

DAY FIVE

PERSISTENT FAITH

DAY 5 - JESUS ON MOUNTAIN-MOVING FAITH AND PRAYER

FRI JUNE 10: MATTHEW 15:21-28 – PERSISTENT FAITH

MATT 15:21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22** A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”

23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

24 He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

25 The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

26 He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

27 “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” **28** Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, **you have great faith!** Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Jesus has finished his powerful ministry in the Galilean region. The people there have had their opportunity. He has withdrawn to Gentile territory before a final push through Judea and on to his final destination, Jerusalem. Maybe he was getting away from the threats of Herod Antipas. Maybe he needed a break to prepare for what lay ahead. Whatever the reason, for a short time Jesus sequestered himself in foreign territory where he was less well known.

But a Canaanite woman recognised Jesus and asked for help. It seems that Jesus was not too keen to get involved. I know how he felt. When I’m on holidays, I’m reluctant to give too much time to any problems that arise in my ministry back at home. It’s not that I don’t care, I just need some space to replenish and refresh.

So Jesus brushed off this lady. He was not in Gentile territory to drum up more followers. They were not his calling or target. In God’s time, they would be reached by Christian gospel missionaries, but this was not their time. Jesus had come as the Suffering Servant to save Israel. God’s intention was to reach the Jewish people first and through them to save the world. Jesus’ boundaries were strong. Of course he cared, but he would not be distracted. This was not the time for a Gentile.





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However, this woman would just not give up. There was a temple for Eshmun, a pagan god of healing, just up the road, but she knew she needed Jesus to heal her daughter. The woman employed every tool at her disposal. She kept crying out so that she could not be ignored. She used the Jewish title, “Son of David,” for Jesus, showing that she understood his Messianic role. She humbly knelt before Jesus in obeisance and called him “Lord.” She parried his seeming dismissive words with the theological insight that God’s intention was also to bless the Gentiles (the dogs that eat the crumbs). This was a persistent and insightful and godly Canaanite woman and Jesus knew it. He marvelled at her great faith in him. He could not resist it. And he miraculously healed her daughter.

Big faith is persistent. It is not put off by disappointment or setbacks or even the seeming silence of God. Big faith is determined to persevere until Jesus responds. Sometimes he says, “No.” That’s okay. That’s his call. We trust Jesus. But until then, big faith keeps pushing and pushing, holding on to the biblical truth that God loves to give good gifts to his people. If you think that it is rude or faith-less to keep asking Jesus to work in power, read this passage again and hear Jesus’ response to the Canaanite lady’s persistence, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.”

FAITH-FILLED PRAYER FOR REVIVAL

Personal Revival: That I will have a growing confidence that God will work in power through my life.

Church Revival: That God’s Spirit will fill our times of worship and fellowship and that we will see the impact of his presence.

National Revival: That our national and state leaders will have good and humble hearts and will promote godly values with wisdom.

