

Matthew 15: 21 - 28 // One more step

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Preacher: Earl Buchan

[0:00] So, Case and Emory, if you're here right now, wearing down your dad is roughly about six times. No, I gotta say thank you, Derek. I really do appreciate it.

I've had the blessing of working with the summit groups Monday, Wednesday and Sunday throughout this past year. And Derek and I, they're on the Wednesdays, and Derek is one of these, like, he's never gonna say it at all, ever.

But he is a fantastic teacher. So communion is kind of the gateway, it's the next time I want to get up and do a sermon, but, so I'm holding them to account now. Everybody's heard that now, Derek. Wonderful teacher, so I'm very grateful. But we will be in Matthew chapter 15, verses 21 to 28. And before I get going, set apart shirts. Today is the last day.

So, if you want to come order them, do so. There's a QR code here. All the instructions. I'm gonna leave this up here, if you want to scan that and go. So, I have mine ordered. And I can't wait to be there.

[1:12] So... But, yeah. Matthew 15, verses 21 to 28. I have to start off with a bit of a story about this, because I want to name this sermon just one more step.

Just one more step. And it brought to mind, seeing as my other daughter, Beth, is here today, there was something that Beth and I did before we left the West Coast. And there's this hike. And it's a bit of a climb, actually.

Up 2,800 feet of stairs to get to this place, on top of this mountain called Grouse Mountain. And it is not fun. Like, it's 28 feet of a grind. It really is, of stairs.

And there's a certain way you have to do it, otherwise your legs are just spaghetti at a certain point. There's some people, like I've known a guy named Sean, not the Sean present here, who actually could run up. I didn't like Sean much for that.

But he could do it very well, very easily. And I could not. So when Beth and I did it, you know, got about three quarters of the way up. And you're pretty high up at that point. And I could see Beth being so kind.

[2:18] Just, you know, she's so loyal. She just didn't want to leave. At one point I said, it's okay, kid, you can go ahead. Scoot it off ahead, you know. I met her about half an hour later. And I remember at one point just kind of being, hiking up there.

And I could see the summit. And I'm just like, Lord, just one more step. Just one more staircase. Just one more, you know. You know, and I'm just trying to push myself a little bit.

And I got up there and I had the big fat greasy hamburger afterwards as a reward. One more step. I find so often with our faith, the Lord does this with us as well.

He wants us to take one more step of faith. Have persistence. Show up. This is something Jamie has been teaching the youth for a while now.

So this heart of be there, it's like show up. Show up as a husband. Show up as a teacher. Show up as a father. Show up in every way of life. Show up and be there. I love that spirit of it.

[3:16] In a lot of ways, it takes this whole thing into context as well. One more step. See, the woman we're talking about here. And Jesus' encounter with her in this moment.

If this is all you ever read of Jesus, you might be tempted to think the guy is a little cold. He's a little harsh. But when you take the whole counsel of God, when you take the chapters as a whole, you realize that's the farthest thing from the truth.

You see, we all need people in our lives that are going to take us from where we are and love us enough to say one more step. Don't quit. Keep going.

Keep going. Those tend to be our closest friends. The people who love us the most that can see you're so close. One more step. And this is what Jesus was doing with this woman.

Because when we read this, and I'll go through this verse by verse, it is easy to think that Jesus was being harsh and distant and cold. Very easy. But that's not what was happening at all.

[4:20] If we read the passages prior, we see his compassion for people in feeding 5,000, which really was probably about 10 to 12 when you include women and children. He took compassion upon them.

That doesn't seem like the same guy here. So let's dive into this. We get to see this beautiful picture of faith and how we will be encouraged. I hope today, one more prayer.

When you feel like giving up on that prayer that you've been lifting to him. One more step when you feel like giving up. Just one more. Verses 21 to 22.

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon, which is modern day Lebanon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from the region came out and was crying.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. He went north and Tyre and Sidon were armed and dead Lebanon.

[5:16] And he met this woman from Canaan. Now, it's interesting to note that the term a woman from Canaan is actually a very, very old term.

This they hadn't been around for about 100 years. So, Matthew is kind of taking, okay, in his mind, you've got the Jewish people, you have the Gentiles, and you have the Canaanites way down here. It was not a polite term. It's like, I shouldn't say it here, but I, okay, I'll say this. When I was growing up, I lived in a town called Gibson's. Small town, one red flashing light, kind of like what we have here, okay.

