

# Jesus Rewards a Gentile Woman's Faith Matt 15:21-28

## *A Relentless Faith is a Rewarded Faith*

1. When the dust settles from the Covid crisis over the last 6 months  
YOUR FAITH will either be stronger or weaker...  
than from before we ever heard the word Covid-19.
  2. And This Congregation, Our Church Family, will be Stronger or Weaker...
    - a. This is a Faith Test—Our Faith is being Challenged by Covid, by Chaos, by Fear
    - b. Challenged by all sorts of things → Will we grow weaker or stronger from it?
  3. A Woman is Experiencing a Crisis—and Jesus Will Challenge Her Faith  
the question is—how will she respond? Will she become weaker or stronger from it?
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## I. THE MIRACLE

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### A. THE REQUEST BY FAITH (v.21-22)

1. Tyre and Sidon are about 50 miles South of Beirut, Lebanon [MAP]
  - a) Tyre is 40 miles north-west of Capernaum.
    - (1) Its name means the Rock. It was so called because off the shore lay two great rocks joined by a 3,000-foot-long ridge.
    - (2) The Land Bridge that Alexander the Great built to destroy the city, exactly as the prophet Isaiah declared would happen.
  - b) These Phoenician cities Tyre and Sidon were actually originally Part of the Promise Land, in the realm of Israel.
    - (1) During the Time of Joshua, the land was being partitioned out...
    - (2) the tribe of Asher was allocated the land "as far as Great Sidon ... to the fortified city of Tyre" (Joshua 19:28–9). (Barclay)
    - (3) But Israel did not remain faithful and this area became known for Gentile Idols and later for, Greek Paganism
2. This Request is From the Desperate Love of a Mother...
  - a) Her Daughter Suffers and Therefore this Mother Suffers
  - b) Love is Like That—when those we love suffer—we suffer for them as well
  - c) When Those We Love are Hurting—we are hurting—esp. a mother for a daughter
3. The Request is From the Realization She is Powerless to Help her Daughter
  - a) Her Daughter is Demon Possessed...

This Mother's Belief Systems are Powerless to Stop it
  - b) Whatever Idols She was Taught to Worship  
Whatever Belief System She Was Raised to Follow
  - c) All of it is Powerless Against This Horrible Spiritual Enemy
4. The Request is a Request By Faith—calling Jesus Lord
  - a) She had some knowledge of Who Jesus is—although Limited knowledge no doubt
  - b) But Enough Knowledge to Call Jesus the Son of David,
  - c) Enough Knowledge to Say Have Mercy on me O Lord

### B. THE RELENTLESSNESS OF FAITH (v.23–27)

1. THIS IS ONE OF THE STRANGEST CONVERSATIONS IN GOSPELS

- a) **Notice Jesus Unusual Response... ‘He Answered Her Not a Word’**
  - (1) Then the Disciples are Urging Jesus to Send Her Away, “for she cries after us”
  - (2) But Jesus Isn’t Doing What the Disciples Want Either...
- b) **Jesus Responds with a Fact—He Has a Divine Mission:**
  - “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (v.24)
- c) **But This Woman is Persistent!**
  - (1) (v.25) “Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”
- d) **But Jesus Answered:**
  - (1) (v.26) “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.”
- e) **Notice Her Humble Response:**
  - (1) (v.27) “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

## 2. WHY DID JESUS RESPOND WITH A REBUKE?

**Why Did He Respond in What Seems Like a Cold and Uncaring Way?**

- a) **Over and Over We See that Even in His Miracles He is Teaching...**
  - Even in His Miracles He is Challenging...
- b) **BUT WHY? He is Challenging Us to Draw Out a Greater Faith!**
- c) Jesus Clarifies His Mission—and He Challenges Her to draw out a greater faith
- d) The Covenant Faithfulness of God demanded that Jesus go to the covenant people of God first—to the lost sheep of the house of Israel
- e) But Sadly, most of Israel didn’t want the bread of heaven, while this gentile woman begs only for the crumbs from the masters table.

## 3. SHE KNEW THAT SHE COULD NOT...

- a) solve the problems of her nationality, or her cultural history...
- b) She Could Not Solve the racial and religious animosity between Jews and Greeks...
- c) She could not change the Lord’s commission...

## 4. BUT SHE COULD PRAY—FOR MERCY AND HELP IN TIME OF NEED

- a) **Abraham Lincoln said, “I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.”**

## 5. HER RESPONSE TO A REBUKE FROM THE LORD IS RELENTLESS FAITH

- a) She was not wanting to deprive Israel of God’s blessings. She was simply asking that some of the blessing be extended to her in her need...
- b) **And in Light of the Fact That Much of Israel Was Rejecting Jesus...**
- c) “It was as if the woman said, “I’m not asking for the portion that belongs to the children, just the crumbs that they don’t want.” (Guzik)

## C. THE REWARD OF FAITH (v.28)

### 1. Jesus was touched by this woman’s great faith!

- a) This is What Pleases the Lord! —A HUMBLE FAITH!
- b) When we stop Trusting in ourselves and start trusting God!

