

# Faith Drawn Out

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[ 0 : 00 ] As the boys and girls go to Sunday school, let's ourselves join together in prayer. Oh God, we come before you once more, we thank you once more for the gift of these children in our congregation.

We thank you for them, we ask God you'd truly bless the lesson to them just now. We thank you for their willingness to come here, their willingness to learn. We also pray once more, we thank you for the sacrificial nature of the teachers.

We thank you Lord for the years of teaching that's gone on in this congregation. We thank you just now for the teachers present who taught perhaps several or many years ago. Those Lord who have done many years of service, who have now stepped back at least for a time from that.

Lord, they would know that you bless your word whenever and however it goes out. Bless as a congregation Lord we ask today, we thank you for this chance to gather together.

We come just now as a people so desperate for you, so desperate for your leading, so desperate for your guidance. We come just now confessing that we've had a week where perhaps we've had such confusion.

[ 1 : 08 ] A week perhaps we've had times of great sadness and times of great worry, times of great uncertainty. We confess that we come just now to you, an eternal, unmoving, unchanging God.

And we ourselves bring our changing lives, our changing minds, our changing hearts. We come just now as those who feel our weakness. We feel our smallness.

We feel at times, if we're honest, our total uselessness. We come just now once more to a sovereign God who sees all and who knows all.

Who is in complete control over all things. There is nothing beyond your complete and sovereign power. It's to that complete sovereign power we come and we ask you to keep us today.

It's to that sovereign total power we come and we lay our burdens down at the foot of the throne of grace. We find mercy and grace to help in time of need.

[ 2 : 11 ] Come just now Lord as some here who are in great distress perhaps. Physically or mentally. Perhaps even spiritually Lord you alone know.

Come just now just now as those who've had a long week with family worries, personal worries, health worries, financial worries. Or the list at times feels endless.

We come just now as a people who perhaps are grieving. Grieving recent loss. Grieving loss of many years ago perhaps. As anniversaries and dates come and go Lord we are so conscious that the pain remains.

And the sadness remains. And we ask that the Holy Spirit that he would comfort those who need that comfort today. Those whose suffering is private and quiet.

Those whose suffering is known and those whose suffering is not known. Those who are crying out even within themselves at this very moment. Those who put a brave face on things but behind the scenes who are crumbling.

[ 3 : 15 ] Those who need comfort and need peace and need help. We ask Lord you bless your people today. We come today as a broken people to you. We don't come to this place claiming to be there.

We don't come to this place claiming to be sorted. Claiming to be perfect. No we come to this place just now. Claiming. As one people. Claiming and acknowledging that we are broken.

In various ways and at various times. We are broken. We are sin filled at times. We are sinful often. We rebel.

We do what is wrong. And we come with all that acknowledgement just now before you. To a holy and perfect God who cannot be in the presence of sin. And we cast ourselves down before you.

And we know that you are holy, holy, holy. And we are not. We come just now in the finished work of the saviour of sinners.

[ 4 : 14 ] The Lord Jesus Christ. Who promises that all who come to him. He will not cast out. He will not cast away. He will not reject or refuse. But no, he will gather his people into himself.

Like a shepherd to his flock. We pray for that gathering today. Pray just now for our friends here. Who as of yet don't know you. Who as of yet cannot say that they are yours.

Who as of yet cannot say that they love. Nor can call you saviour. We thank you for their presence here today. We thank you Lord for their ongoing presence in this congregation.

And we ask you would bless them today as they come once more to hear your word. That they would hear it truly and hear it fully. They would hear that there is one who has died for them.

Who has died for all who come to them. There is one who stepped down from glory into his own creation. Who took on human flesh. Who became like others in all ways apart from sin.

[ 5 : 15 ] So his people would be saved. As we pray Lord for our friends here we also remember ourselves. We pray for this gathering of your people. Encourage us in your word today. We thank you we are part of a church.

Not just in North Tulsa. We are part of a wider church. In Scotland and across this world. We pray especially today for the congregation of Greyfriars. We thank you for them.

We bring especially before you the long ministry of Malcolm Maclean. Of Reverend Malcolm Maclean. We thank you for him. We thank you for his previous work. And all his publishing work too Lord.

