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Weekly Bible Notes
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FREE SAMPLER

Digging deeper into the Bible

For study the week of **March 3 – 9, 2025**

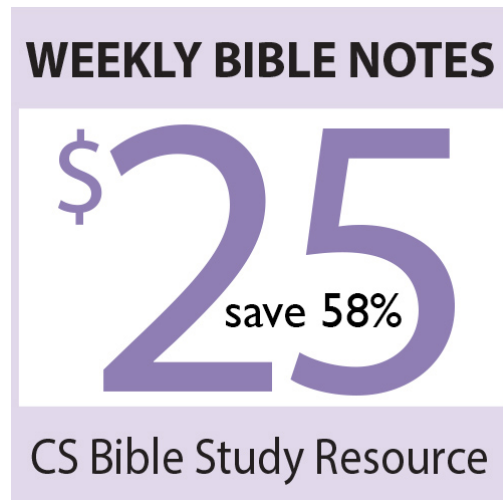
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Matthew 15:21-28

The Faith of the Canaanite Woman

(CEB)* ²¹ From there, Jesus went to the regions of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman from those territories came out and shouted, “Show me mercy, Son of David. My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession.” ²³ But he didn’t respond to her at all. His disciples came and urged him, “Send her away; she keeps shouting out after us.” ²⁴ Jesus replied, “I’ve been sent only to the lost sheep, the people of Israel.” ²⁵ But she knelt before him and said, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ He replied, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and toss it to dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall off their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith. It will be just as you wish.” And right then her daughter was healed.

*(Common English Bible) View text in: [AMP](#) | [GNT](#) | [KJV](#) | [MSG](#) | [NET](#) | [NIV](#) | [NLT](#) | [NRSVUE](#) | [VOICE](#)

COMMENTARY/RESOURCES:

OVERVIEW: “Jesus may have stayed for some time in the Jewish region of Gennesaret on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee, but he now explicitly withdraws to Gentile territory, to the infamous cities of Tyre and Sidon. The Jews of Galilee have been privileged to hear and see Jesus’ message and miracles that authenticated his announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of heaven, but their lack of repentance condemns them....so Jesus ‘withdraws.’ He and his disciples proceed to Gentile regions before heading to Judea and the final destination, Jerusalem.” (*The NIV Application Commentary (NIVAC)*, 538)

21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. (KJV)

(PHIL) Jesus left that place and retired into the Tyre and Sidon district.

PRONUNCIATIONS: Sidon: “(sí’ duhn), [Audio](#) one of the two leading cities (with Tyre) of ancient Phoenicia. Sidon is located twenty-two miles north of Tyre on the Mediterranean coast of modern Lebanon.” Tyre: “(tír),” [Audio](#) (*Harper Collins Bible Dictionary (HBD)*, p1020)

MAPS: “Tyre,” Map and article [BibleAtlas.org](#) and “Sidon,” Map and article [BibleAltas.org](#)

COMMENTARY: “Anciently the whole land, including Tyre and Sidon, was in the possession of the Canaanites, and called Canaan. The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites. Those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was therefore a Gentile, living under the Greek government, and probably speaking the Greek language.” (*Notes on the Old and the New Testaments (BARNES)*)

“It is clear that he leaves the land of Israel. This time it is not a case of ‘outsiders’ coming to him; he himself goes out to them. But this action of going out to them does not begin immediately. First he enters a house for the purpose of temporary seclusion, but ‘he could not be hid’.” (*New Testament Commentary (NTC)*, p621-2)

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. (KJV)

(NLT) 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.”

(VOICE) A Canaanite woman—a non-Jew—came to Him. **Canaanite Woman (wailing):** Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is possessed by a demon. *Have mercy, Lord!*

“a woman of Canaan”: See the [Bible Character Notes](#)

COMMENTARY: “A Canaanite woman of that district came to him crying out on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. During the time of the Judges the Canaanites were the major enemies of Israel. They were the heathen population of Palestine....Matthew’s use of **Canaanite** emphasizes that the woman to whom Jesus

talks is of a distinctly different ethnic background....By addressing Jesus as **Son of David** she shows an awareness of his messianic role." (*New International Bible Commentary (NIBC)*)

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. (KJV)

(GNT) But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, "Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!"

