

The Healing Of The Syrophenician Woman's Daughter

Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

By way of background; After **Jesus** had fed over **5000** with **five loaves** and **two fishes**, He passed over into the land of **Gennesaret**, where He healed many & also rebuked the **Pharisees** for their vain traditions (**Matthew 14:34-15:20**). **Jesus** would leave **Gennesaret** with His **disciples** and travel northwest about **50 miles** into the coasts of **Tyre** and **Sidon**, two principle cities of **Canaan** (**Matthew 15:21; Mark 7:24**). **Canaan**, to the **Jews** meant one thing; **enemies!** It was while here, that attention is drawn to a specific person-*“And, behold, a woman of Canaan”* (**Matthew 15:22**). **Mark** records in **Mark 7:26** that *“The woman was a Greek (a Gentile), Syrophenician by nation”* (she was a **Syrian of Phoenicia**). As such, this woman was an **alien** *“from the commonwealth of Israel”* and a **stranger** *“from the covenants of promise”* (**Ephesians 2:12**). Unknown to the **disciples**, this *“woman of Canaan”* was the reason that they were in *“the coasts of Tyre and Sidon”* It was here, that **Jesus** would **cast a demon out of this woman's daughter!** The **mother** of this **demon-possessed girl** serves as an example of **faith** and **perseverance** in prayer.

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS WOMAN

① **She Was A Loving Mother:**

Mark records that she was the **mother** of a *“young daughter”* (**Mark 7:25**). Reading **Matthew** and **Marks** account of this miraculous event, it is clear that this *“woman of Canaan”* **loved** her daughter very much, and was **devoted** to her, and was willing to go to great lengths for her well-being!

② **This Woman Had A Problem And A Great Need:**

She had a circumstance in her life that was beyond her ability, and beyond the ability of man! **Mark** simply states that her *“young daughter had an unclean spirit”* (**Mark 7:25**). **Matthew** gives more detail, noting that her daughter was *“grievously (very seriously, severely, and in a dreadful and terrible way) vexed (annoyed, disturbed, harassed, tossed about, and exasperated) with a devil”* (**Matthew 15:22**). No doubt, this woman had tried to **help** and **comfort** her daughter, and had tried various methods to give her some **relief**, **but no matter what she tried and no matter what she did and no matter how hard she tried her daughter remained the same-“grievously vexed with a devil”**

③ **This Woman Had A Tremendous Burden**

The daughter of this woman suffered physical pain, and mental anguish, and her entire life was affected by the **demon-possession!** This woman felt the pain, the sorrow, and the burden of seeing her daughter suffer! The burden that she felt is seen in the fact that she **“cried unto Him” (Matthew 15:22)**, and that **“she besought Him” (Mark 7:26)**. She **wept** loudly, she **sobbed**, and she **begged** and **pleaded** with the **Lord!** **THIS MANIFESTS THE SENSE OF URGENCY THAT SHE FELT!** Her words concerning her daughter **“My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil”** reveal a great deal of **distress, heartache, misery, hurt, anguish, torment, and helplessness!**

II. THE WOMAN APPROACHES CHRIST

① **This Woman Had Heard Of Christ:**

“Mark” says in his account **“For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard of Him” (Mark 7:25)**. This woman who had a **problem**, and **need** beyond the ability of man, and who was **hurting**, and extremely **burdened** and **desirous** to see her daughter released from the **demon-possession** **SHE HEARD OF JESUS!** She heard of the One who had caused **the blind to see, and the lame to walk, and the deaf to hear, and the mute to speak, and the possessed to be set free!** She no doubt said to herself; **“Here is the One who can heal my little girl, and take away her pain and anguish”** **“Here is the One who can take away the pain and the anguish”**

② **This Woman Believed Certain Things Concerning Christ:**

○ *She Believed That Christ Was Able To Meet The Need:*

This is seen from the fact; that this woman having heard of **Christ**, and hearing that He had come into the coasts of **Tyre** and **Sidon**, came forth and **followed Christ (Matthew 15:22)**. She **came to Christ; “Then came she” (Matthew 15:25), “and came” (Mark 7:25)**. In order to come to **Jesus**, she had to move beyond her **comfort zone!** She honestly **presented her need to Christ; “my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil” (Matthew 15:22)**. She made request of **Christ; “and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter” (Mark 7:26)**. She came with a sense of **urgency**, and with great **determination** and **perseverance**, and she came with great **humility** of heart.

○ *She Believed That Christ Was Merciful:*

Her entire plea was based upon His **mercy; “Have mercy on me” (Matthew 15:22)**.

