

15:21-22¹

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. By the end of this episode, we wonder if this was yet another long trip for the sake of one family—much like the demoniacs of Decapolis (chapter 9). This region belongs to Asher, but they couldn't flush out the Canaanites. Many things have occurred there through the Kings and Amos conveys a judgment against them. **22 And behold, a woman of Canaan** Yet another Gentile mentioned in the book of Matthew (besides Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheeba, wisemen, centurion in chapter 8). It isn't plan B. God has always pursued Gentiles (widow of Zeraphath, from this same location; Job; Namaan; Ninevites). **came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David!** See the notes under Matthew 1:1 where this title is studied. Jesus does have a "key of David" (Revelation 3:7-8) and He opens to whoever He wishes. He lets people in and out.

Eleven times, so far, Matthew has clearly conveyed the spirit of Isaiah and I think this is the 12th instance. Isaiah 7:14 shows us that the House of David is expecting a "virgin" to conceive. Isaiah 9:6 references again the kingdom of David. He will reign forever and be born of a virgin. Isaiah 22:20 begins with the house of David having a key and one who holds the key. Jesus, then, says He's the fulfillment of this passage (Revelation 3:7-8). There is power, then, in the hands of Jesus to open the door for anybody into the House of David. If He lets you in, nobody will keep you out. Wow, but look at Isaiah 23:1 and see a pronouncement against Tyre! It will be awful! Isaiah 23:12-17 says Sidon is basically damned.

What a masterful book! Here's a woman who knows that only words of damnation pronounced from the prophet Isaiah are for her people, and yet...if anybody can give her a seat under the table...it's this Man. Then, Matthew 11:21 we have what appears to be a hint...that if "Tyre and Sidon" saw His miracles, they would repent. Is this the "if" here in chapter 15? Jesus, then, is in the business of letting Gentiles in to where they don't belong.

My daughter is severely demon-possessed." This is a participle in the Greek language and carries the idea of "my daughter is demonized."

15:23-24

But He answered her not a word. We might think this means Jesus is cold-hearted...as if He is busy pleasing Himself. Yet, His silence is an act of mercy to drive His disciples to feel things and say things they would have otherwise not said.

Do we not see God doing the same when he guards the way of the tree of life in Genesis 3 to keep us from defiled immortality? Do we not see the same thing when God scatters the crowd at the tower so that they don't degrade themselves beyond redemption (Genesis 11)? Meanwhile, a conversation takes place between God and His angels beyond the hearing of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18).

Jesus, on the other hand, has been carrying on conversations with Satan (Luke 22) while Peter has been carrying on with normal, human activity. Job can say the same (Job 1-2).

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." Maybe the response of Jesus in the next verse indicates that the disciples were implying here that they wanted Jesus to "heal her and **send her away.**" **24 But He answered** He doesn't answer

¹See more in my commentary on Mark (7:24-30).

her. He answers them. Once again, the conversation is taking place for the benefit of the disciples.

and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Matthew 10:5 shows this same conviction in Jesus’ instructions to His disciples. For just a little while, then, Jesus seems ethnically discriminatory...until you see that the totality of no ethnicity will be saved. Furthermore, we see that God **sent** Jesus, and that Jesus is simply being obedient. There was nothing more important to Jesus doing the will of the Father. Do you call yourself a Christian? Do you think you have a better plan than Jesus? Doing the will of the Father?

On the other hand, we find no other errand here—other than to perhaps find rest? Was Jesus intended to reach anybody here? Did He really have to walk 50 miles to find rest? And if any sheep are to be found here...why not her? She wants to be included and is not allowed? Does this allow for the theological possibility that there are those for whom salvation is not intended that can change the Master’s mind? I would quake to even entertain such ideas.

15:25

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

15:26-28

But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” A very obvious reference to Gentiles (Matthew 7:6; Philippians 3:2), and yet not so much (**little**). This is not the same “dogs” which are banished from the New Jerusalem; this is a different word and we don’t know with what tone Jesus said it. **27 And she said, “Yes, Lord,** There are now two people interested in “truth.” She agrees with Him more than the “bleeding hearts” of the day. She has a better sense of right theology than the disciples do. She knows a lot about David and his dealings, and she knows she doesn’t belong in the house of David...but “maybe I can still have crumbs.” She had a choice: find fault with the Lord, or keep asking.

yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” 28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Only said of two people in this book, and the other is about a centurion—in a book by a Jew to Jews about a Jewish Savior bringing a Jewish salvation.

By the way—given the preceding passage—we don’t have to speak filth; we can speak **faith**. This lady’s heart was not one of defilement—at least not in this moment.

Then, there’s the comparison with Peter in the previous chapter. Walking on the water? Teachings and discipleship for years? “Little faith.” They both pray three words, yet one walks on the water while the other is willing to crawl on the floor. Think about Peter now. Wouldn’t we think about the so called **faith** of those back in the boat and Peter is accused of “little faith?”

Let it be to you as you desire.” Just like the centurion. They both speak for somebody else and have “great faith.” They both get what they **desire**.

And her daughter was healed from that very hour. Matthew doesn’t tell us anything about how we make these theological issues work. No talk about predestination or election or anything. Deal with it. Somebody who did not belong...now belongs. By the way, you may notice that she still had to have **faith**.