

**Matthew 15:21-28 (NIV)**

<sup>21</sup>Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup>A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.”

<sup>23</sup>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.”

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

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

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

<sup>27</sup>“Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

<sup>28</sup>Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

40-15-01-Faith is the Hunter

faith, persistence, prayer, intercession

Mat 15:21-28

Faith pursues God until it captures His Word.

**INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture Reading)**

–[In *Fate Is the Hunter* (a 1964 movie), a man’s faith in his friend persists until he proves his friend’s innocence.] In this sermon, **Faith is the Hunter**, a woman’s faith in Christ persists until she captures His word of healing. –Jesus just had a run-in with the Jewish leaders and withdrew to *Tyre, a Gentile region*. Was it for refuge from rejection, rest from fatigue, a sign of future Gentile ministry, OR simply His Father’s directive by the Holy Spirit, Who told Him what to do, where to go, and what to say? I tend to believe the latter. His Father wanted His Son to meet a woman whose faith would teach us all a great lesson: HOM.idea.

**I. Her Quest Was Passionate**–v. 22b. “*Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession.*”

A. *This woman’s faith* appealed to the right source of hope and help–

1. “*Son of David*” indicated a turning from her false gods to trust in Israel’s Messiah. (True faith is always preceded by repentance.)
2. Calling Him “*Lord*” was an appeal of reliance, not just rhetoric. (“*Lord*” can be used as a title to flatter a person of superior rank, but she called Him “*Lord*” as her child’s only hope for healing.)

B. Her faith was asking for unmerited favor: “*have mercy on me!*” (This showed no trust in her status, for a Syro-Phoenician had none with Jews, and no trust in her power to bargain (What can sinners offer Christ? [“*Nothing in my hands I bring, Only to His cross I cling!*”])).

**TRANS:** This woman was a huntress chasing God. Her faith sought a powerful word from God’s Messiah to free her daughter from demonic torment, and she pursued this quest against all obstacles....

**II. Her Quest Was Persistent**– v.23-24. *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.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”*

- A. This woman was undaunted by discouraging results in her quest:
1. First, *Jesus did not answer a word*. (But no answer isn’t a no answer.)

**[There's a quote:** "Silence is God's waiting room for divine appointments.")

2. So, she turns to His *disciples*, and their solution is: "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." (But does Jesus tell her to leave?)
  3. No... **He tells his disciples** of the *theological barrier* to her quest: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." (**IOW**, "She's right that I'm the 'Lord,' the 'Son of David,' but I'm after 'the lost sheep of Israel' right now. There's a future door for Gentiles, but she's knocking on the OT door of promise to God's covenant people.")
- B. **To this desperate mother driven by her daughter's misery**—future door or not—**she was determined to keep on knocking**— **v.25**, *The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.*
1. **Her faith did not give up**, but **kept steadily aiming** at the target.
  2. **Her faith took on the posture of a beggar**, a slave, a hostage.
  3. She **no longer approached Him** on any Jewish grounds but was **appealing for His help on the basis of faith alone**.

**TRANS:** "Lord, help me!" "Give me the word that will end the agony of my demon-infested daughter!" This woman's faith was *serious* and on a *passionate, persistent hunt* to capture *Christ's healing word!* Despite *barriers* and *obstacles*, she wouldn't stop till she heard Him say that her precious daughter would be set free. **But it didn't seem that...**

**III. Her Quest Would Prevail**— **v.26**, *He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."*

- A. "Is this the caring Jesus we know?!" Yes, it's Him, but **remember...**
1. He came to bring sinners **to true repentance and to humble faith**. ("Well, what's more humbling than being called a dog [**even** if it's a pet dog, as this word literally means]?")
  2. **Recall also**, He **did only what He saw His Father doing**. (So the **real question is: What was God the Father after in this woman?**)
  3. **Note, too**, how He moved *closer to her* **in each of His responses**: **1<sup>st</sup> silence, next**, talking to her **indirectly, now addressing her!**
- B. **But listen to her reply in v.27**, "Yes, Lord... but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." (**We call that checkmate!** She had cornered her prey **and she knew**, "He **can't** refuse me now!")
1. **Her faith caught Christ** in His own words: "Okay, Master, you say I'm a dog; then give me a dog's rights!"
  2. **Her faith** grabbed the hand that seemed to be pushing her away

and used her **hold on it** to pull herself **even closer to her quarry**.

3. **Her faith** said, "**OK**, let the children eat first! Any crumbs left over from Your hand have enough power to heal my daughter!"
- C. **SHE had WON!**— **v.28**, *Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. (She had hunted for a healing word, but who was the real Hunter? [Ever heard that **comedy line**: "Now I've got you right where you want me!"])*
1. **Jesus always hunted for "great faith"** but found it **only in a Gentile woman and a Roman centurion... never in His own people!**
  2. **Jesus did** want her to enjoy "*the children's bread*," but that could happen only **if her faith surpassed** that of "*the children*," **and it did!**)
  3. **Jesus pulled from this woman's heart a new standard of "great faith"**, showing how all believers should pray. [**G. Campbell Morgan** said about her: "Against prejudice she came, against silence she persevered, against exclusion she proceeded, against rebuff she won."]

### **CONCLUSION:**

—We need this woman's "*great faith*," a **faith that pursues God until it captures His Word!** **Her story** teaches us that "*great faith*" is *passionate* and *persistent*. It keeps **hoping** when it looks *hopeless* to do so. **Her example** teaches us that "*great faith*" **feeds and grows strong on humility**. —Finally, *her victory* teaches us that there's a "yes" that sometimes lies hidden in the heart of God, and "*great faith*" holds on till it hears that "yes" from the lips of Christ.