COMMENTARY: "There was absolute silence on his part. He acted as if he had not even heard her. A little later more will be said about this seeming indifference on the part of Jesus....the theory according to which the disciples meant, 'Grant her request and then dismiss her,' is not supported by any solid argument. These men evidently considered this woman, who was constantly crying out after them, an intolerable nuisance." (*New Testament Commentary (NTC)*, p622)

"The woman continued to follow after them, and she continued to shout. Finally, the disciples urged Jesus to tell her to leave. Jesus, always compassionate, would heal the woman's daughter, but not just to make her stop following them. He had a lesson about faith that he needed to teach this woman. In so doing, he would teach the disciples a lesson as well." (*Life Application New Testament Commentary (LANTC)*)

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (KJV)

(PHIL) "I was only sent," replied Jesus, "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

COMMENTARY: "It would seem that Jesus wished the woman to understand that His activities were circumscribed not only by the inevitable limitations of His manhood, but by the specific part that He had been called to play during His brief earthly life. He was indeed the Christ of Jewish prophecy, as she had herself admitted when she addressed Him as *thou son of David*. His mission therefore was exclusively to God's chosen people Israel. Precisely because He was *sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, He could not be at the beck and call of everyone, however deserving their requests might be." (*The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (TNTC)*, p150)

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. (KJV)

(AMP) But she came and, kneeling, worshiped Him and kept praying, Lord, help me!

COMMENTARY: "The remarkable persistence of the woman continues even after the rebuff contained in the exclusivism of the preceding statement. She is convinced that he is the Jewish Messiah and that he can heal her daughter. She thus 'began to worship' him, a verb used with reference to Jesus. Driven by a mother's love for her child, she again made her appeal: 'Lord help me,' a re-expression of the request in verse 22 but in more idiomatic Greek." (*Word Biblical Commentary (WBC)*, p442)

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. (KJV)

(AMP) And He answered, It is not right (proper, becoming, or fair) to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.

COMMENTARY: "The term *dogs* does not refer to wild dogs (scavenging animals roaming around the countryside) in this context, but to small dogs taken in as house pets. It is thus not a derogatory term per se, but is instead intended by Jesus to indicate the privileged position of the Jews (especially his disciples) as the initial recipients of Jesus' ministry. The woman's response of faith and her willingness to accept whatever Jesus would offer pleased him to such an extent that he granted her request." (*New English Translation notes*)

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. (KJV)

(VOICE) **Canaanite Woman:** But, Lord, even dogs eat the crumbs that fall by the table as their master is eating.

COMMENTARY: "The woman's answer is wonderful in every way. Whole-heartedly she accepts what Jesus says about the divine arrangement of his Messianic mission as confined to the chosen nation. Her consent to it all is far more than formal or superficial: she *understands* and consents, and she submits without question or thought of objection....She keeps entirely to the figurative language of Jesus, and by means of it expresses all

her faith in all its humbleness and submissiveness, begging as one of those little pet dogs a few tiny crumbs which the children in eating inadvertently keep dropping on the floor. Here is faith in all its lowly beauty.” (*Commentary on the New Testament (LENSKI)*, p580-1)

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. (KJV)

(TPT) Then Jesus answered her, “Dear woman, your faith is strong! What you desire will be done for you.” And at that very moment, her daughter was instantly set free from demonic torment.

COMMENTARY: “*Woman* was a polite form of address, similar to “Madam” or “Ma’am” used in English in different regions.” (*New English Translation notes*)

“The address, ‘O woman,’ reveals the degree to which Jesus was moved by this gentile woman’s faith. The reward of faith with the granting of a request for healing is an important theme in Matthew. Jesus thus finally responds to the woman’s faith with the good news, ‘Be it to you as you want’. The short notice at the end of the pericope that her daughter ‘was healed’ from that hour is exactly paralleled in the conclusion to the story of the healing of the centurion’s son.” (*Word Biblical Commentary (WBC)*, p442-3)

METACOMMENT: “In the healing of the Canaanitish woman's daughter there were two main factors—her faith, and Jesus' understanding. The woman's faith brought her to Jesus for help. Jesus recognized her faith, and knowing that it rendered her receptive to the power of Truth, he realized the truth for her and her daughter, with the result that the latter was healed. Men say a miracle happened; and so to human sense it did. But the understanding of God and His law, which Christian Science gives, shows us that what is called a miracle was simply the visible sign that spiritual understanding had destroyed the false beliefs of the so-called carnal or human mind.” (*Sinclair, Duncan, “Faith and Understanding”, Sentinel* Vol. 29 (11 September 1926), p. 30.)

JSH-Online: <https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1926/9/29-2/faith-and-understanding>

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