

Becoming a People of Prayer: A Sermon for the New Year

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[0 : 00] Lord, we thank you that you are here, and though we cannot see you, you're invisible, we long to behold you and to know you. Father, I pray that you would speak through your word through me, your servant, today.

That you would grow within us an awe of who you are and a love for you and a holy fear of you, that we might more completely and perfectly know you and love you and walk with you. Lord, speak for your children are listening. In Jesus' name, amen.

Please be seated. Amen. On November 13th, I was cruising through town from one event to another, and I arrived at Dig and Delve, a conference I know a lot of us were at.

And I was met as I came in by Richard Long, who a lot of you know, and he was like, Daniel, did you hear? We need to be praying for Paris. And I was just like, what are you talking about? And he was all distraught, and a lot of people were looking at their phones.

And I'm always on my phone. I'm always keeping up with the news. But I'd been away from my phone for like 20 minutes because I'm still a new driver, so I still obey the laws of the road. And so I hadn't looked on my phone while I was driving, and I'd missed that the Western world was just smashed by these terrorist attacks in Paris.

[1 : 12] And it really affected a lot of us. All around the globe, people were, myself included, changing our Facebook profile pictures to the picture of the French flag over our picture.

I know a lot of you know what I'm talking about. And the most commonly hashtag thing on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that weekend, about 70 to 90 million hashtags, was pray for Paris.

Hashtag pray for Paris. And as that weekend went on, and everyone and everywhere, non-Christians, Christians, people of faith, people of no faith, hashtag pray for Paris, it hit me that we were all saying that.

I think that alliteration was compelling. But I didn't know how many of us were actually doing that. So we organized an impromptu prayer meeting for our church called Pray for Paris. And as we put that together, people from the church mentioned to me, whether by email or just through people, mentioned, like, why are we just praying for Paris?

Over the same weekend, there was terrorist attacks in Nairobi. Over the same weekend, there were some horrific natural disasters in other parts of the world. I mean, Paris has the media attention. We're all hashtag praying for Paris.

[2 : 14] But the rest of the world is on fire as well. And I really appreciated that feedback. And so at that prayer meeting, we didn't just pray for Paris. We prayed for so many different things of the brokenness around the world.

And what hit me was that even as so many of us around the world of the 70 to 90 million hashtag pray for Paris people, so many of us, whether they were people of faith or not, knew that we had to pray not just for what was going on in Paris, but for stuff around the world when it really came down to it.

But at the same time, like so many people, and I'm sure others in the church, I'm not the only one, that struggled to actually live out what we were saying, which was that we should be praying. And since then, I started praying more about that and our church.

And I knew I was going to get to preach a New Year sermon today. And so as I was praying about what to preach about, what began to be put on my heart was to preach a sermon on prayer that would help cast 2016 as a year that our church becomes an even more prayerful church.

And so as I was doing that, I started listening to various sermons and stuff on prayer. And I got to hear a really, really, really good talk in many ways from an older man on prayer.

[3 : 24] And he was just driving home how often in the Bible when it speaks about a revival and a spiritual awakening and justice coming to the land and all of these things, the thing that the Bible is calling for there is for prayer.

Famously, I think it's 2 Chronicles 7 verse 14 says that if God's people who are called by his name will humble themselves and pray and seek his face, then he will hear from heaven, forgive our sin, and heal our land.

It was spoken specifically to the people of Israel, but the concept remains that if we long to see the world become a more whole place, that what we need, what is called for is prayer.

Prayer. And I know that our church, this is a church that loves the scriptures. We have, I'm not usually the one preaching, usually it's George. He's an incredible preacher. And I think that's why a lot of people come to this church, because we love the scriptures.

And in our Bible studies, even in our Sunday school with the kids, we're teaching the word. We love the word. And this older man in the talk I was listening to was saying, this guy, he loves great preaching too.

[4 : 27] And he says, you know, the scriptures are so important and we need to know them and to obey them. But he said, look, that passage on calling for revival is not calling for better preachers.

It was calling for prayer. And he was saying, this was a talk back in like the 70s or the 60s. And he was saying, you know, we've never had so many well-qualified and excellent preachers. And he was listing off the famous preachers of the day.

And he said, but look at America. He's American. Look at America. And he was talking about the deep brokenness happening in the country. And America and Canada were on this path toward even greater brokenness through the sexual revolution and all of that at that time.

