

Daily Reading & Meditation

Great Is Your Faith! Be It Done for You as You Desire

SUNDAY 16 AUGUST 2020

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 15:21-28

21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Meditation:

Do you ever feel "put-off" or ignored by the Lord?

This passage (Matthew 15:21) describes the only occasion in which Jesus ministered outside of Jewish territory. (Tyre and Sidon were fifty miles north of Israel and still exist today in modern Lebanon.) A Gentile woman, a foreigner who was not a member of the Jewish people, puts Jesus on the spot by pleading for his help. At first Jesus seemed to pay no attention to her, and this made his disciples feel embarrassed. Jesus does this to test the woman to awaken faith in her.

Jesus first tests the woman's faith

What did Jesus mean by the expression "throwing bread to the dogs"? The Jews often spoke of the Gentiles with arrogance and insolence as "unclean dogs" since the Gentiles did not follow God's law and were excluded from God's covenant and favour with the people of Israel. For the Greeks the "dog" was a symbol of dishonour and was used to describe a shameless and audacious

woman. There is another reference to "dogs" in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus says to his disciples, "Do not give to dogs what is holy" (Matthew 7:6). Jesus tests this woman's faith to see if she is earnest in receiving holy things from the hand of a holy God. Jesus, no doubt, spoke with a smile rather than with an insult because this woman immediately responds with wit and faith - "even the dogs eat the crumbs".

Seek the Lord Jesus with expectant faith

Jesus praises a Gentile woman for her faith and for her love. She made the misery of her child her own and she was willing to suffer rebuff in order to obtain healing for her loved one. She also had indomitable persistence. Her faith grew in contact with the person of Jesus. She began with a request and she ended on her knees in worshipful prayer to the living God. No one who ever sought Jesus with earnest faith - whether Jew or Gentile - was refused his help. Do you seek the Lord Jesus with expectant faith?

OPENING PRAYER "Lord Jesus, your love and mercy knows no bounds. May I trust you always and pursue you with indomitable persistence as this woman did. Increase my faith in your saving power and deliver me from all evil and harm. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World Peace

Almighty God, in whose hands lies the destiny of men and nations, Let not the hopes of men perish, nor the sacrifices of men be in vain. Grant us therefore grace and courage to give and to receive the forgiveness which alone can heal today's wounds. Draw us, O Lord, towards loving kindness and guide us into the way of peace. **Amen.**