

Matthew 15:21-28 (NIV)

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 suffering terribly from demon-possession.” 23 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.” 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 their dogs.” 27 “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

40-15-01-Faith is the Hunter

faith, persistence, prayer, intercession

Mat 15:21-28

Faith pursues God until it captures His Word.

INTRODUCTION:

–Earlier in Mat 15, Jesus had a run-in with the Jewish leaders; now He withdraws into the *Gentile region of Tyre*. Why? Was it for refuge from rejection? Renewal from fatigue? Was it a prophetic sign of the Gentile future? OR is Jesus quietly following His Father’s, directed by the Holy Spirit about what to do, where to go, and what to say?

–I believe His whole purpose was to meet this woman whose encounter with Christ would teach us a great lesson: **HOM.idea**.

I. This Woman Was on a Passionate Quest

A. **Her faith felt the pain of the problem**–v. 22, “My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.”

1. A parent’s compassion is rooted in the image of God.
2. How do young people become tormented by demonic forces?
 - a. *Broken wills* are easily manipulated by lies [poor self-image].
 - b. *Broken health* can come from addictions [drugs, sex].
 - c. *Broken hearts* from damaged emotions [broken homes, abuse].

B. **Her faith appealed to the right source of hope and help**–

1. “*Son of David*”– a significant turning from her false gods to Israel’s Messiah (true faith is always preceded by repentance).
2. “*Lord*”– was it only her rhetoric, or was it her only refuge?
 - a. “*Lord*” can be only a title– Mat 7:21, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”
 - b. But she was calling Him “Lord” as her only hope for help and healing !– Rom 10:12-13, For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

C. **Her faith pleaded for unmerited favor:** “*have mercy on me!*”– she had

1. no trust in her personal standing [as a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician]
2. no power to bargain with God (What can sinners offer Him?)
 [“*Nothing in my hands I bring, Only to His cross I cling!*”]

TRANS: This woman was *a hunter chasing God*. Her faith was after a powerful word from His Messiah that would free her daughter from the torment of demons. She stayed with her quest against all obstacles. . . .

II. This Woman Was on a Persistent Quest

A. She was undaunted by discouragements–

1. v.23a, Jesus did not answer a word (No answer is not a “no” answer.)
[a good quote: “Silence is God’s waiting room for divine appointments.”]
2. v.23b– she irritated the disciples (Christians often fail us):
 - a. “*she keeps crying out after us*,” but humans can’t meet the deepest needs of our hearts, even if they are strong, godly believers.
 - b. “*send her away*” (their solution), but **He doesn’t tell her to leave**.
3. v.24, He answered, “*I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel*.” (This is a theological statement, and you can’t argue theology with God).
 - a. “*lost sheep*”– (“*You are on target, lady. I’m the right Shepherd*–
Luk 19:10, For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.)
 - b. “*But I’m sent only to...Israel – It’s the wrong timing*.”
 - (1) She was a Gentile trying to enter by the OT door of God’s covenant promise to Israel. (She’d called Him *Son of David*).
 - (2) She was knocking on a future door– Joh 1:11-12, He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name... – Acts 13:46, Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.”

B. v.25 shows how deeply her daughter’s misery motivated her:

1. she “*came and knelt before him*”–
 - a. Her faith did not retreat, but kept steadily aiming at its target.
 - b. Her faith took the posture of a beggar, a slave, a hostage.
2. “*Lord, help me!*” she cried, no longer approaching on any Jewish grounds, she was appealing by faith alone

TRANS: “*Lord, help me! Give me that word that will end the agonized wailing of my demon-infested daughter!*” **This woman is serious!** She’s on a passionate, persistent quest for God’s healing word, in spite of all the barriers, all the obstacles. Will she win? Will she capture the word she’s hunting for from Christ, the word that will make her darling daughter whole again, back again in her right mind?

III. This Woman Was on a Prevailing Quest

- A. v.26, He replied, “*It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs*.” (“*Is this the Jesus we know?!*”) Yes but maybe we forget...
 1. He came not to make us *happy*, but to bring us to repentance and humble faith. (What’s more humbling than being called *a dog*, even if it’s a “*pet dog*,” as this word literally means?)
 2. Remember, He spoke only what came from His Father. (The big question in this passage: *What was God after in this woman?*)
 3. Notice, too, He moved closer to her in each of His responses: 1st silence, next, talking to her indirectly, but **now addressing her!**
- B. Listen to v.27, “*Yes, Lord*,” she said, “*but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table*.” (It’s checkmate! She’s cornered the prey and can move in for the capture! *How can He refuse her now?*)
 1. Her faith has caught Christ in His words and will not let go: “*Okay, you say I’m a dog; so give me a dog’s rights!*”
 2. Her faith catches the hand that seemed to push her away and uses her hold on it to pull herself even closer to her quarry.
 3. Her faith says, “OK, let the children eat first! Any crumbs left over from Your hand have enough power to heal my daughter!”
- C. She WINS!– v.28, Then Jesus answered, “*Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted*.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (**Her faith was after a word from God, but who was the real Hunter?** [comedy line: “*Now I’ve got you right where you want me!*”])
 1. Jesus always hunted for “great faith,” but He found it only in two Gentiles (her & a Roman centurion) never in His own people.
 2. Jesus did want her to eat from the children’s table. But it could only happen if her faith surpassed that of the children.)
 3. Jesus pulled from this woman’s heart the new standard of “great faith” for the way all believers should pray [G.C.Morgan said of this woman, “*Against prejudice she came, against silence she persevered, against exclusion she proceeded, against rebuff she won.*”]

CONCLUSION:

–We need this woman’s faith! Her story teaches us that, 1) true faith is passionate and persistent, 2) true faith keeps hoping when it looks hopeless to do so, and 3) true faith feeds and grows strong on humility. –**There’s a “yes” that sometimes lies hidden in the heart of God; faith holds on to it until it hears it from the lips of Christ.**