

## **The Childrens Bread**

21Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." 23But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." 24But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

29Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. 30And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. 31So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

32And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." 33The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" 34And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." 35And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; 36and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 37And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. 38And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

39And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

I titled this section, "The Childrens bread", taken of course from Jesus words to this woman in vs. 26. *"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*

Last week I indicated that we would be challenged to grasp all that is in these verses.

And yet, I began to see a pattern in these incidents. The pattern of the multitude of healing miracles, followed by the feeding of the 4,000 is; Like, is there an echo in the room. And it doesn't stop there. I started to see other parallels.

Why the obvious repeat almost to the words of ground we've already just gone over. Miracles, healings, feeding the 4,000. I am convinced that Matthew especially orders all these sections and paragraphs with purpose. He has a reason for the order he tells his story in.

The answer is in the word, *withdrew*. Most of the times it's used, especially in Matthews gospel it defines a purposeful seperation for the sake of either safety, or simply to be alone. It's what we call out at work, flying under the radar. You don't want to be noticed. Don't want to be found.

Joseph withdrew to Egypt when Herod was a threat. Jesus withdrew to Galilee when John was thrown in prison.

Mark helps us arrange the scene. In Mk. 7:24 he says; *From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden.*

I think He wanted some alone time with the disciples, plus the jews were getting too confrontive too soon. It's not time to die yet. It's time to pour your life into the disciples who will be the Kingdom of God on earth when He is gone.

So, he withdrew. To Tyre and Sidon.

Tyre is the northern area of Phoenicia. They were an immensely successful ancient civilization.

Sailors, seagoers, wicked, proud, arrogant Tyre. Jezebel came from there. Baal worship was there. Ashteroth / Astarte was worshipped there. It was a mother / child religion.

It's interesting to note that the culture here was Greek. And in that culture the underlying idea is that the worship of beauty is the basis of culture. So what their religion taught was that all restraint must be cast aside in the pursuit of beauty. Follow your impulses wherever they may take you. Therein lies the beauty.

Don't let any restraint hold you back from following your desires in the pursuit of beauty. Sound familiar? There's nothing new under the sun folks. Satan isn't even very original. He just keeps regurgitating the same old lies. In new packages.

God had long ago pronounced judgement on Tyre. It was fully gentile. And they were the traditional enemies of Israel. A good place to not run into any pharisees.

But I think I see something else also. Turn with me, if you like, or just listen to Luke 4 close to the beginning of Jesus ministry . . . to the jews at Nazareth.

*21And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?" 23And He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we heard was done at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" 24And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. 25"But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; 26and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27" And there were many lepers in*

*Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” 28And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; 29and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. 30But passing through their midst, He went His way.*

When Jesus told them that God could, and would, perhaps, take what belonged to the children and give it to the gentiles, they were enraged!

He reminds them that there were many widows in Israel but Elijah was sent to Zarephath in Sidon to dwell with a widow there. There were many lepers in Israel, but it was Naaman the Syrian that was cleansed.

God answers Israel's stiff-necked unbelief in times past by giving the children's bread to outsiders. That was a warning at Nazareth. And they tried to murder Him.

Here, a year and a half or 2 years later, the rulers of Israel have rejected Him. They are a threat to His life, before the time. They have seen all the miracles and said it was Satanic. Jesus withdrew. And this next section of events is Jesus, giving the children's bread, to the gentiles.

I think Matthew chooses these events purposefully in order to mirror all the things Jesus had done for those who He was sent to, God's chosen nation, and they want Him dead, so now the goodies go to the gentiles.

I think the parallel is profound. Elijah went to Sidon. Jesus went to Sidon. Elijah helped a widow there. Jesus will impact a desperate mother there. Then He'll do the same miracles He did in Israel, but this time in gentile country. Then He'll feed the 4,000, just like He did in Israel, but this time in gentile regions. The children's bread, quite literally, will feed the gentiles.

That word withdrew, is picturesque. Matthew is painting a picture for us. Jesus is finished with Israel. He's moved out in a concentric circle, out into gentile regions. Like a slap in the face to the Jews.

