

MIRACLES OF JESUS

TOUGH LOVE - MATTHEW 15:22-28

- A. Context - Matthew 14:13-15:20
1. The apostles returned from preaching and teaching ministries.
 2. John the Baptist was beheaded.
 3. 5,000 were fed by five loaves and two fishes
 4. Jesus refuted the teaching of religious leaders.
- B. A woman sought a miracle from Jesus (22), *And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."*
1. A Gentile woman approached Jesus crying out to Him.
 - a. *behold* draws attention that she was a Canaanite, a descendant of Israel's ancient enemies.
 - b. *from that region*
 - 1) According to verse 21, Jesus took His disciples to the district of Tyre and Sidon for rest and instruction.
 - 2) It is on the Mediterranean coast, about 50 miles north of Galilee.
 - 3) It had been known for its wickedness with its king claiming to be a god, Ezekiel 28:1-2, *The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord GOD: Because your heart is proud, and you have said, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a man, and no god, though you make your heart like the heart of a god.*
 - c. She was a mother who had a desperate need.
 - 1) Her daughter was oppressed by a demon.
 - a) Her cries revealed her desperation.
 - b) She couldn't hide her problem from others.
 - c) People possibly looked at her with contempt, placing blame on her for the condition of her daughter.
 - 2) Thoughts on motherhood
 - a) A mother looks for help when her child is in need.
 - b) A mother has hope despite the difficulty her child faces.
 2. She hoped that Jesus could help her.
 - a. Her use of *Lord* probably indicated her respect for Him based on His reputation.
 - b. She called Him *Son of David*.
 - 1) She had knowledge of Israel's Messianic hopes.
 - 2) She had heard that Jesus had healed others oppressed by demons.
 - 3) He must be Messiah. He will help.
 3. She made a request to Jesus.
 - a. *Have mercy on me*
 - 1) The pain of her child had become her pain.
 - 2) She asked for mercy because she had no merit as Gentile speaking to a Jew.
 - b. *severely oppressed by a demon*
 - 1) The text literally states that her daughter was *badly demonized*.
 - 2) It is hard to imagine how painful it was for the mother to see her daughter abused by a demon.
 - 3) She wanted release for her daughter and for herself.
 - c. Thoughts on motherhood
 - 1) A mother takes to heart a child's problems more than a father.
 - 2) Motherhood begins at conception but fatherhood begins at birth.
 - 3) The bond of a mother to child is a special blessing from God.
- C. Jesus did not respond to her request but He did respond to the disciples' request (23-24),
1. Jesus gave no reply (23a), *But he did not answer her a word*.
 - a. Questions possibly started to surface because of Jesus' silence.
 - 1) Can't He see the pain on my face and the pain in my voice?
 - 2) Is He unable to do anything or does He have no interest?

- b. The mother continued to cry for help.
 - c. Maybe, Jesus' silence is not a no.
 - d. Thoughts on motherhood
 - 1) A mother doesn't give up until she finds the help her child needs.
 - 2) A good picture of a mother is a pit bull dog in a skirt.
2. His disciples were distressed by her presence and wanted her sent away (23b), *And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."*
- a. The disciples were urging Jesus to grant her request so she would leave them alone.
 - b. Jesus had healed many demon possessed people since the start of His public ministry.
 - c. They disciples were moved by annoyance and not compassion, Luke 18:2-5, *He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'*
3. Jesus told the disciples that His messianic mission was to Jews (24), *He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*
- a. Jesus defined His primary purpose at that time which did not include ministry to Gentiles.
 - 1) He was there to offer the kingdom of God to Israel.
 - 2) The nation of Israel had the opportunity to receive Jesus as Messiah.
 - a) Matthew 2:6, *And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.*
 - b) Ezekiel 34:23, *And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd.*
 - 3) Charles Ryrie, *Christ was not being offensive; he was simply stating the truth that he was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and she did not qualify for his attention. Being a Gentile, she had no guaranteed basis on which to approach the Lord at that point in his ministry.*
 - b. Jesus' message was always intended to have universal impact.
 - 1) Note Mark's parallel passage, Mark 7:27, *And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*
 - 2) Romans 1:16, *For 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.*
 - 3) The Canaanite mother was not a ministry priority but she was on His heart.
- D. The woman's faith in Jesus brought blessing (25-28)
1. The woman made her request at Jesus' feet (25), *But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."*
- a. The woman repeated her request for help.
 - b. She knelt at His feet which is an act of humility.
 - c. Thought on motherhood, A mother's pride does not get in the way of doing what's best for her child.
2. Jesus stated that His mission was to the nation of Israel (26-27), *And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."*
- a. For the first time, Jesus responded directly to the woman.
 - 1) His response is a hard saying for readers today because it seems so inconsistent with the character of Jesus.
 - 3) One commentator remarked about *the shocking intolerance of the saying.*
 - b. What does Jesus mean?
 - 1) The children are Jews and the dogs are Gentiles.
 - 2) Jews called Gentiles *dogs* but here Jesus used the word for *small dogs*, household pets.
 - 3) Jesus was picturing His work in the context of a family meal.
 - a) The children were seated around the table, eating food provided by the head of the household.
 - b) The Canaanite woman was not a child in the family (of Israel).

- c) *yet even*
 - 1] She did not challenge what Jesus said but accepted His saying as true.
 - 2] She accepted that God was just in seeking the Jews first.
 - d) But, she saw herself in the picture as a household pet eligible for crumbs that fall from the master's table.
 - e) She was not trying to take Israel's blessing but was asking for some of the blessing in her time of need.
 - 1] All she wanted was a crumb, a miracle of healing for her daughter.
 - 2] She revealed the strength of her faith.
3. Jesus healed her daughter (28), *Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.*
- a. Jesus honored the woman's faith.
 - 1) *O*, makes this an emotional address. Jesus was moved by the woman's faith.
 - 2) Jesus' words had been meant to challenge her to greater faith.
 - 3) Her faith was not just in what Jesus could do but now in Who He is.
 - b. Healing of the woman's daughter was immediate.
 - 1) Jesus did not need to go to the child to heal her.
 - 2) Jesus heals physically and spiritually based on the authority of His word.
- E. Why didn't Jesus heal the girl when the mother first made the request?
- 1. Jesus was developing the woman's faith.
 - a. She came looking for a miracle and found the Messiah.
 - b. Her narrow request broadened into eternal life.
 - c. Charles Ryrie, *Often it is the same when we pray. Heaven seems to be shut, and God silent. But even though the mother was not answered, she was heard...the Lord did not mean to repel the woman; rather, he meant to instruct her.*
 - 2. Jesus was teaching the disciples that the needs of others is not bothersome.
 - a. Ministry is a priority.
 - b. Ministry is meeting needs not wants.
 - 3. Jesus is teaching us to have faith even when there is silence, Larry Richards, *The healing we need—whether inner spiritual healing or physical restoration—is no great challenge for God. Our healing is only a crumb that falls from a table that groans under the weight of the wonders God has prepared. How can we fail to have faith in a God so great, whose miracle-working powers know no limits.*
 - 4. A thought on motherhood, Abraham Lincoln, *No man is poor who has had a Godly mother.*