

STORY

The Woman of Canaan - Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

TEACHER PRAYER

Lord, Jesus Christ, help us to look to You for all our needs, especially our utmost needs for the forgiveness of sins, faith, Your Word, life, and salvation. Help us through Your Word to humble ourselves so that we plainly and clearly see the need for these gifts and for complete dependence on You at all times. Although You may test our faith severely as You did in the case of the woman in this lesson, grant that the test strengthens our faith. Do not let us weaken or lose our faith over such tests. In Your name we ask this. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Tyre and Sidon - Two ancient cities that for a time were powerful cities. They were both located on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea about 21 miles apart. *Find these cities on the map. (see Rupprecht p. 205-206)

Canaan - a general term for the geographical region of Palestine. Here, it's used to show the woman was not Jewish. (Regarding Canaan, Young's Concordance of the Bible has a good, though dated summary. Compare also the following: Syro-Phoenician used in Mark 7:27)

Syro-Phoenician - a person from the Roman territory that combined Syria with Phoenicia. Phoenicia was a narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean coast that had at one time been a great shipping power (similar boundaries to modern-day Lebanon). Syria was the region east of Phoenicia (similar to today's Syria).

Demon-possessed - In Jesus' time the devil and the devil's fallen angels were allowed the power to take limited physical control of people's bodies. (see Rupprecht pp133-134) While it gave the devil the ability to show his anger against Christ, it also gave Christ the opportunity to show His ultimate power over the devil and the demons. It emphasized for the people the great spiritual conflict being played out between the devil and God.

OUTER AIM

A Gentile woman persevered in seeking help from Jesus.

INNER AIM

Our faith looks expectantly to God for all of our needs.

BACKGROUND

(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol.2, pp. 205-210)

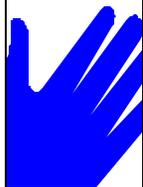
Jesus had recently performed many amazing miracles in Galilee and preached powerful messages in Capernaum. In this story He tries again to take a break from His work by going north from Galilee to a region not as populated by the Jewish people.

Matt. 15:21

- ▶ Jesus went from the region of Gennesaret (Galilee) to the region of Tyre and Sidon. He may not have gone into those cities themselves but to the countryside and villages around them.

v. 22

- ▶ Mark informs us this woman was a Syro-Phoenician, a Greek. "Greek" as used here and other places in the New Testament, often means a non-Jew, a Gentile, a heathen,. She was Greek or Hellenistic in outlook or culture, not in national origin. See vocabulary above.



- ▶ The woman's words, "O, Lord, Son of David," indicates she looked upon Jesus as the promised Jewish Messiah. She believed Him to be her Savior who possessed divine power for forgiveness and healing. She asks that her demon-possessed daughter be healed.
- v. 23
- ▶ Jesus, knowing exactly what He would do and what would happen, seemingly ignores her.
 - ▶ The disciples are perturbed by her and wish to be rid of her somehow.
- v. 24
- ▶ Jesus, knowing that she lived surrounded by unbelievers, seeks to strengthen her faith by testing it.
 - ▶ Jesus lets her know that His first priority was the lost sheep of Israel, meaning the Jewish people of Israel who needed to be gathered through repentance and faith into Jesus' sheepfold (kingdom).
- v. 25
- ▶ She does not let the seeming brush-off, the rejection, disturb her in the least. It made her more persistent and worshipful.
 - ▶ She begs Jesus for help.
- v. 26
- ▶ Yet Jesus' severest test of her faith is shown.
 - ▶ He implies she is a dog and not worthy to receive the full meal on the master's table.
 - ▶ The meal pictures the Gospel that was to be for the "children" (cf. Mt 3:9; Rom. 9; Gal 3:7), not the dogs or the heathen.
 - ▶ The Jews of that time often referred to heathens as dogs.
- v. 27
- ▶ Her reply makes her faith shine all the more brilliantly, because all she asks for is the crumbs from the Gospel table, not the whole meal.
 - ▶ Such was her faith that she knew God's mercy was so great that even a small portion would be sufficient for her needs.
- v. 28
- ▶ Jesus expresses amazement at her faith, hoping that others would look to imitate her great faith and perseverance.
 - ▶ He grants her the "crumbs" for which she asked by healing her daughter.
 - ▶ Mark tells us that she found her daughter lying peacefully on the bed and completely healed.

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear God, you have shown us in this story that even though You may severely test our faith in You, surely You desire us to keep our faith. Help us always to strongly and faithfully trust and hope in You to the end, so that by faith in Your saving work, we may enter Your everlasting home and be with You forever. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Briefly review the previous story as time allows. Make links to the new story when possible.

Tell the story: Teachers, be encouraged to tell the story in your own words while remaining faithful to the scriptural account. When scripture records the story in more than one place, you may want to harmonize the accounts (including extra details found in each account). Let the students know where they can find the additional details in the Bible.

Discuss the story: While reviewing the major events of the story, discuss the possible applications to the students' lives. Ask questions that make them think about the story and show that they understand the story.

ACTIVITY TWO - Help the students memorize the passage and reference. Then have them cut out the boxes and glue them to paper to make a get-well card for someone who is sick. You will need to fold the extra sheet of paper appropriately to make a card.

APPLICATIONS

1. Many times we may and should go to the Lord in times of need and trouble or problems. He tells us to call upon Him in the day of trouble and He will deliver us. We should also see how God may be working on us to show how persistent we can be. Will we be like the woman who did not accept what seemed to be a "no" after her second request? We also need to realize that God does not always answer our prayers in the way we expect Him to.
2. We should realize that we too are "dogs," undeserving of God's mercy because of our many and daily sins. We also are the non-Jews, the Gentiles to whom God also "scattered the crumbs", that is, reached out to after many of the Jews rejected their birthright and Savior. We are made "children" only through Jesus Christ. For Jesus redeemed us, forgives us our sins, and calls us by the Holy Spirit with the Word to believe in Jesus as our Savior. Because of our many sins, even as Christians, each day we need to come many times seeking God's merciful forgiveness and healing and to be reassured of our place as God's children.
3. In this life we should expect the Lord to allow tests of our faith. He permits these trials to strengthen our faith and make heaven appear all the more dear to us. (James 1:2-3,12f; 1 Peter 1:3-7) These trials lead us to long for the assurance of forgiveness and heaven. We know that after the troubles, God will send us times of joy, both now with the peace of forgiveness and in eternal life without tears.
4. Temptation should urge us to have greater reliance upon God instead of relying on ourselves, the world's ideas, or others. (James 1:12ff) Our help is in the Lord.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Psalms 50:15 - "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

1 Peter 5:6-7 - Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Matthew 11:28 - "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Middle any of the above and...

Matthew 11:28-30 - "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Lamentations 3:22-23 - Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.

Upper any of the above and...

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 - Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

Romans 8:28 - And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

HYMN CHOICES

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus." (TLH 457 all)

"I am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus" (TLH 428 all)

"Rise to Arms, With Prayer Employ You" (TLH 444 all)

"Rise, My Soul, to Watch and Pray" (TLH 446 all)