*Vs. 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."*

This is intercessory prayer. A woman with a daughter. The word for daughter would be the one used for a small girl. Pre-teen. How sad that a demon would torment a little child. There is so much we don't understand about the spirit world. This mother is beyond distressed.

The tense of the verb, to cry out, is continuous. She cried out continuously. Over and over. Louder and louder.

The word for cried out is krad-zo. It's an onomatopoeic word that comes from mimicing the noise a raven makes continuously. Out at work we have a large water tower and the ravens have nests up there and they shout at me when I walk from my shop to the admin building. Barack. Barack Barack. Sometimes I say, who ya votin' for? Barack barack barack

krázō krázō krázō like a raven. She won't shut up. She's very loud, and she's going to be heard. That's why Matthew begins his story with Behold!

We might say Dude! This lady was loud! and she wouldn't shut up!

But she says the right things. She has an approach that is consistent with the beatitudes.

*Matt. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*4 Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.*

*5 Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

*6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

She comes from a position of a bankrupt begger pleading for mercy. That's the right approach. She says; *Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David;*  
*my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.*

She calls Him Lord. The word is what a slave calls a master. It's the word a person who has no position or rights or expectation would use for someone who has all of the ownership rights.

I was listening to Douglas Wilson the other day talking about modern quasi-christian music. He was a bit derisive and then he laughed and said "no one blasphemes like an evangelical".

We think Jesus is our buddy. Our pal. We talk to Him like He's sitting next to us at a bar.

This woman comes grovelling. From the position of a slave who is not only unequal with the master, she owes the master a debt she cannot pay, and she begs for mercy.

Now, let's talk about her theology. She says; *Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David.*

Son of David. Son of David. She's a Canaanite. A Syrian woman under greek rule. Where did that come from? Son of David.

Maybe she needs to talk to the rulers of Israel and find out he's a mad man. He's demon possessed himself. That's how He does the tricks.

We don't know much about her. Where her belief system came from. What she knew about God's promises to His people Israel of a coming messiah. A Son of David. But there it is. She believes that He is the promised One.

She's got a lot going for her! Good theology. Beatitude attitude. She's very loud. She's going to be heard. She's persistent.

*23But He did not answer her a word.*

Jesus ignores her pleading. He doesn't answer her. And according to jewish custom, you have to wonder if the disciples are thinking; of course He doesn't answer her. No jew would.

She's a woman. She's a gentile. She's part of a nation that is hostile to Israel. Of course He's ignoring her.

But she keeps it up, and it's really beginning to get on their nerves.  
Bugger off woman.

*And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."*

Like those ravens on the water tower. How I wish I had a .22 with a scope. Now that would be fun. *she keeps shouting at us.*" She's bugging us.

She's like the woman who kept pestering the judge for justice in Jesus illustration. Like the guy beating on the shop keepers door until he finally gets what he came for.

And the disciples are like, make her go away. PLEASE. She's really getting on our nerves. Send her away.

Remember the lesson about what comes out of the mouth is from the heart. Listen to what this woman is shouting; *Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David*

She is powerless. *Blessed \* are \* the \* meek*

Meek doesn't mean wimpy. It means powerless. It would be hard to find a person more powerless than this woman. She's got nothing but strikes against her. No reason on earth why Jesus should help her.

Just like us . . .

Why does Jesus treat her this way. Why is He making her work so hard for this. You read this and you think, wow, this is harsh. Cold shoulder. Doesn't answer. Ignores her totally. Finally He looks her direction but only because the disciples have pressed Him. Make her go away.

Why? Well, think about it this way. This story wouldn't be in these pages if He'd just answered her the first time. *OK, It's done. Go your way. Your daughter's fine.*

That wouldn't have made the pages, because we wouldn't know about her faith if He just did it the easy way.

I was re-reading my notes when we looked at this miracle in the book of Mark. I said then, maybe the reason He went to Tyre and Sidon, besides the fact that He's safer with Israel's enemies than He is with His countrymen.

Besides that, I imagine His father saying, I've got a lady in Sidon that you've really gotta meet. Her faith is huge.

*Vs. 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

This is a test of her faith. Lady, you've got no claim for what you're asking. You're not an Isrealite. The messiah belongs to Israel. The promises are for Israel.