He said, we're having great preachers, but he was calling for prayer. And as I was listening to this and wondering if that was the passage I would preach on, one of the things that began to hit me was that in his words, the very things he was saying, and often the way that I approach trying to become a more prayerful person is to try to keep on more and more guilt to see, to make myself a more prayerful person.

And so Shirley, our communications assistant at the church and I started meeting for one week as I was trying to get ready for the sermon every morning before we started work to pray for God, to help me put together a message on prayer and to help our church become more prayerful.

[5 : 47] And as we began praying before God, asking for his help, not just for the church as a whole, but for ourselves, it began to hit us that so often the way we approach becoming more prayerful is by just trying to willpower or guilt ourselves into it and all of that.

And so instead, the passage I'm preaching on is a passage that's not really even on prayer. It's this really broken, raw, I think beautiful passage of a woman who is crying out to Jesus for help.

And I think that though this is in no way an exhaustive sermon on prayer and the reasons we need to be praying and the ways to pray and all of that stuff, there's just a little glimpse of something in this passage we're looking at this morning that I think will help all of us thrive as a church evermore becoming a prayerful church.

So I'm going to read the short text again and then we'll go through it more slowly. And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. But Jesus did not answer her word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, Send her away, for she's crying out after us.

[7 : 00] Jesus answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered, It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered her, A woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly.

The first thing that struck me as I was reading through this and seeing what lessons we can learn from this broken mother of a demon-possessed daughter is the faithfulness in her endurance in crying out to Jesus.

It doesn't just say that in verse 22 that she cried out, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. But it said she was crying. That means she was saying this over and over and over again. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. She's crying out and she's crying out.

[8 : 02] And the whole time she's crying out, Jesus is not saying a word. He's ignoring her. I don't know if I'm the only one who's ever gone to give someone a high five and they don't give you a high five back. It's called standing you up.

At least back in grade school, that was really embarrassing. And not just for kids. That's embarrassing for any of us. When you're crying out to someone, when you're trying to get someone's attention and they're just ignoring you. That hurts.

That's embarrassing. And that hurts if it's just like you're in the car cruising through town and you go to give the person beside you a high five with your other hand and drive safely. But you're driving and if it's just you and them, that'd be embarrassing.

But to be crying out in front of a crowd of people and to have Jesus who you're crying out to just ignoring you, that is really embarrassing. That is profoundly discouraging. I know that for so many of us, when it seems like God is not hearing us, I know at least for myself, I then stop praying about it.

And so the first thing I hope that this passage will help for us is that for those of us who have been burdened for things that we've been praying for and we haven't seen God answer us, it seems that he's been silent, that this passage would reawaken our going to God in prayer, our endurance.

[9 : 12] For some of us in the room, I think it's family members that we have believed for and prayed for that they would come to know Jesus and years have gone by and they haven't. And it's just so easy to think, this person is never giving their life to the Lord and just to stop praying about it.

I know for others of us in this congregation, you have prayed for and advocated for big issues, for the vulnerable, regarding human trafficking, sexual abuse, abortion, for years and years, decades longer than I've been alive.

And you haven't seen things get better in Canada. In fact, in many ways, they've gotten worse. It's so easy, it's so much easier to just not pray about that stuff anymore because it's so hard to pray for those things when we don't see God answering.

I just want to encourage you as your brother in the Lord from this passage to keep on praying for those things. God doesn't promise he's going to answer the way we want him to answer, but just like this woman, to keep on praying.

I don't know what the story would have been like if this woman, like I have been, just stopped praying for those things, just let it trail off. But I'm so thankful for the sake of her daughter and for her own sake that she kept on crying out and crying out and crying out.

[10 : 18] Now, she's crying out. It's bad. She's being ignored by Jesus. It's not what I'd expect from Jesus. Probably not what she expected from him. And then it gets worse. The followers of Jesus, his disciples, begin saying to Jesus, send her away.

If being ignored isn't bad enough, now his followers are saying, send her away. At this point, most people stop following Jesus or just want nothing to do with them. I know that because of the amount of people that say, I'm not a Christian, not because I don't like Christ, but because I don't like Christians.

I don't like the followers of Jesus. But this woman is just like, Noah, it doesn't matter how much of a tool these people are who follow him and who are his, I need him.