○ *She Believed That Christ Was Lord:*

She refers to Him as such **(Matthew 15:22, 25, 27; Mark 7:28)**.

○ *She Believed That He Was The Promised Messiah:*

Though she was a **Gentile**, she referred to Him as “*thou Son of David*” (**Matthew 15:22**).

③ **This Woman In Following And Coming To Christ Manifested Persevering Faith:**

This woman having heard of **Christ**, and hearing that He had come into the coasts of **Tyre** and **Sidon** came forth and followed **Christ** through the streets **crying unto Him** (**Matthew 15:22-24**). After some time; **Jesus** “*entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For (because of) a certain woman*” (**Mark 7:24-25**). What transpired in that house (**Matthew 15:25-27; Mark 7:25-28**) was a further manifestation of this woman’s faith! **Matthew** records that **Jesus** said unto her “*O woman, great is thy faith*” (**Matthew 15:28**). What transpired in her following Christ to that house, and coming to Christ in that house was a manifestation of the greatness of her faith:

○ *Her Faith Caused Her To Move In The Direction Of Christ:*

Matthew records “*And, behold, a woman of Canaan came*” (**Matthew 15:22**), and **Mark** records that “*The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him*” (**Mark 7:26**). HER FAITH CAUSED HER TO MOVE BEYOND HER COMFORT ZONE AND CULTURAL BARRIERS! She came to **Christ** because **she was concerned!** She came because **she wanted her daughter healed!** She came because **she wanted the demon gone from her daughter!** She came because **she believed that Christ was able!**

○ *Her Faith Overcame The Silence Of Christ:*

This woman comes with her problem, her difficulty, her need, her burden, she comes with a broken heart, and believing that He is able! This woman, who was absolutely helpless and whose situation seemed hopeless came to **Jesus** with a great sense of urgency! **Matthew** says that she “*cried unto Him*” (**Matthew 15:22**). She wept and sobbed, and she begged and pleaded with the **Christ!** She came with great determination, she came presenting her need, because SHE JUST KNEW THAT HE WAS ABLE! She spoke very humbly, her child’s case was very urgent, her heart was very tender, broken, and contrite, and her cries were very piercing, but **Jesus** does not rush to her aid! He does not agree to follow her to her house and heal her daughter! He does not soothe her heart with words of encouragement, but instead; “*But He answered her not a word*” [**Matthew 15:23**]. She had heard that **Jesus** could do the miraculous, and impossible and when she comes to Him with her great need “*He answered her not a word*” She had heard of His great love & compassion but when she came to Him with a burdened heart “*He answered her not a word*” BUT SHE CONTINUED TO PLEAD WITH CHRIST ON BEHALF OF HER DAUGHTER!

○ *Her Faith Overcame The Conduct Of The Apostles:*

The very ones who should have encouraged her in her seeking of **Christ**, pleaded with **Christ**; “*Send her away; for she crieth after us*” (**Matthew 15:23**). The fact that the

disciples were asking **Jesus** to send her away with such urgency implies that they had tried themselves to get her to leave. They tried all different ways to persuade her to go, BUT SHE WOULDN'T! SHE PAID THEM NO MIND! SHE JUST KEPT ON CRYING OUT! She was tired of seeing her daughter "*grievously vexed*" She wanted her daughter healed, she wanted the **demon** gone, so SHE JUST KEPT CRYING OUT!

○ *Her Faith Could Not Be Discouraged By A Doctrine Which Seemed To Disqualify Her:* In response to the **disciples** plea to "*send her away*" **Christ** said "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (**Matthew 15:24**). She did not dispute what **Christ** said, but SHE CONTINUED ON!

○ *Her Faith Brought Her To Humbly Worship Christ:* In spite of the **silence** of **Christ**, and His apparent **apathy** and **rejection**, and in spite of the **discouragement** of the **disciples**, and in spite of an apparent **disqualification**; "*Then came she (to the house where He had entered), and worshipped Him, saying Lord, help me*" (**Matthew 15:25**). This is where **Mark's** account picks up (**Mark 7:25**). HER FAITH BROUGHT HER CLOSER TO THE LORD, AND PERSISTED TO THE POINT OF WORSHIPPING AT HIS FEET!

