

Woman great is thy faith

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[0 : 00] Matthew 15, verse 28. Matthew 15, from verse 28.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. We have here an account of the healing of the daughter of the Canaanite woman.

But it's so interesting, you know, that in so many of these miracles of our Lord, you have, as it were, a story within a story.

And the story that lies within the account of this miracle that is given to us here in the healing of the Canaanite woman's daughter is the way in which Jesus dealt with the woman of Canaan herself.

[1 : 38] Now, at this juncture of the ministry of our Lord, he said at the opening or at the beginning of a new pace of his ministry, you notice that he goes into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

I don't know if all of you know this, but it's true that the ministry of our Lord is confined in Scripture to the coasts of Israel.

It's confined within the borders of Israel. And here he is going to the very extremity of his land.

He's going to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And there's a purpose behind his going there, even if it is to meet with this woman of Canaan, a woman who comes from a land that is under the curse of Almighty God.

Because you know that Canaan came under the curse of Almighty God because of the sin of that land. And here is this woman, a Syrophenician, a Canaanite woman, and she comes seeking for Jesus.

[3 : 09] And I want us tonight to look at the transaction that took place between Jesus Christ and this woman and her daughter.

And the first thing that I would like us to look at, we're going to look almost at this miracle with a zoom lens technique.

And we're going to zoom in on particular aspects of this woman's interview with Jesus Christ. And we're going to look, first of all, at her coming to Jesus, her approach to Jesus.

And then secondly, we're going to look at the obstacles that stood in her way. Because in her coming to Christ, it wasn't all plain sailing at all.

And who knows, but there might be some in this gathering tonight who are seeking for the Lord. And maybe one of the perplexities in your life, above every other thing that you could ever mention, is this.

[4 : 25] The number of obstacles that have been in your way since first you began to seek the Lord. And maybe you're here tonight and you're reading into your life great, great problems because of these obstacles that stand between you and Jesus Christ.

And you're saying because of the obstacles, it must be that the Lord is against me and the Lord doesn't want to give me the desire of my heart.

Friend, take comfort from this woman of Canaan tonight. Then thirdly, I want us to look at the response of this woman as she perseveres against all the obstacles.

And then fourthly, the Lord's interview with the woman. And finally, the Lord's assurance to the woman. So, we're going to look at these five thoughts together tonight as we trace our way through this woman's encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you know, I think it's important that we should begin by realizing that this was a woman who lived under the curse.

[5 : 53] She was a woman that was under God's anathema because Canaan was under God's anathema. And you know, it's a wonder of the grace of God that women and men in the world approach Christ.

Men and women who have been under the anathema of Jehovah, under the curse, and yet they make their approach to Jesus Christ.

And that's been true right down through the centuries. People that were living in darkness and in death's shade who affliction had tied and strong bands had tied, yet they make their way by the grace of God to Christ.

Do you know, my friend, there is something wonderful in a sinner coming to Christ? You know what it is? It's this. It's the wonder of the triumph of God's grace in the gospel.

That's all you can say about it. When a sinner comes to Christ, it's the triumph of the grace of God in the life of a man or a woman who was under the curse.

[7 : 11] and she came and she had a real problem in her life. She had a daughter who was vexed with the devil. She had a daughter who was a problem to her.

And yet, you know, in a strange way when she comes to Jesus, the first thing she says isn't, remember my daughter. What she says is, have mercy on me, thou son of David.

And you know, it's really interesting, I think, the number of times people have come to Christ like this. They've got a problem in their home.

They've got a problem in their family. They've got a problem in their health or in some other way. And yet, they come to the Lord and their main concern in coming is, have mercy on me.

You see that? She didn't come first of all remembering her daughter. You would think that this would have been uppermost in her mind. First and foremost with this Canaanite woman, there was the need of her own soul.

[8 : 34] Now my friend, let me ask you tonight, women here, men here, you've got your own problems, you've got your own family difficulties, you've got your own perplexities in life.

But let me ask you, have you come and have you said, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me?

And it's then, you see, what happened to her. The problem that was hers in respect of her daughter had led her to a point where she came with her own need to the Lord.

Now my friend, let me press on you this question. Have you come yet with your own need to the Lord? Have you come to the Lord with the needs of your own soul?

That's the way this woman came. She came saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me. And you know, it's an amazing thing that a Canaanite woman would call him Jesus, thou son of David.

