

Devotional: "[I Don't Have Much](#)" (4:30) (follow with prayer)

Learn

1. Read Matthew 15:21-28. How did the passage and sermon impact you?
2. In verses 22 and 23, we meet a surprising contrast: a crying woman and a silent Jesus. Why didn't the Canaanite woman simply return home when Jesus didn't respond to her?
 - a. Her faith in who Jesus is was demonstrated in v. 22 (Lord, messianic title of "Son of David") - true faith never turns its back on Jesus
3. How was the Canaanite woman apparently rejected outright by both the disciples (v. 23) and by Christ Himself (v. 24)? Why would they both reject her? How does she respond to this "double-barrel" rejection and what should that response teach us today?
 - a. The Canaanite woman was rejected by the disciples because A. they were sinners, and B. too proud and indifferent (v. 23 "she is crying out after us" - she wasn't crying out for *them*, she was crying out for Jesus. They wanted to get rid of her because of the raucous she was causing)
 - b. To better understand Jesus' rejection we must realize that Christ's priestly work as a promised Savior where all nations will be blessed must be distinguished from his prophetic work during his ministry on earth which was primarily confined to the Jews. After Christ's resurrection and Pentecost, the Spirit would come and the Apostles would then take the Gospel to all the nations. But that time was not yet, so in a way the woman was "acting out of turn" and trying to raid the table of God's chosen people too early
 - c. She responded to the rejection by crying out for help and with worship. A heart of worship is shown by referencing Jesus as Lord (vv. 22, 25, 27), and in v. 25 she knelt before Him (the KJV translates the Greek word *prosekylenei* as *worshipped* instead of "knelt")
4. How does Jesus apparently insult the Canaanite woman in her third test of her faith in verse 26? How does she respond and what should that teach us today?
 - a. He made an allusion to the Gentiles being considered dogs, and dogs were considered unclean. In the OT dogs were wild, but by NT times people were starting to have dogs as pets who would be able to get crumbs that fell from a table.
 - b. This account took place at the northern border of Israel - in a sense she's not asking to be a Jew and sit at the table, she's merely asking to be near so she can "get a few crumbs." She responds with agreement that she is unclean and unworthy, she knows she's a beggar at the feet of Jesus with no religious or citizenship rights.
 - c. This should teach us that we must agree and confess that we are unclean and unworthy; we can "argue" with God in a reverential way - even "crumbs" from

Christ are sufficient for us because he is merciful, strong, and mighty to save; we persist and wait on God;

5. On what grounds could Jesus finally respond positively to this remarkable woman who passed all three of his tests?
 - a. For the Canaanite woman there was apparent silence, apparent rejection, and apparent insult, but she responded with great faith. As we look at what Jesus experienced on the cross we can make the same parallels of apparent silence from God, rejection, and insults.
 - b. This was not her faith, but faith God had given her - think of it like a parent who has a child who wants to buy the parent a gift, and the parent gives them money to do so. When the parent receives the gift they do so with joy, they don't tell the child their gift is meaningless - in similar fashion we're reminded that our faith is a gift from God

Practice

Video: "[What to do when God feels absent](#)" by John Piper (3:14)

1. Spiritually, we who are Christians know the burden of God's silence at times when it seems like He does not answer our prayers. But what are two major reasons why God sometimes appears to be silent to us and how should we respond?
 - a. (1) God sometimes appears to be silent to us for the refining and maturing of our faith - consider how easily we'd take God for granted if He answered every prayer the second we prayed it. (2) For His greater glory (i.e., story of Lazarus in Jhn 11:3-6, emphasis on v. 4) Often our prayers can go from being a flame, then quickly be reduced to a coal, and then to ashes - but God often answers our prayers "from the ashes" so that He gets all the glory

Video: "[How do you pray without ceasing?](#)" by Dr. Donald Whitney (4:03)

2. Compare the two pleas/prayers in verse 22b and verse 25. What differences do you notice between them? Why are some of our shortest prayers the best prayers?
 - a. Her first plea is longer (request for mercy, acknowledgement of deity, explanation of situation) than her second request of "Lord help me." Sometimes the "best" prayers are short prayers because when we too burdened and don't have words, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." Rom. 8:26-27
3. When the Canaanite woman comes to Christ on behalf of her daughter, why does Christ deal with the mother first before he heals the daughter? How does this translate into our lives and difficulties with our children?

- a. God often uses the difficulties with our children to deal with us first and mature us before he heals our children (or loved ones) If we were honest with ourselves, we'd likely admit that we'd be spoiled brats without trials. ("It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply" *The Root of the Righteous* by A.W. Tozer)

Change

- Why is it critical as Christians that our faith continues to grow and mature despite apparent silence, rejection, or insults?
 - James 1:2–4 ²Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.
 - 2 Peter 3:18 ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
 - Ephesians 4:15 ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,
 - Colossians 1:10 ¹⁰so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;