

Encountering Jesus (9)

The Canaanite Woman

Drs. Nick and Leona Venditti



Biblical Text

- **²¹ Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Gentile* woman who lived there came to him, pleading, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely.” ²³ But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word.**

Biblical Text

- Then his disciples urged him to send her away. “Tell her to go away,” they said. “She is bothering us with all her begging.” ²⁴ Then Jesus said to the woman, “I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep—the people of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, “Lord, help me!”

Biblical Text

- ²⁶ Jesus responded, “It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters’ table.” ²⁸ “Dear woman,” Jesus said to her, “your faith is great. Your request is granted.” And her daughter was instantly healed. (Mt 15:21-28 NLT)

Introduction

- **Parallel passage is Mark 7:24-30**
- **Mark does not mention the disciples**
- **Mark does tell us that the woman was Greek (that is, non-Jew) and a Syrophoenician by birth**
- **Tyre and Sidon were on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea about 30 and 50 miles respectively from Galilee**

Outline

- **The Heart of the Woman**
- **The Hearts of the Disciples**
- **The Heart of Jesus**

The Heart of the Woman

- **The Identity of the woman**
- **The Need of the woman**
- **The Attitude of the woman**

The Heart of the Woman

- **The Identity of the Woman**
 - She was a Gentile (Hellenist) not necessarily a person of Greek origin
 - Syrophoenician by birth (Mark 7:26)
 - Matthew uses the term “Canaanite”
 - The Canaanites were the traditional enemies of Israel in the OT
 - The Jews greatly hated the Canaanites

The Heart of the Woman

- **The Identity of the Woman**
 - **Jesus had healed other Gentiles**
 - In Galilee – people from as far as Syria came to be healed (Mt 4:23–25)
 - In Capernaum – a Roman officer had a sick servant (Mt 8:5–13)
 - **But now it is clear that Jesus was in pagan territory not in the nation of Israel**
 - **This created a great dilemma**

The Heart of the Woman

- **The Need of the woman**
 - **A pagan woman was asking the Jewish Messiah for a miracle**
 - **Her daughter was demonized**
 - **The girl was severely tormented**
 - **The mother was desperate to see her daughter healthy and whole**

The Heart of the Woman

- **The Attitude of the woman**
 - She pleaded with Jesus
 - She asked for mercy
 - She called Jesus Lord
 - She called Jesus “Son of David”
 - It can mean a person who is descended from king David, or a Jew
 - It is a messianic title
 - This creates a great cultural tension

The Hearts of the Disciples

- **The disciples urged Jesus**
- **The disciples wanted Jesus to send her away**
- **The disciples felt bothered**

The Hearts of the Disciples

- **The disciples urged Jesus**
 - **It was more than a simple request**
 - **It was a passionate plea**
- **The disciples wanted Jesus to send her away**
 - **The disciples were uncompassionate**
 - **The disciples were prejudiced probably because she was a foreigner**

The Hearts of the Disciples

- **The disciples felt bothered**
 - **Rather than to be sensitive to the needs of the woman, the disciples were annoyed by her insistence**
 - **So many times in ministry, we must guard our hearts from allowing our hearts to harden so much that we dismiss people and opportunities**

The Heart of Jesus

- **Jesus did not reply to the woman**
- **Jesus mentions his first priority**
- **Jesus praises the woman**

The Heart of Jesus

- **Jesus did not reply to the woman**
 - **This is a somewhat strange behavior for Jesus in the Gospels**
 - **He may have been testing the woman**
 - **The woman was not going to receive no as an answer**

The Heart of Jesus

- **Jesus mentions his first priority**
 - **This concept is echoed by Paul in Romans “to the Jew first”**
 - **It is not an exclusion rather a first step**
 - **Salvation is through Israel in fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham but for the benefit of all the nations**
 - **Jesus is the Savior of the world not just Israel**

The Heart of Jesus

- **Jesus praises the woman**
 - **Jesus admires the faith of the woman**
 - **Jesus gives the woman her desire**
 - **The daughter was healed immediately**
 - **This miracle showed that God is the God of all peoples and His mercy endures forever**

Outline

- **The Heart of the Woman**
- **The Hearts of the Disciples**
- **The Heart of Jesus**

Conclusion

- **There are no cultural, geographical, racial or ethnic barriers for the Good News of Jesus Christ**
- **Christ died for ALL**
- **Christ rose from the dead for ALL**
- **Christ is the Savior of the entire world**
- **Let's pray**

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