



## **“The Syro-Phoenician Woman”**

(Mark 7:24-30)

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“For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter” (Mk. 7:25, 26).<sup>1</sup>

Taking a reprieve from the infidelity, danger, and dullness of heart of His own people, Jesus traveled into the borders of Phoenicia. Among the Gentiles was a most remarkable woman. It is astonishing that from an area so darkened by heathenism where idolatry and wickedness drenched the landscape for hundreds of years that such a woman would arise in Scripture. She warrants a place of verbal praise that never fell from the lips of Christ to any of His fellow countrymen. Rather than the familiar charges of “little faith,” “hardness of heart,” and “unbelief,” Jesus commended this woman, like the Centurion in Luke 7:9, saying, “Great is your faith” (Matt. 15:28; contrast Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Mk. 10:5; 16:14; etc.). It’s amazing that this woman even knew of and sought out Christ, the son of David (Matt. 15:22). It’s amazing that this woman would continue to ask Jesus and beg His grace on behalf of her daughter though He initially ignored and denied her. Amazing still that she persisted when the Lord’s own disciples began saying “send her away” (Matt. 15:23; Mk. 7:26). Amazing yet still, that after she was given no answer and then denied that she worshiped Jesus (Matt. 15:25). Yes, Jesus is worthy of worship even He if does not answer our cries the way we want them answered! Further amazed we find this woman persisting to engage Christ even after being likened to a “little dog” and spoken thereby as inferior to children. I think most women would have had their feelings hurt and walked away in anger or sorrow. But this woman shows to us a feisty resolve to eat even the crumbs

that fall from heaven’s table. Oh that the church was full of women like her!

How many women have faith enough to bulldoze through pride to attain grace from God today? Rather, are there not many who complain against sermons on sin, worldliness, social drinking, immodesty, dancing, and the like? Are there not many who chew up the preacher to their husbands and children when issues like the above are exposed, expounded, and applied? Are there not those who become offended when the role of woman is taught as being subjective to man? “Submission” is often the all-forgotten trait of inner beauty in the modern woman (1 Pet. 3:1-6). If godly submission was aspired and desired in American families with the same ambition that facials, make-up, pedicures, manicures, and hairstyles are, the modern family and the presentation of the church would surely look more striking than it does today. Sadly, in many families, the man is happy to let the woman rule the house, and sadder yet that the woman loves to have it that way.

But this graceful woman sets herself apart not only from those “children” in Judah but also from many other women. She never tries to overstep Christ, but simply begs him for help and finds a crack (perhaps intentional by the Lord) in His illustration to show that *little dogs* can also partake without spoiling or robbing the meal designed for the children. Her goal is not derailed by any obstacle laid before her.

Her request was regarding her young demon-possessed daughter (Mk. 7:25). All who have had the blessed experience of having children can relate to this woman’s throbbing heart concerning her young daughter. That young daughter, that cute and delicate damsel, that ray of sunshine and energy amidst the gloom and fresh springtime air even in stale, cold, dry wintertime was being abused by Satan and his angels. Had this woman turned in disgust with Jesus’ initial response or lack thereof, had she been insulted by the disciples telling Jesus to send her away, had she shrunk back by being likened to a little dog rather than a child...then her child could not have been saved. Think about it mothers! Her daughter’s welfare was anchored in the balance of the mother’s faith! Has anything changed since then? Do we consider our daughters’ spiritual welfare may very well be tied to our faith? Are our daughters worth saving? The faith is often learned and received from the

parents (Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; Titus 1:6). Does the Scripture speak to us when it says, "when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also" (2 Tim. 1:5)? Parenting can be the cause for the acceptance or the rejection of Jesus. Do not underestimate your impact, daughters are influenced by mothers.

The Syro-Phoenician woman imparts to us that we must be faithful when it is hard and that we must persist even if it seems useless to do so. Our children's souls are in the balance of the decisions we make. When parents make decisions to attend a church, not because of the integrity of the teaching and soundness of the work, but because of *proximity* and *convenience*, they are teaching their children something about worship. To the spiritual detriment of their family, I've seen parents walk away from sound congregations to worship elsewhere based on proximity. It might make more sense geographically, but certainly not spiritually. When parents attend a church due to friendliness rather than truthfulness, they do not have the greatness of faith that this woman demonstrated. This woman did not have a friendly welcoming committee in Jesus or in His disciples when she came to them. The truth is not always perceived as friendly. When parents lag in Bible study at home and forsake the assembling of the saints due to competing worldly activities, they do not display the quality of faith viewed in this woman. Worldly activities should not compete with or impede the activity of the Word (Matt. 13:22). When parents berate sermons dealing with meatier subjects, sin, duty, etc., they do not have the great faith of this great woman but rather are like those in John 6:66, "From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more." It is not that our concern should be of a demon manhandling our young, but rather, our concern should be of "the doctrines of demons" (cf. 1 Tim. 4:1) entering their thinking. Are our daughters worth saving from Satan's grip? What do our actions speak? Let us pursue Christ even when He is silent. Let us reason from His answers and speak less and listen more (Jas. 1:19-21). Let us chase after even the crumbs, the tiny morsels that fall from the Master's table that we might save, if no one else, our own precious children.

<sup>1</sup> Unless noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.