

Bread For The Dogs

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 July 2021

Preacher: Jared Blankenship

[0 : 0 0] Well, this is an important passage, and in some ways it's a difficult passage as we read it, because one of the things that we've consistently noted throughout our study of Mark's gospel is the compassionate heart of Christ. Everywhere he went, Jesus demonstrated a tender spirit.

He demonstrated a caring nature. I mean, really, everything that we've seen about him up to this passage in Mark's gospel, unless it is confronting error and the false teaching of the Pharisees, we see really just an amazing compassion in Jesus, a tenderness that is unmatched, and this caring nature that many of us often do not experience, perhaps have never really experienced in the way that these people did when Jesus came by. And these gospels even often use that phrase, moved with compassion when talking about Jesus, right? So often we see the gospel writer saying Jesus considered the people, he looked on the people, he thought about the villages he had gone through, and he was moved with compassion on them. And sometimes that moving of compassion, the fires of compassion in his heart were a result of their error, that they lacked a true knowledge of the gospel. And of what God desired for them, and of the salvation that he provides and offers.

Sometimes it was because of their physical needs. We saw that in the feeding of the 5,000. He was moved with compassion on the people because they were hungry, and he desired to meet their need. And of course, we've seen that many times. We know that Jesus is compassionate. After all, it was his divine love that led him to the cross. John makes that clear to us in perhaps the most famous verse in all the Bible.

In John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son. It's divine love that led Jesus to the cross. It's divine love that brought him to earth to do the things that he did and to suffer in the way that he did. It's divine love that led to the resurrection. He's a compassionate Savior. And no person, no matter how vile, was ever turned away by Jesus when they came to him in true faith. No person is excluded from this offer of forgiveness and eternal life. His heart beats for sinners and for sufferers. And the scriptures prove that time and time again. He's not only the sovereign Lord. He's not only a loving Savior.

He's a compassionate friend. And it's one of the things that draws us to him, isn't it? And it's because of what I know of Jesus's tenderness that leads me to always pause with a measure of confusion when I come to this particular passage. Because when we come here and we begin to read especially in Matthew's account, we see this maybe come to life a little bit stronger. On the surface, it seems that Jesus's interaction with this woman is cold. We might even say it's even heartless to an extent. Here's this woman who is begging, not for herself. She's not asking for Jesus to do something to meet her physical need, but she has a little girl who is tortured by a demon. And she's begging for God to help, begging for Jesus to help. And yet he seems so atypically cold and unconcerned at first.

[3 : 5 2] Of course, a careful reading reminds us that Jesus wasn't being cold here. He was just as concerned about this woman and her daughter as he is for anyone else. And that's ultimately shown in the fact that he commends the woman's faith and then he heals her daughter. So we know the ending. We know what Jesus is going to do for them. And so we have to understand that Jesus is not being cold.

We usually have kind of an idea. This is how we envision God doing his work. And this is how we desire him to do his work. And so seldom does it actually meet what our expectation is. He works in ways that we don't often understand. But there's always a purpose to God's ways, which means there was always a purpose to Jesus's ways. And my hope this morning is that I can articulate the purpose and meaning of this passage in such a way that you will be able to see past this, what seems to be a coldness on Jesus's part on the surface to really the true intent and purpose of this passage.