[9 : 53] You see, this is a token to me that the grace of God had already been at work in the life of this woman. Any woman of Canaan who would come saying, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

It shows me that here is a woman that had already been touched by the grace of God. God. There are an awful lot of people, you know, and they put the cart before the horse as far as the salvation of God is concerned.

You see, to them, the first thing is the movement that a man makes to God. The first thing to many is their concern to reach God.

But you know, I think the first thing always is God taking the initiative in human lives and God moving out in a motion of grace to men and women.

And I have confidence to believe that that's what happened in the experience of this woman of Canaan. She's a seeking soul, seeking for Christ because the grace of God had begun to work in her heart.

[11 : 14] And you'll never find people seeking for Christ till the grace of God secretly begins to work in their hearts. When did you start seeking for Christ?

Sure, and it was when the grace of God began secretly to work in your own life. You didn't have a care in the world for the things of God.

You didn't think of the things of Christ until first the grace of God was triggered off in your life and God's grace began to make a motion in your life towards Christ.

Oh, the glory of sovereign grace, my friends. This is the wonder of our gospel, that it is all of grace, as C.H.

Spurgeon called it. And then she came and she made a specific request to the Lord. You know, we've got something to learn from this woman of Canaan in our prayer life and in our seeking for Christ.

[12 : 22] She became specific with the Lord. Lord, thou son of David, have mercy on me, my daughter. Oh, I love the way it comes there.

See, she says have mercy on me. My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. See, what happened with her was this.

The problems that were in her life, the problems that were in her experience, were such that they brought her face to face with Christ.

Christ. And who knows, but there might be some poor soul in the congregation tonight, and there's a serpent in your Eden. There's something in your world that leaves you so unhappy, and so miserable, and so crying for mercy, and there's only one place you can go with it.

you go to Jesus, the son of David, and you say to him, specifically, have mercy on me, and you tell him all that is in your heart.

[13 : 40] My friend, have you gone to him with your own needs tonight? Have you gone to him with your own specific requests for the grace of God to meet you?

I ask you, have you gone to Christ with your prayers? Not just general prayers, but specific prayers.

And you know, I'm going to ask the congregation here to learn from this Canaanite woman. You know, so often in our prayer meetings, I'm really touched by the fact that very often we in the free church are good at general prayers, making general prayers.

But you know, we've got something to learn, we've got to learn that we should be going to God with our specific needs and laying them out before him, making a clean breast of them.

My friend, learn from this Canaanite woman to go to the Lord with the specifics of your case. Go to him with your specific needs and let him hear what you need because he delights in hearing the prayers of a seeking soul.

[14 : 58] Go to him with the specifics of your need. But for all her going, what met with her? Obstacle after obstacle after obstacle were placed in this woman's way.

And you know, some people because of the obstacles that were placed in the way of the woman of Canaan and coming to faith in Christ, have dared to say that it wasn't the Lord that began the work in her heart at all.

That it was just something that was going on in her own psychology. Do you believe that? Not at all. Do you know, my friend, when a child of God begins to seek for Christ and he finds obstacle after obstacle after obstacle placed in his way, he mustn't say that it isn't the Lord that began the work.

Sometimes these obstacles are placed in the way of faith in order that they might strengthen faith. faith. And that's what happened, I believe, in the case of this woman of Canaan.

The obstacles and the difficulties in the way of her coming to faith were put there by the Lord and they were put there to strengthen her faith.

[16 : 32] Jesus, thou son of David, she said, have mercy on me, my daughter lies grievously vexed with a devil. And he answered her, not a word. That's the first obstacle I'm going to mention tonight.

The obstacle of a silent Lord in the face of desperate prayer. And is there anyone in this gathering tonight who can follow that?

You've gone to the Lord again and again with your case and you've gone with your soul's needs to the Lord and you've said to him, Lord, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And he answered her, not a word. Is that one of the perplexities in your own life? The silence of the Lord to your prayers for mercy.

You've gone to him repeatedly and you've said to him, Lord, come into my life. Lord, do a work of grace in my soul. You're a real seeker. God to God to God to God to God to hear.

[17 : 37] God to God has put the obstacle of his own silence in the way of your prayers. And it's almost as though you're saying to him, Lord, thou art never going to listen to me, never going to hear me.

I've been seeking you for so long and you're never going to hear my prayers. Is that true? He answered her, not a word.