And so she kept on going after him. Let us not be discouraged by how brutal other Christians or even ourselves can be, but let us look to Jesus and endure in faith. She's crying out.

She's crying out. It's even embarrassing having them saying in front of others, like, send her away. She doesn't let up. And then finally, Jesus, the one who she needs and who she's crying out to and looking to for her answer, opens his mouth.

[11 : 21] The expectation in her heart at that point. It's like you're going for so long through a dark tunnel and finally you see a light at the end of the tunnel. And the light is not even stationary. It's coming towards you.

Your rescue is coming. Jesus opens his mouth to speak and bam, it's not a light, it's a train. It just flattens her. Send, his words are, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That's verse 24. She's crying out, crying out. So faithful, so faithful. People pushing her away. She's crying out and then he opens his mouth. I'm not here for you. And her answer is, her reply is unbelievable.

Verse 25. But she came and knelt before Jesus. The one who's ignoring her, the one who just said, I'm not here for you. And she kneels down and says, Lord, help me. This gets right to what prayer is all about.

In that we often approach, I've often approached prayer, if I'm honest, as if it's some type of Christian magic. Magic is not like a non-Christian prayer.

[12 : 21] Magic is the opposite of what prayer is. Because in magic, you're trying to assert your mastery over the spiritual and physical universe, to manipulate it to get what you want. It's putting yourself as Lord over creation.

But in prayer, you're looking to the one, in her words, Lord. You're looking to the king of the universe saying, would you do this? Could you do this? Please do this. By virtue of that, you're acknowledging you're not the master of the universe.

You're not able to manipulate the universe. You're looking to him who can, who is in charge. It's the reverse of magic. And this is important for us because so often when we start trying to become more prayerful, we begin to kind of key into these like stuff that's not biblical about how we can get God to bring his kingdom, his revival, his breakthrough, his healing, whatever it is we're looking to him for.

And we begin like in some different denominations have their key words. If you just pray this way, for some of us who are in some more certain circles, it's like if I pray loud enough, if I pray with enough passion.

I've been at prayer meetings where people are like, hey, we need to pray louder. And so people start being, dear God, and they're just passionate. And you'll be like, that was a great prayer meeting. Why was it a great prayer meeting? Because we pray loud enough. And it's just like if we pray with enough enthusiasm, then God will rend the heavens and come down as if we can yell our way to getting God to do what he wants us to do.

[13 : 39] For others, it's actually a reverence thing. I got rebuked earlier this year when I was on a missions trip and I was praying in the view of some as too casually. And it's like, no, you need to speak with, they legit said, you need to speak with these and vows.

I was like, then God will hear. I'm like, what are you saying? And if you believe that, talk with me after. I'll fight you. There's not magic words to try to get God to do what he wants us to do.

She's just looking to him. At the Pray for Parish prayer meeting, at one part, we started praying through Psalm 2 as a way we'd read the words.

You know, why do the nations conspire and the people apply in vain? And so we were praying, God, right now, this is what's happening. The nations, people are conspiring to destroy innocent lives.

And we're just praying through the Bible. And sometimes when we hear people doing that, it can make us feel like, oh, I don't know if I can pray so fancy. I don't know if I can pray the Bible like that or pray like Owen Ripley in his most beautiful way.

[14 : 34] But this woman's prayer is simply, Lord, help me. Just humility, just looking to God with the words that she has, looking to him for help. And sometimes it's not so much about the words that we say, but we think that if we can do the right stuff, then we can get God to answer prayers.

I know that this church sacrificed so very much when we left St. Albans and left our name, left our building, sacrificed so much and came to this place.

And I say we, but I wasn't even part of that sacrifice. I came later. But many of you, you gave up so much of security and comfort and so much of the beauty of that name we had for so long and having our own building and all of that stuff.

And you sacrificed so much. And I've been told that there is, for a lot of us, a belief that in sacrificing all these things and being so faithful to the scriptures and being so faithful to God that he would give us a building.

And it's something that is still in the hearts of many of you. And so you're praying for a building. I've joined you in praying that God would give us a building if it's his will. But the years have gone by and no building has come. And it can be really, really discouraging.