That he has long since served you in various ways. We pray for him. And for his immediate and wider family. As he begins to enjoy some form of retirement.

We know that doubtless he will be busy. For the years you give him. We pray Lord for that congregation. Just now especially as they are preached vacant today. We ask you bless them.

[ 6 : 13 ] And you would send them in due time. One who will lead and who will guide them. We pray for Reverend Rory Stott. As he leads them as intermoderator. We ask for you give him peace. Lord give him we ask the opportunity.

To find suitable men. To find. To preach. And to lead services. We ask Lord you give him ease. And finding supply. As that challenge becomes greater.

Year by year. We also bring before you. The ongoing work in Kirkcaldy. Lord in that tough area. In that tough town. Where your servants have laboured for many years now.

As we see news of growth. As we see good news of some coming to faith. Even the last few months Lord. We bring that congregation before you. We ask you to encourage them.

And support them. We pray all to just now Lord. For that family from America. The Underwoods. As they are in the middle of planning. To come and to serve. With mission to the world in Kirkcaldy.

[ 7 : 13 ] We pray Lord for their plans. That they would be according to your plans. And they would see fruit for their labours. We thank you for their willingness. To pack up their lives in America.

Pack up their lives in one nation. And move to a brand new nation to them. In order to follow your calling. In order to fulfil the promise. That you are building your church.

As we pray Lord for our own denomination. We pray of course as always. For the wider church. We give you praise. That you are not bound to the free church. You are not bound Lord to our culture.

Not bound to us in any way. But you are the God of a worldwide church. Remember just now our brothers and sisters in Nigeria. That one area in particular.

Where there has been such misery. Even this past week. As last Sabbath Lord. As last Sunday. We hear the news of your people being executed.

[ 8 : 12 ] And pray Lord for these six or so families. Who have lost loved ones in the most horrific way. I ask you bless them and be with them. That they would not be discouraged.

But they would be encouraged. As they see the gospel spread. We thank you for the freedom we have in our country. And the peace we have in our country just now.

We pray for the ongoing warfare in the Middle East. Lord we pray Lord for the suffering. And the victims. And the misery on all the sides.

As the situation begins to become more complicated day after day. Lord that you would reign. And you would rule. And you would bring peace to that place. Till that day comes Lord.

That you would support and be with your people. Both in Israel. But also in Palestine. We know you have your people in both nations. People who love you. And people who deserve you. And people who are longing.

[ 9 : 08 ] For days of peace. And days of joy. Until these days come Lord be with your people. We pray the same for your people suffering just now in Ukraine. Or those who are still fighting that ongoing war.

Remember of course just now again. Your true and faithful people in Russia too. As they seek to serve you as best they can. In a nation that is so opposed to you. But we confess that we come just now to you.

From a hurting world. A world where sin has caused so much destruction. And so much misery. We find ourselves feeling so helpless and so small. And we come just now confessing that.

And that we can do nothing. We bring all these burdens to you. Our private burdens. Our public burdens. Our worldwide burdens. We pray for ourselves locally.

Bringing the focus back down to our own congregation. We pray we would see days of refreshing. Days of revival. Days of renewal. In North Tulsa. We would see these homes around us.

[ 10 : 08 ] Come to know. And come to love. And come to serve Jesus. And call him their saviour. As we pray for that. For ourselves. We pray the same thing. For our brothers and sisters.

Indeed our friends. Next door. As the gospel goes out. We hope there today too. We pray Lord for the one who leads them. Who guides them. We ask once more you would provide them. An under shepherd.

To lead them. And to guide them. We know that extended vacancy. Is difficult for congregation. It is not an easy time. I pray Lord for the joint gospel work.

In this place. I pray Lord your spirit would be known. And seen that. He would work his saving power. In the hearts. And in the souls. Of our many neighbours.

And friends in this place. As we said to the boys and the girls. We ask that we would be truly a city and a hill. We would be that flame. That is seen by all. That light that is seen.

[ 11 : 00 ] That draws those around us to you. Help us to live lives. That are truly drawing. Help us to live lives. That are truly faithful. That proclaim in our actions.

