



# Grow, Pray, Study

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

The Week of August 10, 2020

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## **Matthew 15:21-28 NKJ**

<sup>21</sup> Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> 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."

<sup>23</sup> But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." <sup>24</sup> But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." <sup>25</sup> Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" <sup>26</sup> But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs." <sup>27</sup> And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." <sup>28</sup> 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.

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### **When Life Gets Desperate**

*Matthew 15 is filled with people experiencing a desperate time. There, of course, is the woman of Canaan whose daughter is sick and she has run out of options. At the end of the chapter, Jesus feeds another multitude that hasn't eaten in three days. Have you ever gone three days without food? Maybe, but hopefully not.*

*But let's not forget a drastic measure Jesus went to in order to find a little peace. He and the disciples crossed into the land of Tyre and Sidon, strictly Gentile, non-Jewish territory. Why? Because perhaps he, too, was in a desperate time.*

*\*He wanted to get some physical rest and time to be alone with the twelve. It seemed like no matter where he went in Galilee people followed him who wanted to be healed and fed, etc.*

*\*He wanted to get away from some of the pressure he would have been experiencing. For example, pressure was mounting among some Jews to force Jesus to be their king and free*

them from the Romans. John 6:15 says that after the feeding of the 5000 they intended to take him by force to make him King.

*\*Maybe there was also pressure of possible execution by Herod Antipas who thought Jesus was John the Baptist come back from the dead.*

*\*The religious leaders were already determined to destroy Jesus, and after Jesus' rebuke about their human-made traditions the danger from the religious leaders was greater.*

*So, Jesus was under a lot of pressure from all sides.*

*The Canaanite woman, filled with desperation also, expressed what Jesus calls a 'great faith.' What made it so great?*

*\*She asked for mercy which means she was asking for something she knew she didn't deserve. When we live with that humility, our faith can become great as well.*

*\*She had put her faith in the right person - not the gods she would have been used to bowing to.*

*\*She had turned from trusting everything else to faith in Jesus Christ. By coming to Jesus she publicly affirmed his power over her former gods of wood and stone.*

*\*She reverently addressed Jesus as Lord. What are we worshipping in life? We can only have one lord of our lives.*

*\*She had a sense of expectancy and went to Jesus with a trusting spirit.*

*\*She loved her daughter more than her own life so she came to the only source of help she knew.*

*\*Great faith does not give up even when Jesus did not respond to her or said that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Many of us would have been offended but she didn't let that possibility get in her way. Jesus was pleased with the woman's response and she probably grew stronger as she practiced this faith.*

*\*She kept asking until she received, seeking until she found, knocking until it was opened to her (Matt 7:7).*

*Churches in West Africa have thousands of people walking for miles just to come to worship. Since there aren't enough doctors per person, the church community becomes the place of healing. You can see women carrying their sick children to the altar... hoping, praying, doing every single solitary thing in their power.*

*But at the end of day, our power is fairly limited. Sure, it gets masked because we might have all sorts of technology at our fingertips, but falling on our knees and saying one of the earliest and simplest prayers can be cathartic: Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me, a sinner.*

*Don't give up. Keep on asking. Don't let anything take away your faith and trust. As the song, Oceans, says, "You've never failed, and you won't start now."*

*-----Lord, help me to let go of the sides of the well I'm in so I can discover your Solid Ground at the bottom. And there I can rest. Amen.*