[15 : 45] But I want to encourage you, if it's still in your heart, to pray for a building, to keep praying for it. But also to remind you that no amount of sacrifice on our part as a church puts God in our debt to give us something that we long for.

For others, it's like, if I just live a very chaste, pure life, if I am faithful in my spiritual disciplines, if I pursue the Lord, if I'm content in his goodness, if I walk in purity, then he will give me the woman or the guy of my dreams.

But no amount of being faithful in any of those things will get you those things that you long for and you dream of and you're praying for. And if that is your attitude, if this woman had a sense of entitlement, like I've been so faithful crying out, I've been so faithful.

I'm looking to Jesus when my fellow Canaanites are looking to pagans, like God, surely you're gonna help me. And if that was her attitude when Jesus says, I'm not here to help you, then if it's entitlement that you're going for and you see that he is not tracking with your sense of entitlement, then you're not getting on your knees.

You're leaving. You're peacing out. I know this is true because I've lost many friends to this, specifically the one regarding relationships. I've seen people faithfully following God as single people for years and years and years.

[17 : 00] And as the years go on, God doesn't come through for the thing that they're praying for, for that godly spouse. And so they walk away from the faith in bitterness and disappointment.

And I want to encourage you, it doesn't matter what we've done that is so awesome, we never put God in our debt. This woman, she does not approach Jesus in any sense of entitlement, though there's urgency, but no entitlement.

It's a profound humility as she gets on her knees. And it says, Lord, help me. I pray for such humility for myself. Before moving on, there's another thing as she says, Lord, help me.

She's actually advocating for her daughter. And I'm sure that there would be some help to her if her daughter wasn't demon-possessed. But I don't think when she says, Lord, help me, it's like, Lord, I don't want to have to stay up through sleepless nights anymore.

Like, help me because I, you know, it will help me if you help my daughter. Like, I just need some relief. I really believe that she's so closely identified with the plight of her daughter that as she petitions Jesus, she seamlessly switches out from saying, Lord, help my daughter.

[18 : 11] And she's just saying, Lord, help me. She's so closely identified with the vulnerability of her daughter that's become her own cause. And you'll see this as a pattern of prayer throughout the scriptures. Famously, Daniel, in Daniel chapter 9, he's repenting for the sins and he's repenting, confessing as if it's his own sin.

For the sin of the people of Israel. And you see that he is, in his praying for the people of Israel, he ends up identifying so closely, like this woman, he's saying, basically, Lord, forgive me.

Lord, help me. Or Lord, forgive us. Lord, help us. Even though it's them, in a sense, that he's praying for forgiveness for. And this isn't the kind of thing that you can just muster up if you just try a little harder.

But as we begin to increasingly seek God in prayer for all manner of brokenness in our lives, whether it is a personal pain or it is regarding the most vulnerable Canadians or it's regarding people in Paris or whatever it is, there is a sense that you may discover that you're yourself beginning to pray like that.

And that's a biblical thing to do where you're so closely identifying with them that it becomes your own cause. She's on her knees. She's so humble.

[19 : 27] Lord, help me. Verse 26. And he answered, it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Reading what other theologians and other pastors say about this, I find that this makes people very, very uncomfortable.

How is Jesus? Who, like the scripture says that God is love. Jesus is God. Jesus is love. How does Jesus say such a thing? And so you have theologians saying maybe in the original language it's possible that it wasn't actually the word dog.

It could have been translated as puppy maybe. So he's like, it's not right to give the children's bread to puppies. Like good academic theologians saying like maybe this explains how Jesus said this.

Now, I'm not an anthropologist, but it seems that whatever culture or language you're looking at, comparing a woman to a canine is not actually like an endearing term.

It's not like, it's not like, oh, my little cookie. Like it's, he just compared her to a dog in the context of I'm not here to help the dogs. It, and as I was reading that and praying through that, it began to hit me that that when people are going through really tough, tough stuff, the kind of stuff that it seems like God is ignoring you or it seems like, it really seems as if God himself is calling you a dog.

[20 : 49] When my friends have, have gone through a deep, horrific abuse, it, it seems as if God is so far away or even worse, like, like he's crushing them. That's what it seems.

And, and people will say with the best intentions, maybe you or I have even said the kind of thing, like one day you'll understand. It doesn't make sense now, but you'll understand. I don't know if this woman or, or theologians 2,000 years later ever get to understand why Jesus said what he said, but we know that he said it.