### 2. He Was Also Impressed by Her Humble Insight to His Rebuke (Mk 7:29-30)

- a) **Her faith was tested and her faith was real, and her prayer was answered.**
- b) Symbolically, she stands for the Gentile world which so eagerly seized on the bread of heaven which the Jews rejected and threw away. (Barclay)

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## II. THE IMPLICATIONS

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### A. A CRISIS CAN BE A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

1. **Sometimes a Crisis—a Desperate Need—is the Only Thing that Brings us to a Dependence on Christ...**
2. **WHY Is That? Because Only a Desperate Need Reveals How Powerless We Are Without God**
  - a) It Reveals How Powerlessness our Worldly Belief Systems are
  - b) This woman was a greek gentile and her greek centered belief systems were not helping her daughter...
  - c) Her Idols Could Not Help Her, Her Culture, Her Superstitions
  - d) None of these Things Could Help Her Daughter
3. **How Long Will It Take Us to Realize Our Worldly Belief Systems Fail Us? How Long Until We Admit: Only the Truth Can Set Us Free?**
  - a) Not Our Status, or Education or Work Career
  - b) Blessed are the Poor in Spirit for They Shall Be Comforted
  - c) Blessed are those who understand they are spiritually Destitute without God
4. **Jesus Used This Woman's Crisis to Bring Her to a Greater Faith and Then He Rewarded Her For It!**
  - a) The term Greek or Gentile, to the Jews was synonymous w/ Pagan
  - b) so today it would be like saying, a faithless atheist asked the Lord for help...
  - c) Today, Jesus reply is Like: God's blessings are for God's children, not everyone
  - d) Meaning Jesus is not Rejecting Her—He is Making a Spiritual Point!
  - e) But She Got the Point! She Accepted the Rebuke in Humility & Responded in Faith!

### B. GOD'S SILENCE MUST NEVER BE INTERPRETED AS AN UNWILLINGNESS TO ANSWER OUR PRAYERS

1. **When She Went to Jesus, 'He answered her not a word' (v.23)**
  - a) Sometimes when we pray we think God is silent to our requests...
  - b) But Even While He is Silent, He may be working out the very answer we seek
  - c) Even While He is Silent, He may be wanting us to learn the discipline of patient prayer and humble waiting and trusting in Him
2. **God answers our prayers...**
  - a) He May Answer NO
  - b) He May Answer YES
  - c) He May Answer YES, but Not Yet
  - d) He May Answer YES, but Not in the Way You Think
  - e) But God Knows What is Best—not us
3. **God answers our prayers... maybe not in the TIMING, or MANNER we want**
  - a) But God Knows What is Best—not us—Not My Will but THY Will Be Done
4. **We Need the Relentless Faith this Woman Had and Not Give Up!**

## **C. A RELENTLESS FAITH IS A REWARDED FAITH**

### **1. Even When Jesus Preforms a Miracle—He is Teaching Us...**

**Notice How Jesus Teaches Us What it Takes to Receive Things of God:**

- (1) She Went to the Lord in Her Time of Need (She went to the Right Source: God)
- (2) She Cried Out for Mercy and Help (We Do This in Prayer)
- (3) She had a Persistence that Would Not Quit (God wants Persistent Prayer)
- (4) She Worshipped Jesus as Lord, even though she was not Jewish  
(We are all called to Worship in Spirit and Truth)
- (5) She accepted the Discipline of the Lord w/ a Spirit of Humility and Surrender  
(We too are to accept the Discipline of the Lord to become purified in the faith)
- (6) She Had Great Faith that Was Rewarded (v.28)

Without Faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6)

### **2. Her faith was tested and her faith was real, and her prayer was answered.**

- a) Symbolically, she stands for the Gentile world which so eagerly seized on the bread of heaven which the Jews rejected and threw away. (Barclay)

**To Me It Was a Powerful Lesson to the Disciples Who Just Wanted Her to Go Away...**

**The Scribes and Pharisees Rejected the Bread of Heaven—She only asks for the crumbs!**

## **D. THE GOSPEL IS A UNIVERSAL MESSAGE FOR THE WHOLE WORLD** **BECAUSE JESUS IS THE UNIVERSAL KING OVER HEAVEN & EARTH**

### **1. The World is So Divided...**

- a) Divided by Race... by Socio-Economic Status... By Culture... By Class...
- b) And Satan Wants the World Divided, Angry, Suspicious of one another
- c) But We Know There is Only One Race—the Human Race
- d) God Created All People From One Blood—God Wants to Unite us By His Blood

### **2. But God Wanted to Unite Humanity Into One New Man—One New Kingdom —There is nothing in this world like the Church...**

- a) God spoke through Isaiah—describing the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 2:2)  
that **All Nations** Would Flow Into It
- b) God promised Abraham—**all nations** of the earth will be blessed
- c) Paul wrote that In God's Kingdom there is no Jew or Greek, no Male or Female,  
no Slave or Free, For We Are **All One** in Christ Jesus
- d) Jesus the **Light of the World** — Purchased His Church By His Blood!

### **3. By the Gift of God's Grace Given in the Blood of Jesus— we are Adopted into God's Royal Family**

- a) In the Eyes of God we Are Now The Children of God
- b) Born Again in the Waters of Baptism—Raised as a New Creation in Christ  
To Live in Newness of Life

### **4. God Cares For All Human Beings—**

- a) we were created by God from one blood...to Be United By His Blood...
- b) We were born to be with God!

## **CONCLUSION:**

- 1. IF JESUS REBUKED YOU—HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?**
  - a. A Rebuke is a Test of Character...  
Can You Accept a Rebuke in Humility & Respond in Faith?
  - b. Can You Accept a Rebuke and Grow Stronger instead of Bitter?
- 2. Her faith was tested, her faith was real, and Her prayer was answered**
  - a. She Had A Humble and Relentless Faith
  - b. The Faith that the Lord Wants us to Have