The events here are not linked in and of themselves, but the message of this story is absolutely linked with Jesus's confrontation with the Pharisees and the scribes. That's where we've been the last two Sundays. In those first 23 verses, we saw Jesus in this confrontation with these men. And the events themselves, this event isn't necessarily happening immediately after, but it's placed here in Mark and Matthew's gospels intentionally because the message is absolutely linked. The Pharisees, if you remember, they believed that acceptance with God came from conformity to the law, even through their own law that they had added to God's word. And they ignored the sinful reality of their heart and fixated entirely on ritual and ceremonial cleansing. And so Jesus taught them, as we discovered last week, that it's actually their very nature, their very heart is evil, and that it's not that they needed clean hands to be acceptable with God, but they needed a clean heart. And there's no way for them to actually clean their heart. They need for God to do that. And there's no salvation that comes or no purity that comes from religious practice. That was his point. That's what he's getting across to those men and then to the disciples as well. And we understand salvation comes as God declares righteous those who put their faith in Jesus. He doesn't declare them righteous because they've done their best and they've tried their hardest and they've gone to church and they've done the things that people say that they need to do. That's not where God declares a person righteous. He doesn't justify us on that basis. He justifies us on the basis of our faith in Christ, which is what Romans 3 makes clear. For by the works of the law is no man justified in his sight, since through the law comes the knowledge of sin. All that the law and religion can do is condemn you. It cannot actually provide life and it cannot provide forgiveness. And then Paul goes on to say in Romans 3, but now the righteousness of God has been made manifest apart from the law. And here is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. That was the point of Jesus's confrontation.

That your cleanliness and purity and acceptance with God is not on the basis of what you do. It is on the basis of God's mercy and grace as you come to Christ in faith. But then we remember that the disciples had lived their entire lives engulfed in this pharisaical Judaism. And they had difficulty grasping the truth behind Jesus's teaching. It's not that they didn't believe Jesus. It's not that they didn't believe that he was being truthful. It's that they had a difficult time grasping it all.

And the interaction between Jesus and this Syrophenician woman was a living illustration of what Jesus was teaching his disciples in verses 14 to 23. It wasn't that Jesus was being cold to this woman.

[8 : 08] He was testing her faith. He's testing her. As she comes, he ignores her intentionally on first, at first in order to test her faith, to draw out the faith that he knew to be true in her heart.

And why in the world would he do that? Why would he make it so difficult for her? Why would he test her so severely? Because he knew the faith of her heart? And he desired to take that faith and put it on display for these 12 men that were following him around Galilee and now into Gentile regions.

And so the point of this passage, the point of this story, why it's here, is that the gospel of Jesus is for all people. It's for everyone. And it comes only through faith in Christ and it's apart from any human work or deed. That's the point. It's a gospel purpose here as we read this story and understand it.

And so though the focus of Jesus's ministry was primarily on the Jewish people, it would be the responsibility of his apostles to take this gospel around the world. And indeed, ultimately, that's exactly what they would do. And this event was foundational to their understanding of that purpose. Okay. The first thing I wrote down is an unusual retreat, an unusual retreat.

Look with me at verse 24. And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.

[9 : 50] And the next few chapters in Mark's gospel reveal that Jesus was entering a season of widespread travel. So everything between now until chapter 11, Jesus is really moving outside of the Galilean region.

In fact, there's only two times in Mark's gospel that it shows him coming back. Both of them are kind of under the cover of secrecy and they're just quick stops. In chapter 8, he goes to Dalmanutha or Magdala is probably where that was.

And then in chapter 9, he goes back to Capernaum, but he doesn't want anybody to know he's there. He just makes a quick stop and then he moves on. All of his other movement at this point is in Tyre and Sidon and then the region of the Decapolis.

And then he's going to go to Caesarea Philippi and then he's going to go to Mount Hermon. And then he's going to move down to Judea just before his crucifixion. So he's moving out of Galilee at this point, okay?

And so this itinerant schedule begins here. And it begins with this withdrawal from Galilee to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And there's really three reasons, I think, that Jesus needed to withdraw here.

[10 : 59] The first one would be safety, safety. Now think about this. Both secular and religious authorities were doing what they could to arrest and execute Jesus at this point.

He caused them enough problems. The Pharisees and the scribes, they've been doing this since chapter 3. They've been trying to find a way to arrest him and to silence him and destroy him is the word that Mark uses.

They wanted to destroy him. And they were in cohorts together to try to make that happen. Well, their patience is running thin and their plan is no longer a secret, okay? Everybody knows that they want to kill Jesus.