I really don't think this woman will ever get to understand why Jesus said what he said. She just knew that he said it. But somehow, despite, despite what was happening in that current context, she still knew something of Jesus.

That though she didn't understand what he was doing or why he was doing it or how if he's in control, these bad things can be happening to her daughter and all of that stuff, she isn't going anywhere else but Jesus. Somehow, she understands that despite everything that's happening, despite what she's hearing from Jesus, she has this incredible faith that he is powerful, that his love is steadfast.

That he is powerful and his love is steadfast. I'll prove it to you in a minute, but first, why was she with Jesus when she could have been pursuing someone else? Maybe there was a, maybe she had a really kind mom or maybe there was some lovely, like, I don't know, there's kind, lovely people in every culture, but she wasn't with them, she was with Jesus because she needed someone that just didn't care about her daughter.

[22 : 17] She needed someone with power to do something about it. But why was she with Jesus pursuing him when she was a Canaanite and the Canaanites had their own gods and they believed that their gods had power and they had people who, like, witch doctor type people who showed this, this types of power, who, like, actually could legit use witchcraft to do things and she's not following them.

She's following, pursuing Jesus. Why is that? Because the Canaanite gods were known for power but not known for kindness and mercy and love. And she knew that, like, in that context that a demon-possessed girl, like, to us it would, it would look something akin to, we might just write it off as, like, special needs of some kind.

And in that culture, someone with that is more than taboo. They're more than an Ocast. They are to be, they are, in many cases, they would bring out their children and have them be just, like, killed by neglect off in, like, a desert place trying to hide them from everyone so they would not be associated with their kid, the very kid she's identifying with so closely.

So she knows the Canaanite gods might have power but they're not, they're not loving. She knows that there's others who might be loving but they don't have power. She has this confidence that Jesus is the one of power and of love and she's not going anywhere else.

And you'll see that elsewhere where, in John chapter 6, Jesus is, again, saying things that, that people don't understand why he's saying it and it seems bizarre and kind of whack and so he's talking about eating his flesh and drinking his blood and people are like, that's messed up and so a lot of people who were following him begin leaving.

[23 : 54] And, and Jesus turns to Peter and says, are you going to leave too? And Peter's response is, where else can I go? You alone have the words of life. And that's what kept Peter following Jesus and I think that's what kept this woman pursuing him.

She, I'm sure that she would have loved to go somewhere else that would have been more polite and less embarrassing and, and gotten her what she wanted more quickly but she has this attitude of, there's nowhere else I can go. He, you alone have the words of life.

She, she knows he's both powerful and that he's loving. And, and I'll prove that to you in a second of how we know that, not just by, but how we actually know that she believed that. But first there's, as she cries out to him in such humility, I am in awe of, verse 27, yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table. She's saying, yeah, sure, I'm a dog, but, but even your crumbs are enough. Your crumbs, there's life in your, even in your crumbs.

There is, there is salvation and rescue for my daughter even in your crumbs. So, I'm a dog, give me the crumbs. And Jesus answers her, oh woman, great is your faith.

[25 : 07] Be it done for you as you desire. He gives her that thing that she's been advocating for. He doesn't always promise that he'll do that for us, but, but she in, in this incredible, vulnerable, broken place gets to encounter Jesus in a way that no one else around her got to.

Like, there were so many people, I'm sure that they all had various areas of brokenness in me and they're following Jesus and they loved him for the miracles and for the bread and all these things. They were big fans of Jesus, but, but this woman gets to actually encounter him.

She, others are seeing him and knowing about him, but she actually gets to know him in this intimate way. And as I was looking at my own life of things that I, I shy away from praying for, I, I think I'm not alone in being someone, that there are topics that I don't want to go pray for anymore because I'm afraid that if I go there, it's just going to be too vulnerable.

It's just going to be too painful. And this woman does not shy away from going to that place of deep vulnerability and pain. When we were at the Pray for Paris prayer meeting, like, there was, like, four of us at the church office praying.

And we started off with, like, praying Psalm 2, just praying exactly what's there. Like, oh Lord, why do the nations conspire with the people's Paul and Vain? That's what's happening, Jesus. Would you come and bring your peace? And then toward the end, it talks about the King, the promised one, Jesus, being on the throne.