Do you know, my friend, that sometimes when a soul goes seeking for Christ, the Lord can meet that soul with silence and it's a trial of your faith.

But it's a trial of your faith that's been put there to strengthen your faith. Do you think this woman of Canaan stopped praying and turned away from God because of the silence of the Lord Jesus?

Do you think she did? I don't think so. I think the silence of the Lord Jesus made this woman even more desperate.

[18 : 50] Do you remember that desperation in your own life, in your own prayers, when you were seeking for the Lord at the beginning? Do you remember that desperation that you might find him?

And it seemed as though silence was meeting you at every quarter, and you weren't getting anywhere, and the Lord wasn't listening to you, and it was almost as though he was wiping your prayers out as soon as they came out of your mouth.

God, why did he do it? He did it to teach you a lesson in faith, and the lesson of faith that he was teaching you was this, that faith must persevere.

And then, I think there was another obstacle put in the way of this woman, and it was this, the heartlessness of the disciples of Jesus.

they besought him to put her away, so that she troubled them no longer. And who knows but there might be a seeker after Christ in this gathering tonight, and who knows but one of the problems in your own life is this, the heartlessness of disciples of Jesus that have besought him to send you away.

[20 : 21] Have you ever felt a coldness among some of the Lord's people to you? You've been desperately anxious that some way or another one of them would speak to you about your soul.

I was speaking once to a minister of the gospel and he was telling me about the home in which he grew up. It was a Christian home, a home that was very often full of the Lord's people.

And he was telling me, you know, I used to sit there in a corner of a room and the house would be full of Christians and I was longing that one of them would turn to me and say something to me about my soul.

But night after night would go past and no one would say anything to me. Oh Christian, beware lest you might be an obstacle in the way to someone coming to faith by the fact that you're unwilling to tell what the Lord has done for you.

You know, we're so shy when it comes to this matter above all of sharing faith in Christ with our fellow men and women.

[21 : 40] We're so shy in telling them what the Lord has done for us. And sometimes it's almost to them as though we're beseeching Christ to send her away.

Why is she troubling us any longer? The heartlessness of cold disciples.

And then there was another thing that was an obstacle to this Canaanite woman coming to faith in Christ. And it was this, the distinctives of the Lord's ministry.

Listen to what he says to her. First of all, she was tried by a silence. Then she was tried by disciples that besought him to send her away.

We don't know if these disciples were asking that he give her the request that she wanted. But we know that the motive in their desire is all wrong.

[22 : 50] And you notice he answered and said to the disciples, I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Israel. Do you know, my friend, the distinctives of the Lord's ministry, I believe, is a real problem to some men in coming to faith in Christ.

I remember it in my own life, the problem I had with the doctrine of election. The problem I had with this doctrine above all doctrines because I had a false notion of the doctrine of election, you know.

The same as every man or woman or child without Christ has, they think, you see, that the doctrine of election means that you just fold your arms and wait for God to do something.

Is that what election means to you, my friend, tonight here? You know, if there's one doctrine in the word of God that should set us seeking for Christ, it's the doctrine of election.

[23 : 58] I am not come, but to the lost sheep, of the house of Israel, said Jesus. And he was setting this obstacle between this woman and coming to faith in Christ.

The obstacle of an electing God. And it's so easy for the seeking sinner to say, if God elected some, I can't be in them.

I can't be one of them. Have you ever had that obstacle in your life? The obstacle that makes you cry and wonder, am I one of the elect?

Let's turn now to the response of this woman to all the obstacles. And notice at the beginning of verse 25, and she then came she and worshipped him.

Oh, I love that. You know, that's the response of faith always to every obstacle that stands in its way.

[25 : 11] The response of worship. The response of worship. You know, when you get a real vision and when you get a real desire for God in your heart, that's all that a real desire for God can do.

A real desire for God must worship God. Then came she and worshipped him. You know, it seems as though this woman was saying in her worship, Lord, there are lots of things I can't understand.

I can't understand your silence. I can't understand these cold disciples of yours that want to send me away. I can't understand the fact that you've come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and I'm not one of them.

I can't understand the distinctives of your ministry. I can't understand the doctrine of election. And yet, she came to him and worshipped.

faith always answers the things that it cannot understand with worship. That's the way faith always comes to Christ.

[26 : 29] It comes in worship. And I'm sure you're asking tonight, what is worship? Well, let me tell you that for this woman, three words encapsulated the whole of her worship.

