# Matthew 15:21-29 (Theodosia A. Wingfield Powerscourt) 55154

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Matt. 15:21-28

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tire and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, 0 Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matt. 15:21-28.

It is in Matthew's Gospel that we find this most instructive incident, which reveals the Lord not merely as the minister of circumcision for God's truth, but as the display of His sovereign grace where God's curse lay, and Satan's power.

The Lord withdrew from the proud religionists of Jerusalem who made void the law of God for the sake of their tradition. He also laid bare to the disciples that only the plants of His Father take root, while all that issues from man's heart is defiled and defiling. The sinner needs God's grace to save him. This is shown in the otherwise desperate case of the Canaanite, whose daughter was sorely possessed of a demon.

Through this incident, many a soul learns why the Lord does not accede to its appeal. Hers was deep and earnest, yet He answered her not a word. For what claims on the Son of David had a Canaanite woman? When He reigns, there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of Jehovah of hosts (Zech. 14:21).

When the two blind men cried, saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us," He touched their eyes, which were then opened according to their faith (Matt. 9:27-30; 20:30-34). But repentance has its place as truly as faith, and God will have the soul to judge itself aright. "Cursed be Canaan" is the word from of old, and yet, was she not now asking His pity who is to avenge and deliver Israel?

How many today have said the words, "Father... forgive us our sins"! Yet, they, too, have received no answer; nor would they assert or believe that their sins are forgiven. They have gone on wholly untenable ground. They are not His sons by faith in Christ. They are not born of water and Spirit. They stand on law, supplemented by ordinances. They are unrenewed, serving divers lusts and pleasures, a prey to the power of darkness. They do not cry to God and own the truth of their estate, but they imitate the language of disciples, which they, in heart, are not. Have we not experienced it ourselves? Our state was below the Canaanite's.

The woman of Canaan evidently knew that no Israelite ever appealed to Christ in vain. She had faith in Him, but she had overlooked her own dismal position. Theirs were "the promises"; but what did she have? Not promises, but a curse. And He who is the truth would have her feel it. The disciples would have Him dismiss her. This was far from His heart. They disliked the discredit of her importunity, and wished to be rid of her. He meant to bless her, but it must be in the truth, as well as the grace of God. For this He waited, and she, as yet, had no answer; but He answered them, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Now faith, where real, perseveres; and the woman came and did Him homage, saying, "Lord, help me." He is, indeed, Lord of all-that is truth without assumption of privilege. To such an appeal, He does reply. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and give it to dogs."

Thus does His grace help her to see where she was lacking. The light of God shines into her heart, and she bows at once. For she said, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." She apprehends where and what she really was, and takes her true place before God. She had forgotten that she was not a "sheep", privileged to claim the succor of Israel's Shepherd, but was truly a "dog" before Him. Yet, while no longer hiding this from her soul, but confessing it freely, she rejoins, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

What refreshment such faith gave to our Lord Jesus! She savored the things of God. She appreciated, believed, enjoyed the grace of which she was the object. And the Lord owned her "great... faith," and gave her all she wished.