[26 : 26] And my prayers went from this, like, really, like, positive stuff that, like, to, I found myself praying things that I was starting to be like, oh my goodness, like, Shirley and Ross are going to start thinking, like, I'm some heretic.

Because I started praying, like, Jesus, your word says you're on the throne, but it doesn't seem like you're on the throne. Your word says that, God, you're a good father, but it doesn't seem like you're a good father right now.

helpless father who might be good, but can't help us. Or it seems like you're a really cruel father allowing this stuff to happen. And I'm starting praying these things, I'm like, what am I saying? Like, I'm on staff at this church, I can't say stuff like that.

I'm paid to be positive, you know? But, it's a very biblical thing to pray those very raw prayers.

The Psalms, a third of the 150 Psalms, I'm not going to math, but it's a lot of Psalms, are filled with prayers like that. They're saying, God, how long will you forsake us? God, in Psalm 88, like, darkness is a better friend than God, is basically what he says.

[27 : 26] He's crying out with bringing the fullness of their pain and their brokenness and their vulnerability to God. I want to encourage us as a church not to shy away from those areas that are so painful, so raw to bring to God.

Because as she brought that stuff to God, as she brought her brokenness to Him, she got to encounter the reality of who Jesus is. It took a lot of endurance. It took profound humility.

But she got eventually to encounter Him. So I want to encourage us not to shy away from those broken things, whether it's the brokenness in Paris that just hit a chord in me that evening, or if it's brokenness in our lives, to take that stuff to God as we long to encounter Him.

Now, how did this woman have such endurance? How did this woman have such humility? How did she be so willing to be vulnerable with Him? How did she know that He was both powerful and had steadfast love?

How did she have all of that? Because I can read this and be like, hey, I need to be like this woman. I'm going to go home and I'm going to be like this woman. I'm going to pray for that stuff. But if you're anything like me, you go from going to pray to the next thing you're on your phone, checking Facebook and Instagramming, whatever.

[28 : 37] Like, it's difficult to be enduring in prayer and all of this stuff. How do we not just do this for a minute? How do we actually follow her example and seek God's kingdom for this broken world?

The key to that is in the opening words that she says over and over. Verse 22, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David. I don't know how this Canaanite woman, the Canaanites were supposed to be exterminated.

They were supposed to be wiped out back hundreds of years before. She was such an outcast. She's not of the people of Israel. She's not of the people who were the people of God, but somehow she has come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah for Israel and she understands that that has incredible implications for her.

She believes that Jesus, she's using this Jewish term, this messianic term, she's calling him the Son of David. Somehow she had come to believe and had come quite literally to follow the Son of David.

Now, it's not referring to, she didn't, she wasn't mistaken about like, oh, someone's like, hey, that's not actually the Son of David, that's actually the Son of Joseph, like adopted, but you know, that's not what was going on right there. In saying the Son of David, she is recognizing that he is the Messiah, the long-promised descendant of David.

[29 : 54] And other people may have seen Jesus, but she was, to use the word the Bible uses sometimes, she was like beholding Jesus for who he is. She was seeing and seeing like in who he really is and it was changing everything for her.

It's why she was able to do all the stuff that I'm saying we need to do as a church, humility and endurance and all this stuff, because she was beholding the Son of David. What was she beholding? In John, rather in Revelation at the end of the Bible, the follower of Jesus, a friend of his named John, sees this revelation of who Jesus is and the fullness of his brilliance.

And it says, as he sees Jesus, it's in the first chapters of Revelation, John sees that Jesus' voice is like a trumpet, that his hair is like wool, white as snow, that his feet are like burnished bronze, that his voice is like the roar of many waters, that his eyes are like flames of fire, that his face is like the fullness of the sun at the full day.

It is glorious. And you'll notice that he keeps saying like this, like that, because there are no words in any language to describe what Jesus actually looks like and sounds like because he's that majestic and beautiful that words fail us.

We can only use similes. He's like that. He's like this. You can't describe how glorious he is. But that's not actually, the fullness of that is not what this woman beheld. She didn't see the eyes like fire.

[31 : 15] She saw, she just saw this person in front of her that the Bible says there was nothing attractive about him, but still she beheld the Messiah, the son of David. She, in calling him the son of David, she knew something of the Messiah.