There was a town down the road that was called Sechelt. And Sechelt was always the enemy for everything. It's like if anything went wrong, it's their fault, right? And I'm not saying we have that here.

We're all really nice here. But that's what it was when I was growing up, right? I don't want to say anything about Goodwill or Stratford or anything like that. I know they'll probably step it into a landmine there. But Matthew calls her a woman of Canaan.

[6:17] They were cursed people because they were so sinful. And Matthew was basically saying, this woman is so not of the tribe of Israel, it's like 10 times she's not a tribe of Israel.

Like, seriously, this woman is danger. But what I'm starting to understand at my older age is mercy truly is about not getting what you deserve.

I feel like I learned that week by week, a little bit more. It's not something I think I've grabbed a hold of yet. I'm still figuring it out. Mercy is not getting what we deserve.

We go to a judge, we can ask for justice. And we may want it. Something happens in our life and we want a just response. So long as it's going in our direction. And then if it's ourselves that are the people who have done the wrong, well, we want mercy, right?

It's rare that we've done something wrong. It's like, bring the full weight of justice upon me. I've done wrong. We rarely get to that place. We do want mercy though. The woman spoke to Jesus, understanding who he was.

[7:29] Lord and son of David. At a time where people were starting to reject Jesus on mass. At this point in Matthew, his own people were starting to reject him.

She looked at him as Lord and son of David, which is a term for the Messiah. She knew exactly who Jesus was. And she worshiped him as we're about to find out as who Jesus is.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. Verse 22. And behold, a Canaanite woman came 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. I don't know what the symptoms were, but this was pretty bad. I have to take a bit of a pause here and address this because I think glossing over this would be a mistake.

There is an enormous difference between demon possession and demon oppression. An enormous difference. I've seen exorcisms.

[8:35] You're talking about somebody who was not themselves. There was no shade of who they were. They are acting as a different being.

That's possession. I do not believe that there's anything biblical that can be found that shows a holy. This is a very important clause.

A Holy Spirit filled Christian can be possessed. I don't find any biblical evidence of that. But oppression is different.

And if you're like me, maybe you're wondering, well, what does that actually mean in the real world? I think it boils down to this. And I want to read. This is typically something you read at weddings. But I find it very interesting in this particular part, too, because if we look at this in the opposite terms of what it is not, then we start to see what oppression can be in our real day to day.

Reading from 1 Corinthians 13, 4, roughly to 8. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude.

[9:44] It does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice with wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. So let's take a look at that from an oppression point of view. Where Christians can be oppressed or harassed by the enemy.

I want to read this as the opposite. Impatience. Unkindness. Envy. Boasting or pride.

Rude. Demanding its own way. Irritable. Easily to argument.

Resentful. Resentful. Rejoices in the wrongdoing. When somebody falls, we celebrate. It rejoices in lies.

[10:48] It does not bear all things. It does not support one another. It does not believe other people or other things. It thinks the worst possible outcome of a scenario.

It does not hope. And it does not endure. Love ends. You see, it's hard for us to accept.

But those are all shades of oppression. And when we're tempted to be unkind, unloving, unforgiving, these are not whispers from the Holy Spirit.

They are whispers from our enemy. And it is important for us to seek our Lord, to receive prayer from one another, to have deliverance from these things. Because those things are poisonous to healthy plants.

So I wanted to make a distinction because this woman's daughter was severely oppressed. And while we don't know the symptoms there, I like to look at that list and think, these are things we fall into pretty easily.

[11:51] When we're particularly unkind. When we are unforgiving. When we keep record of wrongs. Right? All of these things, these are not from the Holy Spirit.

These are from our enemy. And important for us to lay down on his feet and have them be gone. In Jesus' name. And sometimes we need help with that.

And there are people that can help with that. But I just felt it important to differentiate between the two. Because there is a big difference. And even though that's not what this message is about today.

Like I said, I think it would be a mistake to bypass it too quickly. If you have any further questions. I would like to understand my own experiences. I would love to talk with you. Please do so. But I don't want to focus on that today.