○ *Her Faith Could Not Be Discouraged By Her Sense Of Unworthiness:* She is at His feet, **worshipping** Him, and pleading *Lord, help me*" (**Matthew 15:25**), and the next thing she hears is "*it is not meet (fitting) to take the children's bread, and to cast (throw) it to dogs*" [**Matthew 15:26**]. HE REFERRED TO HER AS A DOG! He meant that "*the Gentiles to Israel were as dogs*" Her response to this; "*And she said, Truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table*" [**Matthew 15:27**]. SHE TOOK HER PLACE AS A DOG UNDER THE TABLE AND BEGGED FOR THE CRUMBS! She comes with her **problem**, her pressing **need**, her **difficulty**, her enormous **burden** that was absolutely beyond her ability, she comes with all her **distress, sorrow, misery, hurt, anguish, torment,** and **helplessness** AND SHE WAS WILLING TO TAKE HER PLACE AS A BEGGING DOG UNDER THE MASTER'S TABLE!

○ *Her Faith Told Her, That Though Her Need Was Great, It Was But A Small Thing To The Lord:*

After **Jesus** said that "*it was nor proper to take that which belonged to the Jews and throw it to the dogs*" [**Matthew 15:26**]. She acknowledged that to be so; "*Truth, Lord*" [**Matthew 15:27**], and then she went on to say "*yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table*" [**Matthew 15:27**]. "*Crumbs*" are "*the remnants and fragments of the meal*" It was as if she said "*That's all I need Jesus, the crumbs*" She realized that though the need that she presented to **Christ** was far beyond the ability of man, it was as simple as "*the crumbs*" to **Christ!** HIS CRUMBS ARE BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE'S DINNER!

III. THE MIRACULOUS TAKES PLACE

① **Christ Commended Her Faith:**

After she had mentally taken her place as a **dog under the master's table**; **Jesus** said unto her *“O woman great is thy faith”* [verse 28]. This woman by coming to **Christ** and persevering in her pleas, gave evidence that she possessed faith. Faith is persuasion and confidence in **God**. Faith is dependence and reliance upon **God**. Faith is trust in **God**. Faith is believing and seeing God. Faith is leaning, and resting upon **God**. Faith is cleaving to **God**, and looking to **God**, and coming to **God**. Faith is surrender to **God**. Faith is the persistent pursuing of **God**, and acting upon what **God** has said. Faith is living in the reality of **God**. **Jesus** looked at this woman, and said to her *“O woman great is thy faith”* He is telling her, that her faith is extraordinary! Her faith was extensive, it was powerful, and dominant, and influential in her life! GREAT FAITH IS AN OVERCOMING FAITH! GREAT FAITH WILL TAKE YOU BEYOND YOURSELF, TO EXTRAORDINARY LENGTHS!

② **Christ Gave Her Assurance And Comfort:**

Jesus said to her *“be it unto thee even as thou wilt”* [Matthew 15:28]. This woman never once pleaded on the grounds of personal merit, but her continual pleading had its basis in the mercy of **Christ**, and He assured her and satisfied her with these words; *“be it unto thee even as thou wilt”* **Mark** records that **Jesus** gave this assurance; *“the devil is (presently) gone out of thy daughter”* [Mark 7:29]. There was assurance and comfort in these words of **Christ**! Faith brings one to the source of assurance!

③ **Christ Healed Her Daughter:**

“And her daughter was made whole from that very hour” [Matthew 15:28]. The cure was both complete (as indicated by the words) *“made whole”* and instant (as indicated by the words) *“from that very hour”* Notice, that it does not merely say *“she was whole from that very hour”* but that *“she was made whole from that very hour”* The phrase also occurs in **Matthew 9:22; 14:36; John 7:23**). The word *“made”* *“a work of power and skill”* **Jesus** brought about a complete and instant cure in this girl without ever going to the house where she was! **Jesus** brought about a complete and instant cure in this girl without ever giving a single piece of instruction or command to her! The **demon** was the cause of the grievous vexation of this girl, in other words, *“the grievous vexation was the symptom of the demon possession”* **Jesus** *“made”* her *“whole”* by attending to the root cause of this girl's grievous vexation, and the result; she *“was made whole”* THE DEMON WHICH HAD CAUSED GRIEVOUS VEXATION WAS GONE BY THE POWER OF CHRIST!

This woman's *"faith"* is further illustrated by the fact, that after **Christ** said to her *"the devil is gone out of thy daughter"* [**Mark 7:29**], SHE DID NOT ASK FOR PROOF, BUT SHE RETURNED HOME BELIEVING THAT IT WAS JUST AS HE SAID! All she needed was the word of **Christ**, (*that was sufficient for her*) and **Mark** records *"And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed"* [**Mark 7:30**]. When she returned home, SHE FOUND IT TO BE JUST AS CHRIST SAID IT WOULD BE! Her daughter **laid peacefully upon the bed, no longer disturbed and harassed by a demon!** This *"woman of Canaan"* found *"joy and peace in believing"* [**Romans 15:13**]. As the result of the power of **Christ** THE ATMOSPHERE IN THAT HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT!
