

## Matthew 15:21-28 Sermon

Intro

Wrestling with a God who doesn't seem to respond. A God who is silent to the prayers of His people.

How do we put this together with Christ's promises?

John 6:37 **He that comes to Me I will by no means cast out.**

His invitations?

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

This is what we see in the passage before us. Was Jesus indifferent? Is He ever indifferent to the prayers of His people?

No. Rather

**Jesus brings out great faith through crumbs of grace.**

- 1) A righteous request
- 2) Persevering Prayer
- 3) The reward of great faith

### 1) A righteous request

We are taken to a new place – the region of Tyre and Sidon. Outside Israel; the land of the 'unclean.' But remember what true cleanliness is!

A Canaanite woman comes, and she comes with a beautiful request.

Sometimes when God doesn't appear to listen we wonder if it is our fault. Is our faith not enough? Did we forget to pray in a certain way that would make Him listen?

This woman's prayer has nothing wrong.

**“Have mercy on me O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon possessed.”**

She pleads for *mercy*.

Two men went into the temple to pray... She pleads for mercy.

That is where all true prayers begin. Recognizing we stand in need of mercy and grace from a holy God. We have no right to forgiveness, no right to healing. We must look for mercy – and she does.

She cries out to the Son of David. She prays with knowledge.

Not only does she know her need for mercy, she knows who she needs mercy from. Son of David is a Messianic title – here taken by a Canaanite woman!

She prays in faith. She acknowledges that her daughter is **severely demon possessed**. Have you ever seen demon possession? Can you imagine *severe* demon possession? Yet she believes Jesus can save.

**“Those things (v. 18) which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.”** This was the lesson Jesus *just taught*, and here we see it operating in the other direction. What comes out of the mouth of this woman shows not her uncleanness, but her righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

In times of trouble, what comes out of your heart? What does it reveal about your need for cleansing?

### 2) Persevering Prayer

Verse 23 goes on to tell us that Jesus answered her **“not a word.”** Did she miss something? Do you, when God doesn't seem to answer?

The truth is Jesus is often silent.

- blind people crying out to Him as He passes by and He comes to them saying, “What do you want me to do for you?”
- He hears that His good friend Lazarus is sick and He waits two more days where He is before traveling to see Him.

Why the silence? Why the lack of a reply?

Isaiah 42:3 **A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench.** Has Jesus changed?

No – He is not dealing with smoking flax, but with great faith, and He has a lesson to teach us, His disciples, and this woman. He does not snuff, He fans to flame.

Disciples tire of her. Why? Because she *keeps* crying out. A good lesson. They say to Jesus, **send her away. For she cries out after us!**

Brief application—here are the words of every unbeliever, and here are the words at times of our own unbelieving hearts. He’s not listening; give up.

Jesus doesn’t answer *her*, but He answers the disciples. **I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** Christ’s earthly ministry focused on Israel. Even after His death the Gospel goes ‘first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.’

Yet the woman hears this or sees the interaction and, in response, presses *closer* to Christ. She comes and *worships – bows down*. Now her daughter is not directly in the picture. **Lord, help me!**

Very difficult response. “**It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.**” Could anything crush the spirit more than this?

Now the comparison to dogs certainly is the toughest to deal with. Did He have to go *that far*? The question is not answered by Jesus, but by the woman.

**Yes Lord.**

Go back to v. 10-12. See how the Pharisees responded when Jesus called them unclean. Compare this to the woman here. Do you see the difference? Do you see her beauty?

Not: Lord, You are too much, this is just far too difficult!

Instead: Yes Lord, **but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table.**

How do the faithful respond when they hear they do not deserve grace? When they do not deserve mercy? See it here. How do you respond? So many ask, “Lord, just let me be a doorkeeper.” What of you? Will you be satisfied with crumbs?

A crumb, Lord. A crumb to a dog, and my request will be granted.

And because God is indeed a God of all grace and of abundant mercy, her request is granted, her daughter is healed and she goes on her way in faith. This brings us to our final point:

### 3) The reward of Great Faith

The story ends with these words from Jesus, “**O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.**”

**O woman, great is your faith.** What justification do we have for seeing an extraordinary display of faith in this woman’s life and response? The very words of Jesus Christ.

This is only said in Scripture, by Jesus, of two people. Of all the acts of faith, only two receive this great acclaim. The one is the Roman Centurion who knows he is a man under authority. The second is this woman, this dog. “**Assuredly I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!**”

What is great faith? Faith that clings to Christ despite any obstacle. Faith that believes even when it appears the heavens are silent. Faith that knows a full stomach from any other table brings nothing but misery, but a crumb from the table of God is life.

Jesus gives more than crumbs.

**Let it be to you as you desire.**

As you desire? What is He giving. Healing for the daughter – but more as well. He is giving her to eat from the Master’s table.

Did Jesus break His mission? He said in verse 24 “**I was not sent *except* to the LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.**” What happened to His commission? Did He break it? No. Rather He showed that this woman too is a sheep of the house of Israel.

Truth: God doesn’t give any of His children crumbs. We ask for a crumb, and God points us to a cross. A cross where love was poured out. Where the inheritance of Jesus Christ Himself became ours. Where not only all our sin was covered, but where in His resurrection we became the very righteousness of God in Him.

Many will say to God on the final day, ‘Just make me a doorkeeper. Just give me a crumb.’ But they will all get so much more, because in Christ they are no longer strangers and outsiders, but sons and daughters.

Will God send you away? When He appears silent should we despair? You are more than a slave – you are a son, you are a daughter. God will not fail to hear your voice as you cry for mercy. And He will not fail to give it.

Doesn’t mean every sickness healed here, and now. But every sickness will be healed. And every sin will be conquered. And every lonely heart will be comforted. Because we will all sit at the table of the king, because the King became a dog.

O woman, great is your faith! It shall be done for you as you desire. Amen.