They want to do something about Jesus. He's causing them so many problems. But then you've got Herod, on the other hand, who we learned in chapter 6, thinks that Jesus is a reincarnated John the Baptist, which he had murdered because that he spoke against his unlawful marriage to his sister-in-law.

And so now Jesus has not only Pharisees and scribes, but he's also got the Herodians who are trying to silence him. They're trying to do something about Jesus. So one of the reasons that Jesus is beginning to move outside of Galilee is just simply safety.

[12 : 12] And it's not that he was moving out of fear. It's just it wasn't time for him to die. That time had not yet come. And it was necessary for him to move out of that area so that he could finish the training of the disciples.

The second reason, I think, is just very simply he needed rest. He needed rest. The last time that Mark tells us that the men desperately needed rest, they didn't actually get it.

Remember? Jesus said, we need to go to a desolate place so you guys can rest. And when they got there, there were 5,000 people waiting and wanted to be fed. And so then they left that place, maybe thinking that they're going to get some rest now.

And then they had that storm in the middle of the night. And Jesus walked on the water, so they didn't get any rest there. And then they finally got to the other side of the sea. And immediately people were coming from all over the place. I mean, these men were tired.

Jesus was tired. And it's not unusual for us to see in the Gospels him needing to go and rest, which is a great example to many of us, right? The necessity of rest and the necessity of retreat.

[13 : 14] Part of the reason he's moving out of Galilee is because he's going to go to places where people don't know him as well. And he can get the rest that he needs. But then really the primary reason is this. Training.

It's training. The closer Jesus got to the cross, the more intensely he trained his disciples. And in the next few chapters, that's going to become incredibly focused for Jesus.

And it was important because he wasn't going to be there much longer. And so they traveled to places that had fewer distractions. Now, so we understand the retreat and we understand really the purposes for it.

But I said it was an unusual retreat. And what makes it unusual is not that he did it, but where he went to do it.

Jesus could have gone to Judea and he could have continued his ministry to the Jews there, which was really his primary purpose in coming.

[14 : 11] That was the focus of his mission was the Jews and the fulfillment of the covenant promises. He could have gone to Judea and done that and left Galilee and gotten at least away from Herod. And if privacy was the issue, there were plenty of desolate places, especially maybe around the Dead Sea, that they could have gone and got the seclusion that they needed.

But Jesus didn't go to Judea. He didn't go to the wildernesses of Judea and southern Israel. That's not where he chose to go. Instead, he went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Now, these two cities were coastal cities on the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre was about a 35-mile walk north of Capernaum, northwest of Capernaum. And then Sidon was about another 20 miles north of Tyre.

And they were Gentile cities. They weren't Jewish at all, actually. They were very pagan. They were known for their paganism even by the Jews. The Jews had a history of being influenced by the idol worship of these two cities.

And so to a Jew, someone from this area was as defiled as an unclean animal. But Jesus went there on purpose, intentionally.

[15 : 26] And really, much of the apostles' ministry was going to be to the Gentiles. But Jesus needed to first teach them that salvation was available to such people.

And so why is Jesus moving here? He's going there to prove that salvation is not just for the Jews. It's for all people. And it always has been.

It's not that the Old Testament taught one thing and the New Testament now teaches another thing. God's promises has always been for all people. Remember what he told Abraham.

Through you, all the families of the earth will be blessed. Consider Psalm 67. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us that your way may be known on the earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy. For you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.

[16 : 31] Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Salvation was never meant to be exclusive for the Jews. That was just the conduit by which God was bringing his plan of salvation.

He was bringing his Messiah through that nation. But salvation was always meant for everyone. The gospel was always meant for everyone. Everyone. It's not exclusive to any nation.

It's not exclusive to any status. It's freely given to anyone who will come to Christ in faith. And Jesus took his disciples to Tyre and Sidon to make this truth abundantly clear.

So it's an unusual retreat. And then we get to really the primary point here. And that is that we see an unreserved faith. An unreserved faith. Look at verse 25. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him, came down and fell at his feet.