And the first was this, Lord, Lord. That's what she said to him. In answer to his silence, Lord, help me.

That's all she had. And you know, if you were to hear one of the brethren in Greyfriars stand up in public prayer and just say, Lord, help me.

Amen. sit down. You would say, that man didn't have much. But do you know, my friend, this woman, all she had was three words in her worship.

Lord, help me. And she had everything. She had everything. And who knows tonight, but there might be somebody in this gathering, and maybe you're saying, one of my problems is that I don't know how to pray.

[27 : 38] But I really know what it is to be in desperation of soul and to say to the Lord, Lord, help me. I know what it is to say that before God.

I've gone there. I've been there. And I've said, Lord, help me. And you know what Jesus, you know what the word of God tells us about that prayer of this Canaanite woman?

Only three words. that it was worship. That's what God calls it, worship. And there are times, you know, when your words might be few before God, but your heart might be full of New Testament worship and desperation going out to God.

Lord, help me. The genuineness of prayer isn't in the volume of prayer. The genuineness of prayer isn't in the quantity of prayer.

The genuineness of prayer is always in its quality. And the quality of this woman's prayer was something real. Lord, help me.

[28 : 51] That's all she could say. And who knows, but that's a suitable prayer to give someone in this gathering tonight. You've known what it is to be brought to your knees before God.

And you don't know how to come to him. And it seems that he's so silent. And it seems that there are so many things standing in the way of you, coming to him.

But you go to him with this prayer and say to him, Lord, help me. And you know this? I don't believe for one moment that the Lord will cast out that kind of prayer.

prayer. And yet, you know, the Lord can react very strangely to real worship. Listen to the way he speaks. It is not me to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs.

It's not me to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. She's a Gentile dog. She's a woman of Canaan.

[29 : 56] She doesn't mean much to the Israelite. And it's not right to give her the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs. It's not right.

My dear friend, let me ask you, has the Lord been dealing with you anything like he dealt with this Canaanite woman? Is he really trying your faith? And is he saying, is it as if he's saying to you, it's no use?

Why was he doing this to me? She must have said, why is he doing this to me? He's doing this to you, woman of Canaan, to strengthen your faith in himself.

And notice the way the interview goes on. True Lord. Oh, I think that's a wonderful confession she makes. True Lord.

True Lord. Have you come to the point in your own life, my friend, where God's condemnation of you, you know it's true.

[31 : 12] And you've had to put your amen to it. And you've had to say, true Lord. True. But do you notice something about the woman of Canaan?

She doesn't finish with the words, true Lord. She says, true Lord, but. And I think faith always says but.

Faith never takes a refusal. Faith always says but to God. true Lord, but even the little dogs that, the little house dogs, they eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

All right, Lord, you'll call me a dog. It's not me that the children should get, that the dogs should get the children's bread.

I'll take you at your word. And I'll argue with you on the basis of your own word. You know the Puritans used to have a say about prayer.

[32 : 22] I think it was the first time I ever heard this. I think it was Mr. Jackson, the minister of Milton, I heard say it. The Puritans used to say, sue God on his own bond.

Sue God on his own bond. Argue with him on his own word. And that's exactly what this woman is doing.

True Lord, you've said all this about me, it's all true, but the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. table. My dear friend, wouldn't it be lovely tonight if you were in that spirit yourself?

One of those that said true Lord, all your condemnation of me is true, but the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table.

Are you here tonight with a desire in your heart to get a crumb from the master's table? Is that what sent you out to church this evening?

[33 : 30] Or is it just to do the right thing, to be in the right place, to be in the place where you've grown up? Or did you come really honestly, did you come really honestly asking for a crumb from the master's table?

Well, if so, you came in the best spirit to the table of the gospel because there's crumbs falling here. Whenever the word of God is broken down, there's crumbs falling for men.

Yes, there is. True, Lord, but the dogs do eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. Are you suing God on his own bond tonight?

Are you taking his word as literally true and are you going to him with all the disappointments and the obstacles that he's put in your way? And are you arguing with him for all that, Lord?

Give me a blessing. Don't let me go to eternity without your blessing. Are you going to him and are you saying to him, Lord, give me a touch of thy blessed grace in my life before I depart hence?

[34 : 41] Are you saying to him, Lord, meet with me, for all that you've said about me is true. I am a sinner. I'm not worthy of anything. C.H.