That proclaim in our words. Proclaim in our very being. That we are loved by. And that we love the risen Lord Jesus. Help us to find peace in him.

And in him alone today. We pray Lord just now for our own nation. We pray Lord for those in government over us. Locally and nationally. We pray Lord for those in the council. Lord those in Westminster.

And those in Holyrood. We pray Lord for our Prime Minister. Our First Minister. And our King. We ask that you would give them wisdom. To lead us well in these dark and strange days.

We also ask first and foremost. That you would save them. That you would give each of these men. A saving knowledge. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you Lord.

[ 11 : 55 ] That these things are. Not impossible to you. They feel impossible prayers for us. But they are not impossible to you. We ask one more impossible prayer for ourselves. We would see Lord.

This place filling up week after week. Not for the glory of this ministry. Not for the glory of this congregation. Not for the glory of the free church. But for your glory.

For your name's sake. Lord we ask we would see days of that gospel work. In this village. And in this area. Keep us safely Lord. We ask as we heard last week. We ask for safety from the ongoing attacks of the evil one.

Lord that he would not have a foothold in our hearts. Or in this place. We ask Lord for peace. Even during this service today. As we know that he assails us. As he attacks your people.

As he seeks to distract us. As he seeks to sow seeds of disunity. Within congregations. And distrust. And unkindness. Lord we ask we would battle against him.

[ 12 : 54 ] And take him again and again to your word. And we would find a rest in your promises. And the hope we find in Jesus. Ask all these things. In and through. His holy name's sake.

Amen. Let's turn. To read in God's word. The gospel.

Of Matthew. The gospel of Matthew. We can read.

It's on page. Chapter 15. Matthew 15. On page 770. Of the church bibles. Matthew 15. On page 770.

I'll read from verse 10. Of the chapter. Matthew 15. Verse 10. Let's hear the word. Of God.

[ 13 : 56 ] And he called the people to him. And said to them. Hear and understand. It is not what goes into the mouth. That defiles a person. What comes out of the mouth.

This defiles a person. Then the disciples came and said to him. Do you know that the Pharisees were offended. When they heard this saying. He answered. Every plant that my heavenly father has not planted.

Will be rooted up. Let them alone. They are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind. Both will fall into a pit. But Peter said to him.

Explain the parable to us. And he said. Are you also still without understanding. Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth. Passes into the stomach. And is expelled.

But what comes out of the mouth. Proceeds from the heart. And this defiles a person. For out of the heart. Come evil thoughts. Murder. Adultery.

[ 14 : 57 ] Sexual immorality. Feft. False witness. Slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands. Does not defile anyone. 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 saying. And was crying. Have mercy on me.

O Lord. Son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed. By a demon. But he did not answer her a word. His disciples came. And begged him. Saying send her away.

For she is crying out after us. He answered. I was sent only to the lost sheep. Of the house of Israel. But you 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.

[ 15 : 53 ] Eat the crumbs. That fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered her. O woman. Great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire.

And her daughter was healed. Instantly. Jesus went on from there. And walked beside the sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain. And sat down there. And great crowds came to him.

Bringing with them the lame. The blind. The crippled. The mute. And many others. And he put them at his feet. And he healed them. So the crowd wondered.

When they saw the mute speaking. The crippled. Healthy. The lame walking. And the blind seeing. And they glorified. The God of Israel. Then Jesus called his disciples to him.

And said. I have compassion on the crowd. Because they have been with me now. Three days. And they have had nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry. Lest they faint on the way.

[ 16 : 49 ] And the disciples said to him. Where are we to get enough bread. In such a desolate place. To feed. So great a crowd. And Jesus said to them. How many loaves do you have? They said.

Seven. And a few small fish. And directing the crowd. To sit down on the ground. He took the seven loaves. And the fish. Having given thanks. He broke them. And gave them to the disciples. The disciples gave them to the crowds.

And they all ate. And were satisfied. And took up seven baskets. Full of the broken pieces. Left over. Those who ate. Were four thousand men. Besides women. And children.

And after sending away the crowds. He got into the boat. And went into the region. Of Magadan. Amen. We give praise to God. For his holy. And his perfect.

