



SUNDAY CLASS

3/1/09

Key Verses: Matthew 15:21-28

Matthew 15:21-28 (New International Version)

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A 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." ²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." ²⁵The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. ²⁶He 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." ²⁸Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

***Note, We have here that famous story of Christ's casting the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter; it has something in it singular and very surprising, and which looks favorably upon the poor Gentiles, and is an earnest of the mercy which Christ had in store for them. Here is a gleam of that light which was to lighten the Gentiles, Luke 2:32. Christ came to his own, and his own received him not; but many of them quarrelled with him, and were offended in him."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 15:21 (New International Version)

²¹Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

"When he went thence, he departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; not to those cities (they were excluded from any share in Christ's mighty works, Matthew 11:21-22), but into that part of the land of Israel which lay that way: thither he went, as Elias to Sarepta, a city of Sidon (Luke 4:26); thither he went to look after this poor woman, whom he had mercy in reserve for. While he went about doing good, he was never out of his way. The dark corners of the country, which lay most remote, shall have their share of his benign influences; and as now the ends of the land, so afterward the ends of the earth, shall see his salvation, Isaiah 49:6."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Isaiah 49:6 (New International Version)

⁶ he says:

*"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

Matthew 11:21-22 (New International Version)

²¹"Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

Matthew 15:22 (New International Version)

²²A 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."

"She was a Gentile, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel; probably one of the posterity of those accursed nations that were devoted by that word, Cursed be Canaan."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Genesis 10:15 (New International Version)

¹⁵ Canaan was the father of
Sidon his firstborn, ^[a] and of the Hittites,

Genesis 10:19 (New International Version)

¹⁹ and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.

Genesis 9:25 (New International Version)

²⁵ he said,

*"Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers."*

Judges 1:30-33 (New International Version)

³⁰ Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, who remained among them; but they did subject them to forced labor. ³¹ Nor did Asher drive out those living in Acco or Sidon or Ahlab or Aczib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob, ³² and because of this the people of Asher lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land. ³³ Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them.

Matthew 4:24 (New International Version)

²⁴ News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

“God will have his remnant out of all nations, chosen vessels in all coasts, even the most unlikely: she came out of the same coasts. If Christ had not now made a visit to these coasts, though the mercy was worth traveling far for, it is probable that she had never come to him.”

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 9:27 (New International Version)

Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Mark 7:24-30 (New International Version)

The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman

²⁴ Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.^[a] He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. ²⁵ In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil^[b] spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." ²⁸ "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

“Tender parents very sensibly feel the miseries of those that are pieces of themselves. Though vexed with the devil, yet she is my daughter still.” The greatest afflictions of our relations do not dissolve our obligations to them, and therefore ought not to alienate our affections from them. It was the distress and trouble of her family, that now brought her to Christ; she came to him, not for teaching, but for healing; yet, because she came in faith, he did not reject her.

Though it is need that drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from him. It was the affliction o her daughter, that gave her this occasion of applying to Christ. It is good to make the afflictions of others our own, in sense and sympathy, that we may make them our own, in improvement and advantage.”

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 15:23 (New International Version)

²³Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

“The discouragement she met with in this address; in all the story of Christ’s ministry we do not meet with the like. He wanted to encourage all that came to him, and either to answer before they called, or to hear while they were yet speaking; but here was one otherwise treated: and what could be the reason of it?

(1.) Some think that Christ showed himself backward to gratify this poor woman, because he would not give offence to the Jews, by being as free and forward in his favor to the Gentiles as to them. He had bid his disciples not go into the way of the Gentiles (ch. 10:5), and therefore would not himself seem so inclinable to them as to others, but rather more shy.

Or rather,

(2.) Christ treated her thus, to try her; he knows what is in the heart, knew the strength of her faith, and how well able she was, by his grace, to break through such discouragements; he therefore met her with them, that the trial of her faith might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, 1 Peter 1:6-7.

1 Peter 1:6-7 (New International Version)

⁶In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

This was like God’s tempting Abraham (Gen. 22:1), like the angel’s wrestling with Jacob, only to put him upon wrestling, (Gen. 32:24).

****Note, Many of the methods of Christ’s providence, and especially of his grace, in dealing with his people, which are dark and perplexing, may be explained with the key of this story, which is for that end left upon record, to teach us that there may be love in his face, and to encourage us, therefore, though he slay us, yet to trust in him.”*

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 10:1 (New International Version)

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

¹He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil^{a)} spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

Matthew 26:56 (New International Version)

⁵⁶But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Mark 3:7 (New International Version)

Crowds Follow Jesus

⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed.

Mark 16:20 (New International Version)

²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Luke 6:13 (New International Version)

¹³When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

John 12:16 (New International Version)

¹⁶At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.

"When she cried after him, he answered her not a word, v. 23. His ear will not always be open and attentive to the cries of poor supplicants, and his lips, which dropped as the honeycomb, always ready to give an answer of peace; but to this poor woman he turned a deaf ear, and she could get neither an alms nor an answer.

It was a wonder that she did not fly off in a fret, and say, "Is this he that is so famed for clemency and tenderness? Have so many been heard and answered by him, as they talk, and must I be the first rejected suitor? Why so distant to me, if it be true that he hath stooped to so many?"

But Christ knew what he did, and therefore did not answer, that she might be the more earnest in prayer. He heard her, and was pleased with her, and strengthened her with strength in her soul to prosecute her request (Ps. 138:3; Job 23:6), though he did not immediately give her the answer she expected. By seeming to draw away the desired mercy from her, he drew her on to be so much the more importunate for it.