Spurgeon, I've read countless of his sermons now I'm sure, but there's one little poem that he used to quote very often in his sermons and it was this, I'm just a sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all.

And if tonight you were to come to the Lord and say, I'm just a sinner and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all, wouldn't you have something with which you could argue for the blessing of God in your life?

Of course you could. The dogs eat the crumbs which fall from the master's table. And then we're going to look finally at the Lord's assurance to her.

Oh, woman, great is thy faith. She had it from the Lord himself.

[36 : 02] Her assurance came to her from the Lord himself. Isn't that where you should be looking for your assurance? From the Lord himself. What would be better tonight?

That the minister of grey friars tell you that you're a Christian? Or every Christian in grey friars tell you that you're one of the Lord's people? Or something, some kind of funny feeling come over you and make you feel that you're a Christian?

All of these things could be proved wrong. yes, they could. But you go for your assurance to the lips that have never lied.

Don't come to the lips of this minister or any other minister. Don't go to the lips of any Christians that tell you that you're a Christian. You go, my friend, to the Lord himself.

the Lord that could say to the Canaanite woman, O woman, great is thy faith. Where are you to get your assurance tonight?

[37 : 12] You're to get your assurance from an incorruptible evidence from God himself. That's where you're to get it. You're to go to the source.

You're to go to the fountain. and you're to seek your assurance at the fountain. A word from the Lord. Isn't that what you want tonight?

If only I had a word from the Lord, I know I would be sure of my standing in Christ if I had a word from the Lord. Just one word.

Where are you going to go to get that word from the Lord? You're going to go into the Bible and you're going to search the scripture and see if there the Lord gives you his assurance in your own heart.

Go to the Bible. Go to the word of God and see if there's something in the word of God that meets with your own soul's need tonight that tells you that you're a Christian.

[38 : 20] Go and see if your experience of Christ measure up to the experience of God's word. Go and see if the Bible of the Lord's word has it and if so you'll get your assurance there.

Oh woman great is thy faith. And look at what the Lord did for her. I think it was Archbishop Trench that said the Lord opened the storehouses of his grace for this woman.

And he told her they are now. Go and take whatever you want. Oh woman great is thy faith.

Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. Imagine the storehouses of God's grace open wide for a sinner from Canaan tonight.

And let me tell you my dear friend that the storehouses of God's grace have been opened wide for sinners like you and I.

[39 : 32] And you know what the Lord is saying to yourself tonight seeker? He's saying to you be it unto thee even as thou wilt. You've come and you've said to the Lord Lord those son of David have mercy on me and he's saying to you tonight be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

Sure and you've got something that can send you home tonight with a song in your heart if you've got the Lord saying to you be it unto you even as thou wilt.

Imagine the storehouses are wide open oh my friend I've got news for you tonight and it's this sinners Jesus will receive sound this word to every land he receives sinners and he receives them in such a way that he opens the storehouses of his grace to them and he says be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

And one last word she received a blessing for her daughter because her daughter was instantaneously healed.

I'm sure there are some of you in this gathering tonight and you come with your own sons and with your daughters to the Lord that are concerned to you as they are concerned to me and I'm sure you're crying to God for their salvation.

[41 : 13] My friend do you know this when this Lord of ours moves in with a saving power he does his work instantaneously it's not a long time.

The Lord can answer your prayers my friend in a twinkling of an eye as he did with a Syrophoenician woman for all the obstacles and let me speak now personally to some of you parents in this gathering tonight you know that your sons and daughters are grievously vexed of the devil and you've wrestled at a throne of grace for them and you've pled with God for them and you've asked the Lord when when in mercy unto me wilt thou be pleased to come and you've asked the Lord when are you going to come for my son or my daughter or my sons and my daughters and all that you seem to have had is obstacle after obstacle to your prayers but my dear friend let me tell you the

Jesus who set the obstacles in the way of the Syrophoenician woman is the same Jesus that met her at the point of her deepest need and what he did for her he can do for you is anything too hard for the Lord no no let's pray oh Lord we bless thee for thy power to save for thy power to heal for thy power to cleanse and we pray that the gospel might go forth conquering and to conquer in all of our lives tonight we bless thee for thy dealings with seeking souls and we pray that there might be many in this gathering who will come to seek thee for Jesus sake amen out patience for thy oil for thy offering teal for god mouth and ■■ they glory and for love for thy voice to moving in alt power oIDS IN HOPE