Now the woman was a Gentile, Syrophoenician by birth. And the people of Tyre and Sidon, they weren't totally unfamiliar with Jesus. Mark chapter 3, when all of those crowds were coming to Jesus, it said that people were coming from as far as Tyre and Sidon.

[17 : 42] And they were bringing their sick and diseased in order to press against Jesus is really what they were doing in order to experience his healing power. And though he may not have been as quickly recognized there as he was in Galilee, it was really only going to be a matter of time until people realized that he was there.

And who this actually was that had moved into town for a few days. And one such person was a mother whose daughter was really in desperate need. The word here for daughter is little girl, but younger than marrying age, which at that time would have been 12 or 13 years old.

So we're talking Ashlyn age little girl who has been possessed by a demon. We don't know how long, but it's torturing her and it's wreaking havoc on her family.

And Mark doesn't tell us exactly what was happening with her, but chapter 9 tells us about another instance when a little boy was possessed by a demon. And here's what Mark has to say. They brought the boy to him.

And when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy. And he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, how long has this been happening to him?

[18 : 56] And he said, from childhood. And it has often cast him into fires and into water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.

So if her experience was anything like this other family's experience, this was really a devastating situation. She was desperate. And we can certainly imagine the heartache that she was experiencing in this moment.

The interaction between Jesus and this woman is the focus of this story. Her circumstance is a picture of what it means for anyone to come to Jesus in genuine faith.

Now think about this. From a Jewish perspective, she had everything going against her. Not only would she have typically been passed over because she was a woman, but she was a Gentile that was Hellenized in Greek culture.

She was from an area that was known for its paganism and idolatry. And Matthew says she was a Canaanite, which means that her ancestors were the historical enemies of Israel.

[19 : 59] There is nothing positive about this woman from a Jewish perspective. In fact, based on the customs of the day, the average rabbi would have considered himself unclean if he even looked at her.

In fact, there's examples historically of rabbis in this day that were so dedicated to this ritual cleanness that whenever a woman, they would pass a woman in the marketplace, they would close their eyes.

They called them the blood and bruised Pharisees because they were constantly running into things. Because they were so afraid to look at a woman, they thought they'd be unclean. Well, now there's a woman here who just has absolutely nothing going her direction as far as the Jews are concerned.

She was like each of us. She was in desperate need for God's intervention in her life, but she was utterly undeserving of his attention. Which means she was the perfect person by which Jesus could teach this lesson, this vital lesson to his disciples.

There's three features to her faith here that I want to point out to you because that's really the focus. She was full of faith and Jesus was testing that faith, as I mentioned, and he was putting it on display.

[21 : 14] And there's really three features to it that I want you to note. The first one was that it was a focused faith. It was a focused faith. By focused, I mean she was turning specifically to Jesus.

Now, there are people who are intrigued by Jesus and see him as a possible solution to their problem. You know what I mean? It's not that they necessarily reject Jesus.

It's they are actually intrigued by him. There are a lot of people in the Gospels that fit that description. They're intrigued by Jesus. They see that he could be a possible solution for their problem.

He could be a possible solution for their sin. And then there are people who are entirely and wholly convinced that he is the only solution for their problem.

And we understand as we study the Gospels, we understand the Gospel itself. Only the person who sees Jesus as their only hope actually possesses a saving faith.

[22 : 18] And this woman clearly had a focused faith that was not seeing Jesus as just a possible remedy. She saw him as her only hope.

It's likely that she had exhausted every other avenue for help. She had probably done whatever the temple priest in Tyre had told her to do in order to achieve some type of healing.

She had probably prayed to however many gods she would have worshipped and nothing helped. Nothing could work. And she had come to a point to understand, if there is hope, it's only going to be in this man, Jesus.

And so her faith was focused. Now I want you to flip over to Matthew 15, if you've got your finger there. And I want you to look with me at verse 22. Matthew 15, verse 22.

