

Lesson 57 – THE HUMILITY OF GOD-GIVEN FAITH Matthew 15:21-28

Christ had exposed the false and self-righteous religion of the Pharisees (v. 8), the fact that they were not planted in Israel as ministers of God (v. 13), and their spiritual blindness (v. 14). He then taught His disciples of the real issue of sin, that sin is an inward, heart problem (vv. 18-19), a spiritual problem for which the only cure is the life-giving grace of God that comes from God's righteousness worked out by Christ for His people (Rom. 8:10). Contrary to the teaching of the Pharisees, people are not defiled by what they take into their bodies. Our corruption is a problem with which we are born (Psa. 51:5; 58:3). We all enter this world as fallen in a state of sin, spiritual death and depravity, and we must be redeemed from our sins by the blood of Jesus Christ and born again from above (John 3:3-7). The Lord must take away our hearts of stone and give us a heart of flesh, i.e. a heart of faith, humility, and obedience (Ezek. 36:26).

(Matt. 15:21) – The hatred of Herod (14:1), the opposition of the Pharisees (15:12), and the desires of the multitude to make Him king (John 6:15), were certainly factors in the Savior's decision to leave Galilee. He disappeared from the offended religionists, leaving them to their traditions and blindness, and He went into Gentile territory – *"TYRE AND SIDON."* It has always been revealed by God, even in the Old Testament, that His chosen people are made up of sinners whom He saves by His grace out of every tribe and nation, both Jew and Gentile. The Lord told Abraham, *"And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: AND IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED"* (Gen. 12:3). This promise of blessing would be fulfilled in the salvation of all of God's elect all over the world, and this is the promise of God to all whom He loves in Christ (John 3:16).

(Matt. 15:22) – *Mark 7:24* is a parallel passage that informs us that Christ entered into a house, *"but He could not be hid."* By the following episode of His meeting *"A WOMAN OF CANAAN,"* we are assured that all who truly seek the Lord will find Him. He will not hide Himself from His sheep (Prov. 8:17; Jer. 29:13; Rom. 10:13). This woman *"CRIED UNTO HIM, SAYING, HAVE MERCY ON ME, O LORD."* Unlike the Pharisees before, she was aware of her need of mercy, and she knew that Jesus was (and is) the Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, the Savior of sinners – *"THOU SON OF DAVID."* Those who are truly needy and are made aware of their sinfulness by the power of the Holy Spirit, will seek the Savior and find Him when they search for Him with their whole heart. She cried for her daughter who was *"GRIEVOUSLY VEXED WITH A DEVIL."*

(Matt. 15:23-24) – This may seem strange to us because the Lord was (and is) always a willing and merciful Savior. He said, *"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37). Yet it says, *"HE*

ANSWERED HER NOT A WORD,” and the disciples *“BESOUGHT HIM, SAYING, SEND HER AWAY; FOR SHE CRIETH AFTER US.”* They mistakenly and arrogantly thought she was crying after them. They were prejudiced against Canaanites, and she was a member of a cursed race (Gen. 9:22,25) who were known to be idolaters (Deut. 7:1-5). Then the Lord said, *“I AM NOT SENT BUT UNTO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.”* As the Great Prophet, the Lord was sent by the Father to the Jewish nation, therefore He was called, *“the Minister of the circumcision” (Rom. 15:8).* However, as Savior and Redeemer, He was sent to make satisfaction and reconciliation for the elect, Jews and Gentiles alike, all which constitute SPIRITUAL Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Gal. 3:26-29). He came to save all of His sheep.

(Matt. 15:25-26) – The woman persisted in her cry for help – *“LORD, HELP ME.”* His answer may seem strange – *“IT IS NOT MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDREN'S BREAD, AND TO CAST IT TO DOGS.”* Was the Lord, then, rejecting her or putting her off? Absolutely not! This was a preordained test of her faith in Him. If God gives us faith to believe in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9), nothing can stop us from seeking and crying out for Him for all salvation, forgiveness, righteousness, eternal life, and glory.

(Matt. 15:27-28) – Here is the reason the Lord treated her in this way – *“AND SHE SAID, TRUTH, LORD: YET THE DOGS EAT OF THE CRUMBS WHICH FALL FROM THEIR MASTERS' TABLE.”* It was to show a true example of God-given humility among the true children of God as opposed to the arrogance and self-righteousness of the Pharisees. This woman recognized and admitted that she was not deserving of the least of the Lord’s mercies, and this is the case of all sinners saved by His grace. This is an example of great God-given faith as it drives sinners to beg the Lord for mercy. And all who come to Him in faith will receive salvation – *“O WOMAN, GREAT IS THY FAITH: BE IT UNTO THEE EVEN AS THOU WILT.”*

This great faith always brings us down from our pride in thinking that we either deserve or can earn salvation from God by our works and/or our wills (Matt. 23:12). Whenever sinners come to God seeking salvation conditioned on what they do or what they choose, they exalt themselves in sinful pride above that which is true in reality about themselves. When God gives faith to believe in and receive Christ, He brings us to see our utter depravity and His sovereign power and grace. He brings us to see that we have no power or will of our own, and that our whole salvation is by His power and will. He brings us to see that we have no righteousness of our own and that we cannot produce the righteousness required. He brings us to submit to Christ as our Redeemer, our Righteousness, our Life-Giver, and our Preserver. Notice what the Lord did for her – *“AND HER DAUGHTER WAS MADE WHOLE FROM THAT VERY HOUR.”* The Lord is merciful to all who call upon Him!