***Note, Every accepted prayer is not immediately an answered prayer.

Sometimes God seems not to regard his people's prayers, like a man asleep or astonished (Ps. 44:23; Jer. 14:9; Ps. 22:1, 2); nay, to be angry at them (Ps. 80:4; Lam. 3:8, 44); but it is to prove, and so to improve, their faith, and to make his after-appearances for them the more glorious to himself, and the more welcome to them; for the vision, at the end, shall speak, and shall not lie, Heb. 2:3. See Job 35:14

[2.] *When the disciples spoke a good word for her, he gave a reason why he refused her, which was yet more discouraging.*

First, It was some little relief, that the disciples interposed on her behalf; they said, Send her away, for she crieth after us. It is desirable to have an interest in the prayers of good people, and we should be desirous of it. But the disciples, though wishing she might have what she came for, yet therein consulted rather their own ease than the poor woman's satisfaction; "Send her away with a cure, for she cries, and is in good earnest; she cries after us, and is troublesome to us, and shames us." Continued opportunity may be uneasy to men, even to good men; but Christ loves to be cried after.

Secondly, Christ's answer to the disciples quite dashed her expectations; "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; you know I am not, she is none of them, and would you have me go beyond by commission?" opportunity seldom conquers the settled reason of a wise man; and those refusals are most silencing, which are so backed. He doth not only not answer her, but he argues against her, and stops her mouth with a reason. It is true, she is a lost sheep, and hath as much need of his care as any, but she is not of the house of Israel, to whom he was first sent (Acts 3:26), and therefore not immediately interested in it, and entitled to it. Christ was a Minister of the circumcision (Rom. 15:8); and though he was intended for a Light to the Gentiles, yet the fullness of time for that was not now come, the veil was not yet rent, nor the partition-wall taken down. Christ's personal ministry was to be the glory of his people Israel; "If I am sent to them, what have I to do with those that are none of them."

****Note, It is a great trial, when we have occasion given us to question whether we be of those to whom Christ was sent.*

But, blessed be God, no room is left for that doubt; the distinction between Jew and Gentile is taken away; we are sure that he gave his life a ransom for many, and if for many, why not for me?"

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Matthew 15:24 (New International Version)

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

Matthew 10:6 (New International Version)

⁶*Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.*

Matthew 10:23 (New International Version)

²³*When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

John 4:22 (New International Version)

²²*You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews.*

[Romans 15:8 \(New International Version\)](#)

⁸For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews^[a] on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs

[Matthew 15:25 \(New International Version\)](#)

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

[Matthew 15:26 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁶He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

"When she continued her opportunity, he insisted upon the unfitness of the thing, and gave her not only a repulse, but a seeming reproach too (v. 26); It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. This seems to cut her off from all hope, and might have driven her to despair, if she had not had a very strong faith indeed."

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[Exodus 22:31 \(New International Version\)](#)

³¹ "You are to be my holy people. So do not eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts; throw it to the dogs.

[2 Kings 9:10 \(New International Version\)](#)

¹⁰ As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.' " Then he opened the door and ran.

[Matthew 8:2 \(New International Version\)](#)

²A man with leprosy^[a] came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

[Philippians 3:2 \(New International Version\)](#)

²Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh.

[Matthew 15:27 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁷"Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

"Her plea is, Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs. It is true, the full and regular provision is intended for the children only, but the small, casual, neglected crumbs are allowed to the dogs, and are not grudged them; that is to the dogs under the table, that attend there expecting them.

We poor Gentiles cannot expect the stated ministry and miracles of the Son of David, that belongs to the Jews; but they begin now to be weary of their meat, and to play with it, they find fault with it, and crumble it away; surely then some of the broken meat may fall to a poor Gentile; 'I beg a cure by the by, which is but a crumb, though of the same precious bread, yet but a small inconsiderable piece, compared with the loaves which they have.'

****Note, When we are ready to benefit from the children's bread, we should remember how many there are, that would be glad of the crumbs.*

Our broken meat in spiritual privileges, would be a feast to many a soul; Acts 13:42."

"Observe here, First, Her humility and necessity made her glad of crumbs. Those who are conscious to themselves that they deserve nothing, will be thankful for any thing; and then we are prepared for the greatest of God's mercies, when we see ourselves less than the least of them. The least of Christ is precious to a believer, and the very crumbs of the bread of life.

Secondly, Her faith encouraged her to expect these crumbs. Why should it not be at Christ's table as at a great man's, where the dogs are fed as sure as the children?

Observe, She calls it their master's table; if she were a dog, she was his dog, and it cannot be ill with us, if we stand but in the meanest relation to Christ; "Though unworthy to be called children, yet make me as one of thy hired servants: nay, rather let me be set with the dogs than turned out of the house; for in my Father's house there is not only bread enough, but to spare," Luke 15:17-19."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

Luke 15:17-19 (New International Version)

¹⁷When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!' ¹⁸I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'

Matthew 15:28 (New International Version)

²⁸Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Matthew 9:22 (New International Version)

²²Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

Matthew 17:18 (New International Version)

¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

[John 4:52-53 \(New International Version\)](#)

⁵²When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."

⁵³Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed.

"Though Satan may sift Peter, and buffet Paul, yet, through Christ's prayer and the sufficiency of his grace, we shall be more than conquerors, Luke 22:31-32; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Romans 16:20. The event was answerable to the word of Christ; Her daughter was made whole from that very hour; from thenceforward was never vexed with the devil any more; the mother's faith prevailed for the daughter's cure. Though the patient was at a distance, that was no hindrance to the efficacy of Christ's word. He spoke, and it was done."

***MATTHEW HENRY COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

[Luke 22:31-32 \(New International Version\)](#)

³¹"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you^a as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

[2 Corinthians 12:7-9 \(New International Version\)](#)

⁷To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

[Romans 16:20 \(New International Version\)](#)

²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you