Word. This time singing. From Sing Psalms. Sing Psalms. In Psalm 139.

[ 17 : 47 ] Sing Psalms. Psalm 139. It's 139a. The. Commeter version.

Psalm 139a. Verses 13 down. To verse 18. That's on page 181. Psalm 139a.

Verses 13. Down to verse 18. For you. O Lord. Created me. You wove me on your room. My inmost being. You have formed. Within my mother's womb. Because I'm wonderfully made.

With all. Your praise I tell. Your workmanship is marvelous. And this I know. Full well. Verses 13 to 18. To God's praise. For you.

SicDIA μ Ouais kinda world. Give me a singing. I hear you Lord. forgive me. You hold me on your room.

[ 18 : 53 ] And I can ask for you. My mamma sting. You have formed within my mother's womb Because I'm a wonderful evening With all good peace I can You were■■■ out on me Tschir partes Did you hear us, I gave O Lord, well, when in the sea and his smiling cross me before my earth, you saw my glory and the glory within the heavens of heaven.

And all the earth is high, I assure him when to guard him for me, when rich and impure him, Lord, our peace for living to thee.

O God, how precious fire, for lightest young men of our, and as I sing to God's men, O our number has made up.

When I took time to give me Lord, I'm the peace of sound.

Where I am, I am with you, still see where will you come?

[ 22 : 21 ] Let's turn to the Gospel of Mark, the chapter we've been working through for some time now. Mark, chapter 8. We read in Matthew, of course, that the parallel passage to this, here is Mark's telling of the same account, from a different angle, of course, but the same information as given to us.

Mark 8. Mark 7, sorry.

Mark 7, verse 24. noticed on the análise before. Remember that the EA Digion Exodus could be told by the comment recall the Kita chapter 9 it comes to 48, verse 24.

4. And behold, our ■■■■ ninguna even antic boast of the game on earth is really be■less. Salad 8, verse 24, Numero 22, In the name of the Torah, or something else.

Paul threw all the trouble at all. We find that in the background now, we find that Jesus in verse 24, he has left. In verse 24, he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

[ 23 : 40 ] As we begin our account today. Now this is a section, these verses down to verse 30, that have caused no amount of uncertainty and no amount of believers to do a double take when we come to these passages and these verses.

This is a section which, if not read carefully, it may well leave us, even as Christians, pretty confused or totally misunderstanding the beauty of what's going on here.

Rather than look at points, we can just follow the journey of this woman today and see the account almost from her perspective. And see why this does not have to be a confusing passage.

It doesn't have to cause us to worry about what Jesus is saying here. Rather, it's a beautiful passage. And just in the back of your minds, just think, our main object is to see that this is a passage about faith.

It's all about faith. Behind this conversation and throughout everything we see here, it's all about the great faith of this woman. This context, we're now entering pagan lands.

[ 24 : 56 ] We see that he's entered this pagan area. We've seen Jesus now for a few weeks now battling the scribes and the Pharisees. They've been following him around, haranguing him, harassing him.

And now Jesus goes away from this place now into the pagan area, into the Gentile lands. He goes into the lands of Tyre and Sidon, as verse 24 tells us.

And then he enters a house. I did not want anyone to know. He leaves behind the Jewish area. He leaves behind the massive crowds for now.

And he goes now instead to this Gentile place where he is, at least in theory, less known. Now, we see here and nowhere else, we see no extended mission by Jesus to the Gentiles.

That was given to the church later. That was the church's job that Jesus allowed them to take part in the mission to a wider world. To those outside of Israel.

[ 26 : 01 ] We see the early church doing that. And we ourselves in Tulsa are evidence that that was successful. Just think how far away Tulsa is from the very start of the New Testament church.

You think, how many people did the gospel go person to person to person for it to land here? Thousands of miles away.

Thousands of years later. And here we are praising our Saviour. So why did Jesus go to these Gentile lands, this pagan area? Well, first of all, as the text tells us, he went to rest.

Here we see the humanity of our Saviour. We must never forget that. He was fully human. He goes to find a place to rest. Away from the crowds. Away from the Pharisees. He goes to a house.