Matthew writes, And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying. Here's what she was saying. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

[23 : 22] My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. Now notice the language she's using there. She's not only crying for mercy.

She's recognizing Jesus as her Lord. And then she's referring to him by his messianic title, son of David. Now we don't know how much this woman actually knew about Judaism.

We don't know how much she knew about the Old Testament. She at least knew enough to recognize that Jesus was not just another Jew. She's referring to him with his messianic title, Lord, son of David, Messiah.

Have mercy on me. And then Mark says that she fell on her feet. And he uses that word proskuneo. It's the same word that he used with Jairus.

When Jairus fell at Jesus' feet, it means to worship. When this woman comes to Jesus in this moment, it's not because she thinks he might be able to help. She thinks he's the only one that can help.

[24 : 24] She's recognizing him as Lord. She's recognizing her desperate need for him. And she's crying out for mercy. Isn't that how it works for anyone who comes to Jesus in genuine faith?

Do we not have to recognize that Jesus is our Lord? Do we not have to acknowledge that he is the Messiah and the Savior? And should that not then lead us not to appeal to him on the basis of what we do, but solely on the basis of the mercy that he possesses?

That's what she does. It's focused. Because faith is only as good as its object. There's a lot of people that talk about faith, but faith in yourself isn't going to get you anywhere. No matter what the world tells you around, faith in yourself is going to lead you to hell.

Faith in this church is not going to lead you very far. Faith in whatever rituals you may subscribe to is not going to do very much for you.

Faith is only as good as its object. And she had found the right object, Jesus. But it wasn't just a focused faith. It was a persistent faith. Persistent faith. Back in Mark, at the end of verse 26, she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

[25 : 43] It was a continual begging. Now, a distinctive mark of true faith versus a mere intrigue is perseverance. That's clear in the New Testament, right?

And her persistence in crying out to Jesus follows a pattern that we've seen actually quite often in Mark's gospel. Think about that. You remember the leprous man in chapter 1? Remember his persistence?

He broke every law that he could break to get to Jesus. He wasn't supposed to be there. And he made his way to Jesus. He was persistent. He's trying to get to him. What about the woman with the issue of blood?

She had exhausted every other opportunity that she had. Nothing worked. She knew that Jesus was the only one that could help. And she presses through this crowd of people just to touch the hem of his garment.

Just to touch the tassels at the bottom of his robe. If she could just get to those. And she's persistently, she's pushing. She's not giving up. She's pushing to get to where Jesus is. What about the paralytics friends?

[26 : 43] They show up to Peter's house in Capernaum. They know that Jesus can help their friend. But there's so many people they can't get to him. So what do they do? They climbed up the house. And they tore the roof apart.

They were persistent trying to get to Jesus. Jairus was the same way. And Mark wrote that she continued to beg Jesus to intervene. But Matthew's account provides a few more details here.

Look back at Matthew 15 verse 23 this time. Notice what Jesus did. He did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him saying, Send her away.

For she's crying out after us. What's happening here? This woman comes to Jesus. Falls before him.

And says, Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. And she tries to explain the situation. And Jesus ignored her. And he kept going. And so what did she do?

[27 : 46] She followed. And as she's following what she's doing, she's crying out, Have mercy on me, Lord. Have mercy on me, son of David. Help my daughter. Have mercy.

To the point that the disciples, ultimately, they get annoyed. And they say, Jesus, will you not send this lady away? If you don't do something about her, everybody in town is going to know that we're here.

She was persistent. It wasn't that Jesus was being cold here. He's not ignoring her out of rudeness. He's drawing out her faith.

He's drawing out the persistence in her faith in order that his disciples might see it. And at first, they completely missed it. Because on the other hand, he's exposing not only the reality of her faith and the strength of it, but he's exposing the lack of compassion in these disciples.

What they should have been doing was interceding for this woman. Think of all the things they had seen Jesus do. Think of all the transformation they had witnessed Jesus before their eyes accomplished in people's lives.