This is the one. She beheld the one. Somehow she knew he, this is the man that was promised that would crush the serpent, the devil. What that means for her, for she who, daughter is afflicted by a devil.

She knows he's the one who's going to crush the devil's head with his heel. She sees the one, even as a king, an oak cast that the scripture says in Genesis 12 would be a blessing to the nations.

She sees the one who the scriptures say will gather the oak cast. She's an oak cast and she sees what that means for her. The scriptures prophesy, this is the one who will bind up the brokenhearted and bring freedom to those who are in captivity, who will set the oppressed free, who will bring good news to the poor, to the lost.

He will bring salvation to the nations. This is the one whose very name is Healer. This is the one who, it says in Isaiah, is wonderful. He fills us with wonder and awe that he is the prince of peace despite the chaos he might be going through.

[32 : 30] He is the one that brings and establishes a kingdom that will outlast every, it will outlast Herod, it will outlast Pilate, it will outlast every Caesar, it will outlast every president and prime minister.

He is the king of kings whom no oppressor will ever be able to get into his empire because he is above all and he, his will will be done and she sees that despite all the brokenness that's who he is.

She beholds the one who isn't just a great teacher and a path to wisdom but he is the very source and the embodiment of wisdom itself. He's not a source of enlightenment. He is the very light of the world.

She sees him who we cannot speak about as simply a great teacher or a great king or a great prophet of the past but someone who we must speak about as alive today because he defeated death and lives even today.

She sees the one who we can't just speak about as someone alive today as if I'm telling you about some great inspiring hero that just got a Nobel Peace Prize but we have to speak about as the one who's always in the room with us because his name is Emmanuel God with us.

[33 : 31] He's present here and Jesus I thank you that you're here. God I thank you Jesus that you're not just our guest of honor today but that you're the reason that we're here.

We've gathered in your name to worship you the very one whom this woman is crying out to and even as I speak about prayer and brokenness and vulnerability Jesus I know that these things are not foreign to you at all but that you entered into the fullness of our pain and our brokenness that by your very wounds and by your death we would receive life.

In Jesus I know that as I talk about beholding who you are that there are some of us in this place who know exactly what I'm talking about know exactly of the joy and the glory and the meaning and the purpose and the life of beholding you but God the haunting thing is that it's only a memory for them that though they have had such incredible times over the years of beholding you and savoring who you are not just believing about you but following you that Jesus is now simply something of their past and Jesus I pray for our church that you would help us to behold you afresh that you would give us a fresh revelation of who you are that you would help us not just to know things about you but to know you that we wouldn't just talk about you and sing about you but that we would speak with you just like this woman did and Jesus I pray for my brothers and sisters in the room who they're tracking totally with where it's at that their life is one of beholding you and savoring you and loving you and all of that

Lord that you would care for us in such a way that there would not be a time in our lives where it becomes just a memory Lord I pray for years from now when we're all much older than today and we've been through stuff we never thought we'd have to go through and it feels like our teeth are kicked in that God you would be there with us Emmanuel that even in everything that life throws at us in the disappointments and in the successes and in everything we would behold you Jesus continually and Jesus I pray for those who even now as I speak to you who is here in the room with us that they legit think I'm speaking to an imaginary friend that you would gently but so very clearly reveal the reality that you are not just the God that works for me and works for some of us but that you are the true and living God that you are the only way and the only truth the only life

Jesus it's in your name that I ask this Amen I'm sorry we're not done that begs the question how do we behold Jesus how do we actually not just know about him but how do we know him and there's so many things we could talk about if we wanted to do a full day on beholding Jesus the scriptures are an incredible place to go to begin to see the stuff that this woman did about who the son of David is this woman knew something of the scriptures that's how she was able to know that he is the one who the scriptures speak of as both being in Psalm 62 the one of power and steadfast love that's how she knew that was the case no matter what he said we can speak about how worship is when we're singing songs to God that's one of the ways that helps turn our hearts to the glory and the goodness and the reality of who he is we can speak about the reality of stepping outside of our comfort zone and going to these things where it's risky and difficult with God we go there and how we get to behold God coming through for us and there's so many ways to behold God all of them have to be in line with the scriptures or you're not beholding God it's someone else you're beholding and it's not going to be what you need but it starts all the same way and that is this woman doesn't just say son of David have mercy on me but she is continually crying out oh Lord son of David and then when she gets on her knees in that place of such vulnerability her words are not just help me but Lord help me and this is consistent with a broader teaching of the Bible throughout the pages of scripture that there are two ways to do life one that is dead and one that is alive and those two ways can be some have said accurately so that the two ways are chalked down to this that there is in the heart of every person it's like there's a throne it's whether if thrones aren't your thing it's like the command control center of who you are and that there's two ways to live either you can live with yourself as the one on the throne of your heart as the Lord as the king of your life or you can live as having the one who created the universe and designed you and made that throne in your heart for him to be on have Jesus be the throne of your the king of your heart the king of your life either you're a follower of Jesus or you're a follower of yourself or other things that do not deserve your allegiance and the way that you see in another part of the scriptures there's a