Because we're talking a lot about mercy. And I don't want to miss that either. Because she didn't ask for mercy on her daughter. She asked for mercy for herself.

[12:51] Anyone who is a parent here knows. What your child goes through. You go through. The struggles that they encounter. You encounter.

Because that's what love does. When we go through things. When we have a family. And it's like that. Your parents grieve. And one of the most difficult things I've had to go to as a father.

Is not be able to rescue. To feel as though my hands are tied behind my back. And all I can do is pray. Now you see how backwards that is. Because prayer is powerful.

Right? And my hands have done far less. Than the great Lord. Who answers prayer. Have mercy on me. O son of David.

She said. Verse 23. But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him. Saying send her away. For she is crying out after us. Can you picture this for a moment?

[13:51] She goes to Jesus. She hears all of the stories. Because the stories would have been spreading like wildfire. And she's on the land right now. This guy heals. He fed thousands of people. Miracles are happening.

I gotta go out. You should go to him. And she goes with all of this hope. And she gets rejected. She feels this sense of silence. So she's like. Okay. I'm gonna go to the next guy.

Peter. Not knowing his name properly. But you know. Hey you. Can you talk to him? Is there anything you can do? Okay. You're ignoring me too. I'm gonna go to the next guy. What about you?

Will you have mercy on me?

Will you tell your master? You imagine she goes down and down in the line. Until finally they say. Send her away. For she's crying out after us. Jesus was not playing games with this woman. Not for a moment. He wasn't trying to make her situation or her life difficult. He was drawing out her growing response of faith. One more step, daughter.

[14:52] One more step, daughter. One more prayer, daughter. One more. You're so close. One more. Jesus, can you help me?

And he says nothing. It seems so out of character. That if we stopped there, it would feel cruel.

Thankfully we're not stopping there. Because the woman didn't stop.

She didn't say, excuse me, can you help me? No, he's passing by. Okay, well, let's wait for the next guy. That's not what she did. She was persistent in this.

She wouldn't stop bugging the disciples. And Jesus didn't say anything. She would make her way through all of them. So much so that they complained. Verse 24.

Verse 24. And he answered. And keep in mind, he's not addressing the woman yet. He's answering the disciples. I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

[15:52] Now, I've read a bit about this and all I can say is that this is from my own guess. So take this with a grain of salt. Knowing the nature and character of God that we've seen so far in the Gospel of Matthew.

I would not be surprised one iota. If the Lord wasn't handing back to them. They're training up as good Jewish boys. Okay. And showing them in a mirror.

Right? But I only came for your people. Isn't that what you say? Challenging them. Because we know that for all have sinned. And fallen short of the glory of God.

That the Lord brought his son into this world to die a death on the cross for us as we celebrated here in communion. That all would be saved. Not just son. Not just from a tribe.

All. I wonder if Jesus wasn't saying. Putting this back to his boys and saying. But isn't this what you believe? So take it with a grain of salt.

[16:53] But I wonder about that. I thought it was cold when Jesus wouldn't say a word to this woman. But now he's saying it's not his job. It's not in his job description to help this woman.

Crazy. Verse 25. But she came and knelt before him saying, Lord, help me. You know, sometimes it's good to look at what isn't happening. What isn't happening is her rejecting him back.

Fine. You know, it could be like that. I'm going to be like that, too. There's no attitude with her. Only humility. What a difference it is from us sometimes.

I see humility here. Truly. She came to him and knelt before him saying, Lord, help me. The words that we translate as worshiped him means to bow down before him.

That's a posture of worship. Being on your knees. Being bowing before him. This isn't a rebellion. This isn't a challenge. This is like, I know who you are.

[17:56] I know what you can do. My daughter needs your help and only you can do it. And I'm not leaving. She took a posture of worship and submission.

I will worship you. Even if you're silent. Even if I don't understand what's going on. Even if I don't know what your plans are. I will worship you anyways.

This was her heart. Whenever worship was offered in the Bible to a plain man or to an angel, you notice what they do? They immediately reject it.

Don't worship me. And you see this in the book of Revelation. Don't worship me. And yet Jesus received this worship. This is one of the proofs that we know. That Jesus knows exactly who he is. As the son of God. And though some people out there may say, Well, Jesus never said he did. He's the only one to receive worship like this. He knew he was worthy of worship being God in the flesh.