[28 : 53] They should have been coming to Jesus and saying, Jesus, can we not help this woman? Can we not help her? We know you can. Will you stop and help her? But that's not what they did at all. What did they do? They run to Jesus and they say, Jesus, will you please get rid of this woman?

She's about to drive us crazy. And I wonder how many times we fit that description in our lives. And we've got these, quote, problem people in our lives.

And instead of interceding for them, that God would do his gospel work in their life and that he would do something for them, we go to God and we say, would you please do something about these people, Lord?

Would you please get rid of these people? They're driving me crazy. It was failure on the part of these disciples. But it was an incredible faith on the part of this woman.

And it's peculiar to see Jesus respond this way, isn't it? But doesn't he always respond in ways that we don't understand? There's many times in the gospels where the way that he acts leads people to think he doesn't care.

[30 : 02] You remember the storm on the Sea of Galilee? The ship's falling apart and the disciples think they're gonna die. What was it that they said to Jesus when they woke him up? He's just asleep. He's asleep.

What was it they said? Master, do you not care? Do you not care that we're perishing right now? We're dying, Jesus, and you don't care.

You're just asleep. Remember when Lazarus, Jesus' friend, died? Jesus tells the disciples, Lazarus is dead.

We're gonna go see him. And he shows up four days after. They had sent a runner to let Jesus know that he was sick. He could have gone straight there and healed Lazarus from his sickness. But that wasn't Jesus' plan.

And you remember when he showed up? Mary runs out and she says, Lord, if you had just been here, if you had come when we asked, then what did Jesus do?

[30 : 59] He performs a much more incredible miracle than what he would have performed otherwise. It wasn't that he was being negligent of his friend. It's not that he didn't care about the disciples in the boat.

And it wasn't that he was being rude to this woman. Jesus works in ways that we don't understand because he has a purpose in it. And the purpose here was he was showing how much faith she actually had.

And at the same time, he was showing how little faith the disciples had. So her faith was focused. Her faith was persistent. And then her faith was humble. It was humble.

Now, it would be a grave mistake to insinuate that the woman's persistence earned God's favor. That's not what's happening here. He didn't respond because she asked him a certain amount of times.

Her persistence was just a demonstration of her faith. And if God works in our lives, is contingent on what we do or how much we do it, then salvation comes through our merit rather than his grace.

[32 : 02] But the Bible is abundantly clear about this. Salvation is only by God's grace. Ephesians 2. By grace are you saved through faith, not of yourselves, not of works, lest you could boast.

He's not responding to her simply because she reached the quota of times that she was supposed to pray. God doesn't work that way. If you've got an issue in your life right now, don't let someone deceive you into thinking that you just have to pray harder and you have to pray more times, God's not gonna respond to you because of anything that you do.

He's not because of what you do. It's his grace. And it was this woman's faith that was humble enough to see that there was no merit in her. And that's the message of this really unique conversation that she and Jesus have.

Now, set this up against the Pharisees that Jesus had just dealt with. The Pharisees considered themselves to be unbelievably worthy. They did all the stuff.

They washed their hands before they ate. They did all the things they were supposed to do. If anybody was worthy of salvation, they thought they were worthy of salvation. And then we get to this Syrophoenician woman and what we discover in this passage is that she knew she was unworthy.

[33 : 17] She knew it. So her faith wasn't just focused or persistent. It was humble. Let's look at it. Verse 27. And he said to her, let the children be fed first, for it's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

But she answered him, yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. So Jesus responds to her with a parable. This is what this is. It's a story about children and dogs and who gets to eat dinner first is essentially what this story is.

And on the surface, it really does seem like Jesus is being insulting, doesn't it? Doesn't dog typically refer to an insult in the Bible? Yeah, it does. Often. But Jesus isn't insulting her here.

He wasn't demonstrating an arrogance that was so prevalent and pervasive among the Jews. And a careful reading will help us with this. Just let me cover it this way. Let me try to give the meaning of this parable and then we'll look at the purpose.

