



**KING'S  
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**EDINBURGH**

# The Faith of The Canaanite Woman

## **Matt 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30**

Matthew spoke about this encounter outside of Israel's territory, with a gentile, Greek speaking mother, whose daughter was suffering terribly from effects of a demon. He had taken his disciples into this area to get some peace and relaxation; however no sooner are they there when they are accosted by this woman, who begs him to: "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."

What is surprising is that she has the gall to approach him at all, women don't talk to strange men in public, and secondly gentiles know that Jews won't come anywhere near them; and yet she addresses Jesus with some knowledge of who He is, maybe having seen him previously healing the sick in Israel ? (*See Mark 3:8*)

Jesus seems to totally blank her, and instead of responding to her, addresses the disciples, using the occasion as a teaching session. The disciples suggest to him that he sends her away so they can get some peace. (This incorporated him healing her daughter ASAP so she would leave them alone) Jesus points out that actually his mission was towards the Jews, not gentiles, that would come later after he had died and been resurrected.

The mother however still isn't put off, she has heard what he's said to the guys, that it wasn't really the right time for the gentiles to receive the power of God in signs and wonders, but she was desperate! She's not afraid to jump the gun, push her way to the front of the queue and beseech him to help her.

In v 25 we're told she comes and kneels before him and says "Lord help me". She knows He is the only answer there is for her daughter...there is no B plan.

Jesus responds to the woman by pointing out that it wasn't right to take the children's bread 'Kingdom power for the Jews' and give it to the dogs 'meaning gentile people like her'.

You'd expect her to get highly offended but instead she takes the insult and plays with it "even the dogs eat crumbs that fall from their master's table". She shows that she is totally accepting of his positioning of her. She's desperate, her daughter is in a terrible way. She is willing to do anything, there's no room for getting offended, and she's grabbing the opportunity with both hands!

Jesus is mightily impressed with her. He knows he's set the bar high; a lesser person would have gone off in a huff. But she's shown humility and courage, and in spite of a lot of put me downs, a determination that she's willing to accept whatever was on offer, totally on his terms. He says of her that she showed 'great faith', Mark tells us that at that moment her daughter was made well.

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## Questions:

- **Not getting offended.** Talk about how at times you find yourself backing off church / other Christians, because you get offended. This woman is a great example of someone who knew her need, there was no other person she could turn to.
- **Humility.** She showed an amazing humility, she knew she didn't deserve anything, but asked Christ to show her mercy. Think about other occasions this happens in the bible, where God honours a humble response.
- Jesus commends her as a woman of 'great faith', and interestingly the healing of her daughter happens simultaneously as she asks for 'some crumbs'. Do we not receive because we don't ask? It is the act of asking that shows humility and faith, a dependence rather than an independence and pride. How can we do this better?
- Jesus seems to test this woman, to find out how persistent she will be. Talk about other times Jesus does this in the gospels. Then how you've become aware of Him testing you.



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