

THE SYRO-PHOENICIAN WOMAN

Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Jesus had taken His disciples across the northern border of Israel into the coast of Tyre and Sidon. - Only time, we know of, Jesus went outside borders of Palestine, except as an infant, he was carried into Egypt.
- B. Jesus may have wanted to rest and give His disciples some private teaching. Mark 7:24
 - 1. Also, the hostility of Jews becoming more intense.
 - 2. Just prior to this, Jesus had told the Pharisees that they had made void the word of God by their traditions.
 - a. They were greatly offended by His words.
 - b. Perhaps He wanted to escape everything for a while.
- C. It was during this time that a certain woman makes a plea To Jesus and, as a result, receives a great blessing.
- D. Note some things we admire in this woman

DISCUSSION:

I. HAD RESPECT FOR THE LORD.

- A. Syro-Phoenician woman had probably heard of Jesus might works and set about to obtain help from Him
- B. Addressed Jesus as, "Lord, Son of David Matt 15:22
 - 1. Jesus is indeed "Lord." Mighty God, Everlasting Father, King of Kings, and Lord of lords Isa 9:6
- C. She knelt before Jesus Matt 15:25
 - 1. Greek word for "kneel" - literally, "to prostrate self in homage" and often translated "worship" in N.T.
 - 2. Mark says, "She came and fell at His feet" Mk 7:25
- D. She also pleaded for mercy Matt 15:22 (Demon possession was exceedingly terrible Mk 9:14-29)

II. HAD A STRONG FAITH

- A. She started with at least three strikes against her
 - 1. A Greek (Gentile). Mk 7:26 not of God's people
 - 2. She was a woman of Canaan Matt 15:22
 - a. Israel commanded to utterly destroy Canaanites
 - b. They disobeyed, and eventually the pagan influences they tolerated were their downfall
 - c. By Jesus' day, the Jews had learned their lesson and had no contact whatsoever with Canaanites
 - 3. A Syro-Phoenician - a Phoenician of Syria - of region of Tyre and Sidon. In latter days of ancient Israel, before the Babylonian captivity, people in region of Tyre and Sidon were bitter enemies of Israel

- B. When she came to Jesus, thrown three more strikes
 - 1. At first, Jesus ignored her Matt 15:23
 - a. Thus, she finds Jesus, the gracious helper and healer, not answering her at all
 - b. He did this, no doubt, to test her faith
 - 2. Disciples annoyed by her persistence - want Jesus to send her away Matt. 15:23 Jesus tells them, He was not sent just to Israel Matt. 15:24; Rom 15:9-12 Matt 12:18-21; Jhn 10:16
 - 3. Jesus tells her, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" Matt 15:26
- C. In spite of barriers, the woman responded in great faith
- D. Persevered in her faith even under discouragement

III. SHE RECEIVED HER REQUEST

- A. After hearing only words of seeming contempt, now hears words of gracious commendation: Mk 7:29-30
- B. Greatly blessed: received help she needed

IV. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM HER

- A. Respect for the Lord
 - 1. He is Lord, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, King of kings, and Lord of lords Isa 9:6; 1Tim 6:15
 - 2. Let us have awesome respect for Him and His word
- B. Humility Matt 23:12; Rom 13:7
 - 1. We must be willing to take the lower seat
 - 2. Don't be discouraged if we don't receive recognition or praise (even if it might be deserved)
- C. Persistence - Consider, again, obstacles woman faced
 - 1. There was, at first, the silence of Jesus
 - 2. The disciples asked to send her away
 - 3. When Jesus spoke, His words seemed negative
 - 4. None of this caused her to leave Lk 11:5-9
- D. Faith tested is a richer faith Jas 1:2,3, 12; 1Pet 1:7
 - 1. Jesus could have at once given her what she wanted, but He tested her
 - 2. She left with a fuller and richer faith in the end

CONCLUSION:

- A. In Jer 29:13 God declares, "...You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart"
 - 1. Seek the Lord in faith; in humility; with all our hearts
 - 2. Seek the Lord with complete obedience
- B. When we do so, blessings will flow from the presence of the Lord Acts 3:19

(By David J. Riggs revised by JLH)