Okay, here's the meaning. It's not teaching that some people are more worthy of the gospel than others. That's not what this parable means. And we know this can't be the case because Jesus often worked in Gentile people.

[34 : 33] We've seen him do it. Remember the demoniac in Gergesa? He wasn't a Jew. Yet Jesus crossed the lake on purpose to get to him to cast out the legion of demons.

Okay, this story, it can't be about the salvation and the gospel being for some people and not others. How about the woman at the well in Samaria? John, I think is John chapter six tells us about that.

The first person that we see in the scripture that Jesus actually just kind of lets it all out. Yeah, I'm him. I'm the Messiah. I'm the one. And he reveals it not to a Jew, not to his disciples.

He reveals it to a Gentile woman, a Samaritan woman. What about the centurion that had a servant that was sick and he comes to Jesus asking for help?

And remember the great faith that he had calls Jesus to marvel and Jesus does this work in his life. So this is not Jesus saying that the gospel is for some people, some people are worthy of it and some people aren't.

[35 : 30] The very fact that he's in Tyre and conversing this woman shows that the gospel is for all people. The story just simply expresses that the priority of Jesus's ministry was focused on the nation of Israel.

It had to be. The covenant promises of God were given to Israel, not because they were special. They were just God's chosen.

And his ministry had to concentrate on him. Otherwise, the promises of the covenant would not have been fulfilled by Jesus. His ministry had to have its priority there.

That's really what this story is about. And yes, indeed, dog is often used as an insult, but the word that Mark used here is a diminutive form. It means little dog. It's a reference to whatever would have been the closest thing to a household pet for these people.

He's not calling her a scavenger and a repulsive person. It's just a part of the story. God was not going to abandon his covenant promises to Israel in order to make his ministry first about the Gentiles.

[36 : 36] He could have traveled to Rome. He could have gone to Tiberias. He could have gone to these other places to have his focus. He didn't do that because that wasn't his purpose. That's what the disciples were going to do. Okay? But it's not about saying that some people are worthy and some people aren't.

It's just a story about his purpose. Okay, now here's the purpose of that story. Here's why he's saying it. You could almost assume a pride in the disciples at this point.

Can you imagine that? That's how I would have been probably. You're standing there, and this woman comes up. You're already annoyed by her. And then Jesus' first response is, it's not right for me to throw bread to the dogs before the kids.

And you can imagine maybe what's going through one of the disciples' head and thinking, yeah, that's right. He's here for us. Move along. Right? You know, since that coming up, perhaps they were thinking that.

I don't know. She took no offense to the parable because she understood it. And whatever she may or may not have understood about God's covenant with Israel, she believed that there was enough of his grace to overflow to her.

[37 : 41] Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat the crumbs from the children's table. What's she saying? I know, God. I know, Lord. I know I'm not worthy.

But I know there's enough grace in you that even if I just get a little bit of it, it will be enough. It will be enough. She didn't make her appeal based on her own goodness like the Pharisees would have done.

She made her appeal based on the goodness of Christ. And isn't this what David was getting at in his psalm of confession in Psalm 51? Remember verse 1?

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions. Her faith was focused on Jesus.

It was persistent in her pursuit, but it was also humble. She recognized that she was actually unworthy, but she recognized how good he is, how much grace and mercy there is in him.

[38 : 44] And then we see, finally, this unrestrained grace. Unrestrained grace. Verse 29. And he said to her, For this statement you may go your way.

The demon has left your daughter. And she went home and found the child lying in bed, and the demon was gone. And again, Matthew adds a note that gives kind of a fuller understanding to this.

Look back at Matthew 15, verse 28. Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire.

O woman, great is your faith. Ah, there it is. That's why he was doing it. That's why he was doing it. So sometimes I can picture almost a playfulness on Jesus' part, and you can almost imagine that up to this point in the conversation and his reaction to this woman, maybe he's a little bit stoic and a little serious.