[38 : 51] I think it might be Luke 9 where there's a woman who she's living life like this she's bound up she's at some kind of skeletal issue and for years and years all she has seen is herself all that she sees and then she like this woman cries out to Jesus cry out to him the Lord saying would you rescue me and Jesus rescues her he becomes her king and as she is as she is is saved by Jesus she stands up and for the first time in her life she sees a face and it's the face of Jesus and she sees the universe as it was meant to be seen and she worships God and I think for so many of us we really have thought that freedom and life and joy would be found as we assert ourselves as we learn to control our destiny by basically asserting ourselves as the kings of our lives and what happens is that we get to really know ourselves and we get to we're all about ourselves and we're just like this woman who's bent over and like whatever experience you go through like whatever you're doing all you're seeing you're thinking about like how did I handle that situation how did I do this how was I there

I was awesome over here I sucked over there and all you're seeing really you become so obsessed with yourself that's no way to live the answer is the same as it was for this woman as same for the one who is bound up the same it's been for my life is that is that the way that we get rescued from a life where we are king of our life and all we see is ourselves and life is like that no matter how successful we are we're all still living with that anxiety of if we'll be able to master being able to keep what we've accumulated all that stuff life is of you and what we need to do is to cry out to God and say God be the Lord be the king of my life don't just be the one that I believe is God but be the one in charge of my life I want to be a follower of you not just someone who believes in you but someone who is surrendered to you and so in a moment I'll ask you to stand and we'll pray together but as I pray if you're someone who has not has not given your life to Jesus you haven't been a follower of him you're not a Christian even though you may identify as one but you know that he is not king of your life

I want to invite you not to think along what I'm saying and say amen to that but just as you stand up would you just even quietly but out loud but quiet you can just quietly so you're not distracting others around you just say cry out to him to be the king of your life and there's I'm not going to give you some magic formulas and incantation to if you say the sinner's prayer like this like that just cry out to him even something like Lord help me be my Lord would you forgive my sin and would you be the king of my life and if that's something that you pray this morning or any time in the future I want to invite you come talk to me or George we'd love to talk with you more about how to then live that out but I plead with you not to live life anymore as someone who just hears and knows about Jesus but someone who actually has Jesus on the throne of your heart that he would be your Lord and your Savior would you stand with me heavenly father so often we know things that we should do but we find that we don't have the willpower or the strength sufficient to actually follow through and do it

Lord I confess it so often I can hear words about prayer or anything and I'm like hey I'm gonna do that I'm gonna follow that example but I lack the strength to do it Lord we confess that we have so often not been like the Canaanite woman who found her strength to walk in what she needed to from who you are instead that we try to do it on our own and Lord we confess that we are often not like this Canaanite woman enduring faithfully in prayer and humility but instead Lord we give up too soon instead we approach you but with arrogance and entitlement instead we we so often Lord even for me this morning forget to believe and stop believing that you are good and loving it's so easy for other things to turn our attention from that but Lord I pray that in your mercy

Lord we pray that in your mercy you would help us to behold you who you really are I pray that you would not just in the past but day by day by day night by night be the king of our lives Lord help us help us to be a prayerful church faithful not just better than the church beside us or anything like that but to be to be living in the fullness of what it means to be a church that prays and seeks your kingdom and your healing and the binding of the broken hearted in your name but Lord help us to not just be a prayerful church help us be a church that beholds and loves you with all of our heart with all of our soul with all of our mind with all of our strength in Jesus' name Amen forget to mayor just to ■■■