And yet, before there was a nation, a chosen people, God told Abraham that ALL nations would be blessed through his lineage. So Jesus remark to her is about timing.

Right now, God is dealing with Israel. But God's ultimate plan is for all the nations to be blessed. After the death and resurrection, Jesus says Go ye therefore into ALL the world.

You know, when God was choosing a people to be His own, He picked a people who were just small enough and wicked enough and horrible enough to murder Him when He got there. Israel thought they were chosen because they were good. Noble. Maybe it's the other way around.

Speculation. In any case, Jesus has not gone to the cross yet. Not been

raised from the dead yet. For now, He's only sent to Israel. She has no claim on Him. No basis to ask anything. Again, like us . .

*24But He answered . . . that's a breakthrough! Before he was acting like she was invisible. Anything is better than that. At least this is a conversation.*

*25But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"*

This is worship. This is the dogged determination of a mother who is out of options. Her daughter is cruelly tormented by a spirit being. She believes Jesus is Lord. Lord of her, Lord of that evil spirit, Lord inside and outside Israel.

She worships and she begs. This is the correct posture before God, the Almighty. He doesn't owe us anything. We're like this woman. We don't have any claim on Him. All we can do is take the posture of a begger. Plead for mercy.

In this case she's not even asking for mercy for herself directly. She's interceding for a beloved daughter. She says simply, *"Lord, help me!"*

*26And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*

This is a stunning statement to us who have landed in the politically correct 2010's. We laugh out loud thinking about Jesus on the Oprah Winfrey show. The gasps of horror.

Did He just call this lady a dog? Well, in the context of "the children" He just called her whole nation "dogs."

I think maybe Jesus may be a good candidate for some re-programming. Jesus needs to pay a \$135,000 dollar fine and submit to some hours of re-programming. He's just throwing hate language all over the place.

Let's take a little side bar here and look at this weeks headlines;

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD NYTimes NOV. 4, 2015

A story with the headline: **In Houston, Hate Trumped Fairness**

*Sometime in the near future, a transgender teenager in Texas will attempt suicide — and maybe succeed — because vilifying people for their gender identity remains politically acceptable in America.*

Those words were the opening lines in an article about the Houston bathroom ordinance that ultimately failed.

What's frightening in there though, is the ideas inherent in those words. First that anyone who believes the definitions in an old book called the Bible, is by default, a hater. And such a hater that teenagers are going to take their own lives.

The next idea put forward is that the way to solve the problem of the haters is to make it politically unacceptable in America, to hold those views described in this book. Government needs to reign in the haters. Do you see where this is going? The government must coerce and punish the haters until they stop. That story ran in the Times on Nov. 4th.

On Nov. 10th, the Washington Post ran this title; *White House press secretary Josh Earnest said on Tuesday the administration endorsed legislation that would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.*

I'm not supposed to mention this president, but the fact is, this man is not a friend of anyone who believes in the authority of what is written in this book. That statement is not political. It is moral, and if you believe what this book says, and believe it has authority over your life, you are defined as a hater that the political process in this country needs to somehow fix.

This mischief, tampering with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is

purposefully done to cause harm to people of faith who hold to the tenets of this book.

Here's my tip of the day; If you have a bunch of cash to invest, I'd recommend buying stock in whatever company it is that makes the "blue room" porta potties. That's probably where decent folk, or haters, whatever the right term is, will end up.

OK, enough of that.

Jesus is using terminology here, ***the dogs***, the same as he used before. In Mt. 7:6 he says; 6"*Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.*

When we look at this closer, it seems there's a role reversal. The children are the dogs and the dogs are the children.

It's his own people, Israel, who are ultimately going to trample Him under foot and tear Him to pieces. He's thrown the pearls to them and they have trampled them under foot and will turn and charge Him as soon as it is possible.

Turns out, the people in Sidon are classier than the home folk. He's in less danger there with Israel's enemies than He is in Israel.

Make no mistake. Jesus knows who the dogs are, and who the children are. He's just on a mission to reveal this lady's mega faith.

*He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*

And she is razor sharp. She takes His metaphor and throws it right back at Him.

*27But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."*

She offers no defense, no argument, nothing at all. She accepts His metaphor totally. A canaanite woman. A virtual dog. A curr.