Maybe even in his expression. And then as soon as she makes this statement, that's what he was waiting for. As soon as she makes this statement, you can almost picture the tenderness in his eyes and maybe the smile light up on his face as he says, Yes.

[40 : 04] Great is your faith. Great is your faith. And imagine the disciples seeing this. Seeing Jesus' response. He knew what he was going to do for this woman. He had planned to do that all along.

That was his purpose in going. But he wanted his disciples and probably the woman too to understand the extent of saving faith. And here we just see another proof that he is indeed the Messiah and the Son of God, as we mentioned earlier.

He demonstrated this power over the demon and he did so without even being present with the girl. And you say, Well, this is just about healing the girl.

This really doesn't have anything to do about the gospel and salvation. But I'm not so sure that that's true. Who would we ever think would come to Jesus with this kind of faith and not be granted forgiveness and eternal life?

And she must have continued to follow Jesus after this because how in the world would Mark and Matthew have known what happened when she finally got home? Their subsequent meetings with this woman, they're finding out perhaps while they were still in tire, perhaps years later in their old ministries as they're going about, this woman was a part of it.

[41 : 23] Her faith was in Christ. And she received the unrestrained grace that he provides to all who come in him in faith. Now, ironically, in conclusion, the Pharisees in the earlier verses had the bread and yet they were lost.

They had every advantage. They had the promises. They had the covenant. They had the word. They had all the things. And yet they were lost. And here's this woman and all she has is the crumbs.

She couldn't have known much. But she knew enough. And she was blessed by the Savior. And she was blessed by the Savior. Maybe you're being tested today one way or another.

And it's easy to come to this passage and think, why would Jesus just be, why would he make it so hard? She was already coming.

Why did he have to test her so hard? Why did he have to test the disciples so hard? Why is it always so hard? Why would he have to test her so hard? And maybe you're in a period of testing right now as well.

[42 : 40] Can I just say, sometimes God will test us to expose the weakness of our faith. sometimes he will test us to prove that our faith is true and he dealt with this woman in such a way that it proved to his disciples and everyone else that the gospel is for all people that it's received through faith alone and that he has the power to provide it it wasn't about making it hard on her he was proving to her and everyone else that she had true faith and there may be three types of people that would relate to different people in this story maybe you're here and you're more like the pharisee you've convinced yourself that you are worthy and can i just tell you you're not you study the new testament you see paul he was a pharisee and he got to philippians chapter 3 and he listed all the things that made him worthy according to judaism everything i mean no one none of us could ever reach those marks that he had and he said but all of that i counted as loss it was like dung he says it didn't mean anything and there may be somebody here today you just think you you're good you're not as bad as most people i mean you're here on a sunday in vacation season a lot of people are out and you're you're doing what you're supposed to do can't just say you're not worthy of his grace if you were it wouldn't be grace and why would god emphasize grace so much you're not worthy your problems your heart you need to figure that out maybe you're more like the disciples you have an understanding of your unworthiness and and and you're getting it you're getting it as far as the gospel relates to you but it's still maybe pretty common for you to look at others and think i'm more worthy than them at least you know i wasn't too far beyond god's reach but there's just some people they're just too far they're just too far this syrophenician woman would have been one of those people and i tell you you need to repent of that there's no difference between us and anybody else perhaps you're more related to the woman here you know you're not worthy and maybe in your case you let your unworthiness actually keep you from coming to jesus you think why would he take me you don't know what i've done you don't know how far gone i am i tell you you can come to this text and be encouraged you're not worthy but he is and there's no sin you've ever committed that's beyond his forgiveness it doesn't matter what you've done paul was a murderer he said he was the chiefest of sinners actually and yet god so graciously helped him saved him and then there's this woman like we said everything was going against her why would jesus want anything to do with her no one else did oh because it's not about her it's about him it's not about you either it's about him would you just come to him you'll find in him tenderness you'll find care and compassion you'll find hope that you can't find anywhere else and he offers it freely if you will just come to him you Thank you.