[19:02] That's something to consider. The woman will not be pushed away. Jesus, I know you all want to be rid of me, but I know your Lord.

I know your Messiah. I'm not going to run away. I'm going to worship you. I like this woman. She didn't give up. She didn't give up.

Not once. Many of us get discouraged easily. We'll pray about something and about two days later we're like, Well, I gave it my best shot. Maybe we've been praying for something for years, and there's just only the sense of silence.

Lord, where are you? It's not absence. It's silence. And there's a huge difference between the two. Sometimes that silence from the Lord is just one more step, son or daughter.

One more prayer. Your faith is going to be rewarded. It's right around the corner, but you've got to hold on. Don't let go. Don't give up now. You're so close.

[20:04] And he wants to draw that out of us. Anybody who's done any form of training, whether it's of the mind or of the body or both, you know you can't just dial it in and then go out and do it.

It takes practice, effort, discipline. And our faith is like that too in some ways. Because the Lord will lead us into steps to draw us one more step.

And this is what he was doing with this woman. This was far from cruel. This was loving. Drawing out behind and beside all of this racial prejudice. Trying to draw out that this is the faith that the disciples should emulate.

But I'll get to that in a minute. This woman was getting a cold shoulder and Jesus hasn't said a word to her directly yet. But it didn't deter her.

If you go through a season in our walk as Christians where you feel like Jesus is silence, don't give up. Not now. Push through it. We have one another to help us push through it.

[21:08] If you need to grab hold of someone and maybe even physically say, Hey, pray for me. Do that. Don't go it alone. Just don't give up.

Jesus has a purpose for seasons like this. Some have called it the dark night of the soul. There's a wonderful German poem about that. And sometimes we go through it.

I've been through it. Where we wonder why, why, why can't you hear me? Why am I going through this pain? Why am I going through this particular situation, Lord? I pray to you.

I show up to church. I read my Bible. Why does it feel like this? And I feel like sometimes the Lord is just trying to take us from one place to the next. Deeper and greater faith for what he has next for us to prepare the way.

But there's something in this woman that Jesus wanted to bless her with. And he had to draw out of her a greater devotion and tenacity than she had ever known before.

[22:06] Woman, I know you believe, but your faith needs to go deeper. Your faith needs to go deeper. Your faith needs to go deeper. And I'm going to step back a bit so you can pursue more.

Fight for your faith. If you're feeling like it's dusty and dry at the moment, fight. Fight. Go to the mat on your knees. Fight. One more prayer.

One more yard. One more day. One more step. Fight. And find in one another the brother and sister. This woman responded beautifully.

And in worship. And he answered, and I wish I could say it was sewn up there, but it wasn't. Because there was more testing to come.

Verse 26, and he answered, it's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Now, for us, we hear the term, oh, you're such a dog.

[23:09] You can almost be a compliment these days, right? He's such a dog. What a good boy, right? But here, at this time, this was a horrible insult. This was harsh.

And Jesus is putting it out there. Because I wonder sometimes, like I said before, if he wasn't trying to show the dark, awful attitude that was there, that was racial prejudice.

Right? She was no dog. He knew that. He called her woman coming up, which is actually a wonderful and beautiful term of endearment and respect back then. Woman.

And he was about to call her that. The lost children of Israel are the kids and the Gentiles are like the dogs. So to call someone that would be like the worst of their culture.

You're not worthy. And a part of me imagines the woman walking away at this point. But she didn't. One more step. One more yard.

[24:09] One more prayer. I'm not giving up. Verse 27, she handed it back to him. And man, I love this about her. She argued with Jesus.

She said, yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. She agreed. Okay, sure. I'll understand your logic.

But even I should get some crumbs. Even me begging, I'll take the crumbs. Because you know what? She also knew that up until this point, like I said, his own people were starting to reject him heavily.

They rejected you, Lord, but I'll receive you. They don't see you as Messiah, but I do. I'll take the crumbs. I'll take whatever you got. I'll take whatever you spare. That was her heart of worship.

I'll take whatever you got. Verse 28. And then Jesus answered her, oh, woman, great is your faith.

[25 : 08] Let it be done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. I'm going to read that again. Then Jesus answered her, oh, woman.

