

## **Review**

We last left off in the gospel of Matthew at chapter 15, where Jesus was up in Gennesaret, being hassled by the Pharisees and Scribes for not forcing His disciples to go through a laborious ceremonial washing of their hands before they ate.

### **15:21 Jesus Goes To The District Of Tyre And Sidon**

After this incident at Gennesaret, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon, about 40 miles to the northwest. Mark tells us that when Jesus went there,

**Mark 7:24 ...He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.**

### **15:22 The Canaanite Woman Cries Out**

Jesus is inside a house, and from outside, this woman begins to cry out to Him.

**Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race.**

This woman was not a Jew - she was a Gentile of pagan religion. The Syrophenicians worshipped Ashtaroath, the moon goddess of beauty and pleasure. They believed in doing everything that seemed desirable, with no limits, without restraint. It was the philosophy which says, "If it feels good, do it."

Something to take note of here is that regardless of her religion, she has hit a crisis in life that she knows only the Lord can deal with. How often we see people who say that they are Humanists, New Agers, or Agnostics turn to a Christian to pray when a loved one's life is in danger!

You see, when life's circumstances become terribly real - like this woman's daughter being in danger - all of this worldly philosophy often goes out the window. That is because the world's religions and philosophies, beliefs, and practices will not do anything for anybody in times of crisis.

The Psalmist pointed this out, saying,

**Psa. 135:15-17 The idols of the nations are but silver and gold, the work of man's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; They have eyes, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear, nor is there any breath at all in their mouths.**

Worship what you want, but don't fool yourself into expecting a miracle from Buddha, Ashtaroth, or an agnostic.

### **Have Mercy On Me**

The woman was crying out to Jesus. How did she know to turn to Him? Remember that people from Tyre and Sidon had come to Him.

**Luke 6:17-19 Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were being cured. And all the people were trying to touch Him, for power was coming from Him and healing them all.**

The people came to Jesus, had an encounter with His power, and brought the news back to their hometown.

How are people going to know about Jesus in our town? After you come to Him, go back and tell others.

### **15:23-24 Only To The Lost Sheep Of Israel**

Although the woman was crying out, Jesus wasn't answering. Anytime any of the disciples would walk out of the house, the woman would begin shouting at them. They begged Jesus to send her away.

But He told them that He had a specific mission: it was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

This is difficult for many people in the church today to understand. We think of Christianity as an American/European/Western faith. However, the Scripture clearly states that the gospel was only opened up to the Gentiles after the Jews had been given the first oppor-

tunity.

When Jesus sent out the twelve apostles, He instructed them,  
**Matt. 10:5-6 ...”Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”**

And Paul wrote in Romans,

**Rom. 1:16 ...I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

### **15:25-26 Bread To Dogs**

Now the woman comes right into the house and begins to bow before Him, pleading for His help. But Jesus says something that many people find offensive when they read it.

Gentiles were referred to as dogs by the Jews. Remember that in those days, dogs were dangerous, ravenous, wild animals that roamed city streets in packs. But Jesus uses a different term for dogs than the Jews did. The word He uses is diminutive, the term used for the little puppies that people did keep in their houses.

And so, without being insulting, Jesus is making the simple statement that to take the Bread of Life which is first intended for the Children of Israel and give it to the Gentiles would not be right.

### **15:27-28 Your Faith Is Great**

Now, I want you to notice something. She has appealed to Jesus as the “Son of David” (v.22). This was a Messianic title, a term that the Jews used to describe the Messiah. She was not a Jew, she was a Gentile. When she did that, she got only silence from Jesus. But now, she is not saying, “Messiah,” but “Master.”

She is no longer saying, “Bless me like you bless the Jews.” Instead, she is saying, “I know I’m a Gentile, but I also know that you are a merciful God who will allow me to get some of the leftovers that the children won’t eat.”

When she said this, Jesus congratulated her for her faith and her

daughter received the miracle.

Saints, this is so important to understand. There is a “messianic” movement in the church today, of which many fellowships are falsely teaching Gentile Christians to become Jewish, for a “complete” Christian experience. This Gentile received only silence from Jesus when she approached Him in this manner. Far worse would be to hear Jesus say, “I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of satan” (Rev. 2:9).

### **Purposefully Difficult**

Why go through all of this stuff? Why did Jesus have to make things so purposefully difficult, when He knew in advance that she would believe?

I believe that it is to remind us that the gospel is not about psychological manipulation, and seeker-sensitivity.

In just the last few months, I have gotten in trouble for saying that Mormonism and Jehovah’s Witnesses are cults, that Catholicism mistakenly teaches prayer to Mary and the saints, that Christians in continual and unrepentant sin should be removed from the church, and that the Messianic movement has fallen into heresy.

Very few have taken me to task claiming these things are untrue. Instead, they almost always say, “How are people going to come to Christ when you aren’t being seeker-sensitive? How can you belittle these other religions and be so harsh against sin and expect people to get saved? My friend was offended, my family member didn’t like what you said.”

You know what? The disciples said, “Send her away,” yet she still came to faith in Christ. Jesus wouldn’t even go outside the house and talk to her. But she walked in. Jesus even referred to her as a dog, and yet still she insisted on receiving His mercy.

That’s because in spite of all difficulty and obstacles, those who truly want to know God will meet Him. It is as the Scripture says,

**Deut. 4:29 “But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with**

**all your heart and all your soul.”**

If someone is seeking the Lord with all of their heart, then no offensive truth I present will prevent them from finding the Lord. So please don't expect me to ever compromise the truth so that a visiting "seeker" won't be offended. Because if you do, then I guarantee that you will eventually be offended.