If Israel had completely followed Gods command in Deuteronomy, this woman wouldn't be standing before Jesus. God ordered Israel to eliminate the canaanites. They were a cancer on humankind. A blight. But Israel failed, and thus this woman stands before Jesus begging.

She's not about to argue her position. Dog is OK.

Actually, much has been made of the greek term for dog here. It is actually the one used for small dogs kept as pets. Not vulgar packs of dogs which were dangerous.

*And she shoots back, Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."*

I'm nothing but a dog, but even dogs get the occasional crumb. In her return metaphor, Jesus is the Master, she is the dog, and she's begging for just a morsel. Her faith is that one crumb of Jesus power would be enough.

*28Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great;*

We talked about who the dogs are. Gentiles. But Jesus only said this word about great faith 2 times. Both of the recipients were outside the commonwealth of Israel. Both of the mega-faith people in the gospels . are gentile dogs.

Jesus said. *O woman, your faith is great!*

We need to talk about faith for just a moment.

Again, a headline taken from the internet; *Oprah Winfrey presents "Belief," a groundbreaking television event exploring humankind's ongoing search to connect with something greater than ourselves . .*

I promise to never mention Oprah twice in one sermon again. I couldn't

resist. This idea of "belief" for the sake of believing. In what?

Faith only means something if you believe in something that has the tangible power to accomplish what you believe. You can leap out of an airplane with no parachute because you have faith, and the laws of gravity may win out over your faith. Faith has to be in something. Let's explore this woman's faith.

She called Jesus, Lord, and Son of David. She had some understanding of the Jewish nation's promises concerning their messiah. She believes Jesus is that person. And she believes that He can accomplish what she's asking Him to do.

She believes He has the authority to control the spirit world. She believes He is the promised one, and that He has all authority. She believes one crumb of His power and authority will be enough to accomplish her desire for her daughter.

And she comes repenting. Lord, have mercy, she says. Mercy is not getting what you deserve. It is a grace. Unmerited favor. What a beggar asks his debtor for when he is bankrupt. That was her faith. Quite different from Oprah's faith. It's faith IN someone who can accomplish what she needs. Huge difference.

*28 Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.*

I can't help but wonder if the demon was present, watching the proceedings. The woman crying out. Jesus ignoring her. The drama unfolding. Thinking to himself, this could be bad for me. Jesus has ultimate control. Authority over every created thing.

He doesn't speak to the demon, like He did in other places. He just tells her, it's done. It's finished. And that's the end of it.

What is the lesson for us.

If you're a Christian, and I hope you are, somewhere in your heart, you

must have this desire to be someone Jesus would meet, and say; *your faith is great!*

It's not often heard in the gospels. 2 times. Both gentiles. Not once in Israel. In fact, most of the time what's He telling the disciples?

*Ye of little faith*, right? Wimpy faith. But in fairness, that was before He sent the comforter to them. The Holy Spirit. In time, they turned the world upside down.

So, what's our problem? Why aren't we turning anything upside down? We have the same Holy Spirit. The possibility is there. The Bible says; *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

That verse is ground zero for me. I keep telling you I'm a one trick pony. The only thing I know to do is teach the word of God. Teach the word of God. Line upon line. Precept upon precept. Here a little. There a little.

My hope is for some "great faith" people who are eventually going to turn the world upside down. That's what the Word is supposed to do. I believe it.

The woman in this story was a tough character. Flinty. I'm sure the folks around where she lived knew her well. She has a presence. Strength of character. Gutsy. Quick witted. Smart.

And yet she's powerless in the spirit world. She can't drive the demon away. I'm sure she had prayed. To the God of Israel. Still the demon won't go away. She's helpless in that realm. As are we.

We can't accomplish anything in the spiritual dimension. We're just like this woman. We need to come to Jesus, begging, loudly, persistently, over and over, until the man who CAN do something, does.

We need to be intercessors. She came begging for someone else. She is motivated by family love. She comes begging for her loved ones.

And we need to rightly assess our position before the Almighty God. This woman came as a beggar, begging. As an unworthy slave to a master. She personified the beatitudes. And she went home blessed.