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

- Woman response #1- again great address-great desperation! - **came and worshiped**
- **"Lord, help me (not my daughter, but me)!"** She responded to the rebuff from Jesus with increased dedication to prevail with her request. In so doing, the Gentile woman continued to show what a dedicated intercessor does.
- **When you get rejected, is your response to worship Him?** Again crying out in desperation - **Lord, help me!**
- **"Lord, help me!"** This is such a handy prayer. You can use it in almost every situation!
- Now she is **not asking, she is worshipping.** She is now calling Him, Lord. As **Lord, she can come.** Son of David, no, can’t come on that basis. But on the basis of Lord, she can come. Lord, help me.

Mat 15:26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

- Rebuke #3-worst thing to be called a Gentile dog(puppy)- **How would you have handled that?**
- *It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs:* Jesus continued to say discouraging things to the woman, yet this was not quite as severe as it might first sound. When Jesus called her one of the **little dogs**, He used **little** as a way to soften the harshness of calling her a dog, softening the traditional Jewish slur towards Gentiles.

- We are at the great disadvantage of not hearing the tone of Jesus' voice as He spoke to this woman. We suspect that His tone was not harsh; we rather suspect that it was winsome with the effect of inviting greater faith from the woman.

Mat 15:27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

- Woman response #2- notice her turning the situation around – “**Yes, Lord**” - she didn’t have the proper credentials!
- **Ever feel that way? In such times, do you say? Yes, Lord**
- **Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table:** The woman responded with great faith. She admitted her low estate, and did not debate the issue when Jesus called her one of the **little dogs**. She did not demand to be seen as a child; **but only to be blessed as a dog.**
- It was as if she said, "Jesus, I understand that the focus of Your ministry is to the Jews - that they have a special place in God's redemptive plan. Yet I also understand that Your ministry extends beyond the Jewish people, and **I want to be part of that extended blessing.**"
- Her response is especially meaningful in light of the increasing rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious leaders. It was as if the woman said, "I'm not asking for the portion that belongs to the children, just the **crumbs** that they don't want." In the flow of Matthew's gospel, there was more and more that the Jewish religious establishment did not want to receive.
- These were two faith-filled words: **Yet even**. She accepted Jesus' description and asked for mercy despite it - or perhaps because of it.
- She just wanted a crumb? A desperate situation but she demonstrated the Lord's exceeding greatness, so great that just a crumb is all that is needed.
- **How about you? When it seems like you're such a crushing situation, maybe from sin,-no way out- you're desperate – do you recognize that all you need is a “crumb” from Him?** Notice the extraordinary humility here and the recognition of His great power!!!

Mat 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

- She was exonerated! Her prayer was answered! Note the example for the disciples!
- Speculate a moment – Any idea why Jesus would rebuke her 3 times? Did He know she had great faith?
- Do you think He was drawing that faith out? Now, we know that Jesus knew and does know all things. He knew from the beginning that He was going to heal the daughter. So why the ignoring of her call? **Because He was seeking to draw out what He knew was in her.** He knew her great faith was there and **He was seeking to draw it out to its fullest expression and also seeking to draw her into a deeper relationship**, not just one of looking from the outside in, Son of David, have mercy; **but where she would say, Lord.** And she would worship. **From petition to worship, from Son of David, far off, to the closeness of Lord, help me--drawing her unto Himself because He knew what was in her.**
- **Does your faith get stronger through adversity, rejection and then victory through the Lord, through Christ?** – Count it all joy when you fall into various trials;- *Ps. 119:75*
- Her faith was great, even *compared to her other virtues*. She was humble, she was patient, she was persevering, she cared for her child. Yet Jesus didn't compliment any of these good things, **but only her faith.**
- Her **faith was great because it would not give up.** She did not stop until she got what she needed from Jesus.
- Jesus never said anything like that to any of the disciples. Never once were the disciples commended for their great faith. But here's a woman, outside of the covenant people and Jesus is saying, "O woman, great is your faith." And then those wonderful words, **"Let it be to you as you desire."**

SUMMARY:

- **Be compassionate, even when tired; Recognize desperate situations require desperate measures**
- **Be faithful, be persistent, persevere-keep seeking, keep knocking- even when there is no answer**
- **Keep worshipping Him – recognizing only a crumb from the Master's table is all that is needed!**
- **Let Him draw out your faith – Be expectant! – Great is your faith! When victorious, be thankful!**

O Worship the King – Robert Grant

*1 O worship the King all-glorious above, O gratefully sing God's power and God's love:
our shield and defender, the Ancient of Days, pavilioned in splendor and girded with praise.*

*2 O tell of God's might, oh sing of God's grace, whose robe is the light, whose canopy space.
God's chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form, and bright is God's path on the wings of the storm.*

*3 Thy bountiful care, what tongue can recite? It breathes in the air; it shines in the light;
it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.*

*4 Frail children of dust, and feeble as frail, in Thee do we trust, nor find Thee to fail.
Thy mercies, how tender, how firm to the end, our Maker, Defender, Redeemer, and Friend!*

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