

40-15-01 --Faith is the Hunter  
 faith, persistence, prayer, intercession  
 Mt 15:21-28  
 Faith pursues God until it captures His Word.

#### INTRODUCTION

--In Matthew 15, Jesus had just had a run-in with the Jewish leaders; now He withdraws into the Gentile region of Tyre. Why? Refuge from rejection? Renewal for fatigue? Prophecy of the Gentile future? Or is Jesus quietly following His Father's voice, directing Him by the HS what to do, where to go, and what to say?  
 --Perhaps His whole purpose was to meet this woman whose encounter with Christ would teach us a great lesson: **HOM.idea.**

#### I. A Passionate Quest, v. 22

- A. Her faith felt the pain of the problem-- "*my daughter*":
1. A parent's compassion is rooted in the image of God.
  2. Young people can suffer torment at the hands of demons:
    - a. Broken wills, manipulated by lies (poor self-image).
    - b. Broken health, destroyed by addictions (sex, drugs).
    - c. Broken hearts, embittered by family breakdown.
- B. Her faith appealed to the right source of hope and help--
1. "*Son of David*"-- she forsook her false gods for Israel's Messiah (true faith is always preceded by repentance)
  2. "*Lord*"-- is it only her rhetoric, or is it her only refuge?
    - a. "*Lord*" as a title only?-- Mt 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."
    - b. "*Lord*" as her only hope for healing help!-- Ro 10:12-13, For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
- C. Her faith pleaded for unmerited favor:
1. No trust in her personal standing (Greek, Syro-Phoenician)
  2. No bargaining with God (What can sinners offer Him?  
 "Nothing in my hands I bring, Only to His cross I cling!")

**TRANS--** This woman was a hunter on the trail of God. Her faith was in hot pursuit of a word from His Messiah, a word that would

free her daughter from the torment of demons. And she persists in this passionate quest despite the obstacles she meets.

## II. A Persistent Quest

### A. Undaunted by discouragements--

1. **v.23a, Christ's silence**: no answer is not a "no" answer. ("Silence is God's waiting room for divine appointments")
  2. **v.23b, Irritated disciples**: Christians can sometimes fail us:
    - a. "*she keeps crying out after us*"-- but they can't meet the deepest needs of our hearts ("but my friend's a Christian!")
    - b. "*send her away*"-- "answer her request, and get her out of our space!" (He did neither!)
  3. **v.24, Theological statement**: no arguing theology with God.
    - a. "*lost sheep*"-- "On target, lady" (It's the right Shepherd-- Lu 19:10, For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.)
    - b. "*only to...Israel*"-- (It's the wrong timing)
      - (1) She was a Gentile trying to enter by the door of the covenant people ("*Son of David*")
      - (2) She was knocking on a future door-- Joh 1:11-12, He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name... --Acts 13:46, Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles."
- ### B. v.25, Haunted by her daughter's misery:
1. She "*came and knelt before him*"--
    - a. Her faith did not retreat--it stayed pointed at its target
    - b. Her faith took the posture of a beggar, a slave, a hostage.
  2. "*Lord, help me!*"-- (no longer approaching on Jewish ground, she appeals on faith alone)

**TRANS--** "Lord, help me! Give me that word that will end the agonized wailing of my demon-infested daughter!" This woman is serious! She has a passionate quest, a quest that persists in spite of all barriers and obstacles. Will she win? Will she catch that word from Christ that she's hunting for, that word that will make her darling daughter whole, returning her to her right mind?

## III. A Prevailing Quest

### A. v.26-- Is this the Jesus we know?-- Remember...

1. He came not to make sinners happy, but to bring them to humble repentance and faith. (What's more humiliating than being called a dog, even a "pet dog," as this word means?)
  2. He spoke from His Father. (What was God after?)
  3. He was moving closer to her in each of His responses (silence, talking to her indirectly, but now addressing her)
- ### B. v.27-- Checkmate! Her faith has cornered its prey! She's closing in for the capture! How can He refuse her now?
1. Her faith has caught Christ in His words and will not let go: "Okay, you say I'm a dog; so give me a dog's rights!"
  2. Her faith catches the hand that seems to be pushing her away, and uses it to pull herself nearer to her quarry.
  3. Her faith says, "Yes, let the children eat first! The leftover crumbs from the Master are powerful enough for my needs."
- ### C. v.28-- Faith pursues God until it captures His Word-- But who was the real Hunter? [comedy line: "*Now I've got you right where you want me!*"]
1. Jesus was hunting for "great faith" and found it only among Gentiles (her & a Roman centurion)-- He 11:6, And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
  2. She asked for crumbs, but Jesus wanted her to sit and eat at the children's table. (This could only happen, if she showed that her faith in God surpassed that of the children.)
  3. Jesus was setting a standard for His disciples (including us) that prayer must be motivated by "great faith." (G.C.Morgan said of this woman, "Against prejudice she came, against silence she persevered, against exclusion she proceeded, against rebuff she won.")

## CONCLUSION:

--Faith pursues God until it captures His Word.

--We need this woman's faith! From her story, we learn that:

- 1) true faith is passionate and persistent.
- 2) true faith holds on to hope when it looks hopeless to do so.
- 3) true faith feeds and grows strong upon humility.

--There's a "yes" imbedded in the heart of God; faith holds on until it hears it from the lips of Christ.