Keep in mind that up until now, he had been walking somewhat aloof, somewhat cold, saying these things out, talking to disciples. And now he dialed right in on her.

Oh, woman, great is your faith. Let it be done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. Could you imagine? She goes home from this.

And whatever it was that was manifesting, whatever it was that was happening with her daughter, suddenly she's home again. Her daughter is there, fresh and free, healed, loving, kind.

And her mom would come home and see this. We need to have some of this determination in following Jesus. Because the Christian life is not easy.

[26 : 07] I mean, our symbol is a cross. It's not a pillow. It's not comfy and, you know, squishy. The symbol we follow is a cross. There's a thousand little deaths we have to die to ourselves over in a lifetime.

Maybe more. Sometimes we'll have adversity that God ordains for us to fight through. It's good. Don't despise it. Don't go it alone.

But keep trusting in Jesus. One more step. One more yard. One more prayer. He said this woman had great faith.

Not a little. He could have said great is your perseverance. Great is your patience. He could have said great is your love for your child. What a good mom you are.

He could have said these things. And all that would be true. But Jesus says great is your faith. Her faith was great because it was unlikely.

[27 : 06] And I know that the Lord finds great faith in unlikely things, situations, and people at times. We can learn from one another if we're not going it alone.

Not a single disciple expected to find this faith among the Gentiles. This was not what they were expecting that day. And when she did worship Jesus, it was before he answered or after.

She worshiped before. I think that's a really important distinction for us. She didn't wait until the blessing came to worship. I'm sure she got home and went, thank you, Lord.

I'm sure. After a lot of hugs and tears and reunion in many ways. But she worshiped him before the blessing came. When the things were difficult. When she wasn't feeling heard.

When it seemed silent. One more step. One more stairway. One more prayer. Her faith was great because it was tested so severely.

[28 : 09] Some of us go through things that are just plain difficult and seem unfair. Keep going. Her faith was great because it was smart.

She used what he said. She accepted it. She didn't argue with it. But said, I will take whatever you got, Lord. And submitted. There was no sense of entitlement.

But I should be getting this. Aren't you the great savior? Shouldn't you do this for me? There was no attitude of that in her at all. No, I'll take the crumbs. I'll take whatever you got left over.

Because I know it'll be enough. Take the moment. Take the moment. Take the moment. Take the moment. Take the moment. there's nothing else recorded that Jesus did on this particular trip it was about 50 miles out of his way now driving if you drive fast that's not that far right but walking it was about two good days walking the Lord went to this place for her we have no indication it was for any other reason God is worthy of great faith from us and any of the great things that God has done he has done it through faith verse 28 and then Jesus answered her a woman great as your faith let it be done for you as you desire and her daughter was healed instantly if the Lord Jesus were to speak to you and me this morning what would he say tired is your faith timid is your faith stale is your faith inexperienced is your faith what would the Lord say to us today don't settle for that don't settle for it one more step one more prayer don't give up keep going keep moving forward and when you feel you can't walk anymore grab someone beside you and say I need you to pray with me I need your help to carry me this far one more step don't settle because it's kind of like a soup kitchen that offers free soup to everyone and if you bring a little bowl you're going to get a really sweet little bowl of soup and it's going to be awesome you bring a barrel I'm going to get a barrel of soup you see where I'm leading with that you bring a little bit of faith and you'll get the faith and it'll be overflowing you bring a barrel and say Lord I'll take your breadcrumbs I'm just going to wait here all day for you you'll get a barrel full of faith and it may take some trying some testing may take some dark nights of the soul it may take some times your prayer feel like they're bouncing off the ceiling don't give up

don't give in just one more step so i don't leave with this challenge here today i did this in our decideship group and i want to promise them i'm going to write this down so i'll send it to everyone pick one thing that you've been praying about that you feel like giving up on just one thing this is not a magic formula and i make no promises whatsoever with this okay but change up the way that you're praying about it for seven days for the next seven days sunday to sunday pray every day for that thing and change it up this way lord i trust you with this i don't understand your timing i don't know what you're doing i know you are good i know you hear me i know you are lord so i will keep coming back to you seven days a prayer you feel like giving up change it up let's get in the habit of worshiping before the blessing let's pray you