I did not want anyone to know. Our Saviour was fully human, friends. He needed to rest. But of course, he could not be hidden.

[ 27 : 06 ] Yet he could not be hidden. His fame is following him. The crowd know where he is. Even those in Gentile lands have heard about the Messiah.

I've heard about this man who has been called the Son of God, who has been called the Saviour, who is doing wonderful miracles. But of course, there's a second reason of why Jesus has travelled to this Gentile place.

There's no reason. There's no reason geographically for Jesus to do this. There is no friendly relations between these two parts of the country. Quite the opposite. There's no time today for a history lesson.

But safe to say, no good Jew would be seen in this land, in this place. They weren't friendly to the Jewish people. It wasn't full of animosity, but they certainly weren't friendly.

But Jesus goes and he finds rest, or he searches for rest. But the second reason is why we're here in detail. He went to this Gentile land to meet a Gentile.

[ 28 : 08 ] He goes to meet this very woman. We say that she meets him, but no, he is there because he knows that she should have come find him.

He is there to be approached by this woman. We see that from our previous reading in Matthew. Because the second this miracle is done, he then goes back. We see that here even in verse 31.

He then returned to the region, the back of the Sea of Galilee. The second this woman approaches him and this account takes place, Jesus then goes back to his mission, back towards the Sea of Galilee.

He is here for one reason. He travels to this unclean land, the Gentile land. He travels to this unclean land to meet an unclean woman. And here we see the glory of the gospel.

Last week we saw the scribes and the Pharisees calling him and his disciples unclean. For the way they acted. They weren't doing things they should be doing in the way the scribes and Pharisees said they should be doing it.

[ 29 : 12 ] They accused him of being unclean in their ways. And Jesus now goes to an unclean nation to find rest there. To meet an unclean Gentile woman. Bear in mind, he is a rabbi.

At least, he is being seen as a rabbi. And rabbis of that day did not associate with woman. Especially not a Gentile woman. But Jesus goes to find her out.

What do we find when we find this woman then? We find, first of all, she is a Gentile mother. Verse 25. But immediately, a woman whose little girl had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.

She was a Gentile. She was a Greek of Syro-Phoenician lineage, heritage. Her people were of Phoenicia. But Phoenicia had been conquered, really invaded, we could say, by Syria at this time.

In short, she was thoroughly Gentile. She was completely, likely pagan. And she had, in herself, culturally, would have had no time for a Jewish Messiah.

[ 30 : 27 ] It doesn't make sense that she cares. It doesn't make sense that she goes near him. He's got nothing to do with her. But yet, what do we see? We see her immediately running and finding the Saviour.

She's heard he has arrived in the locality. And she finds out where he is and she makes her way to the house. And the obvious question then, of course, is, how did she find him?

How did she know he was there? How did she know he could help her? There is, perhaps, a practical answer that we can't say from Scripture.

So we say it very carefully. There were Jews in this area. It was on the border. It was very much like any border. There's nationalities living on both sides of that border. And perhaps, news has spread.

And perhaps she has some Jewish friends. Lots of perhapses there. The answer I would find more compelling is, Brothers and sisters, we don't know. Brothers and sisters, God uses means.

[ 31 : 29 ] Now, we don't know how she knew Jesus was there. We don't know how she knew where to find him. We don't know how she heard about him. But she did. God uses means.

And God uses ways that we will never understand or hear about. And I'm sure that the whole story of how this Gentile pagan woman heard about the Jewish Messiah was in the same city, the same area she was in.

An amazing story, I'm sure, of Jew to Gentile sharing the good news of this Messiah. We never hear that. We don't see that. But God still did it. But I have a way.

Brothers and sisters, God used some means to draw this woman to Jesus. To draw her to the one who had come to find her.

And she has some understanding. Limited as it might be. She has some faith. As small perhaps as it might be. But she believes that this man can and will help her poor daughter.

[ 32 : 29 ] She is a Gentile, yes. She's a pagan, yes. But she's still a loving mother. She's still a loving mother. She's willing to do anything to help her poor daughter.

And what good mother would it, I'm sure, do the exact same? She's willing, as a Gentile, to approach a group of Jewish men. Again, you wouldn't do that culturally.

You wouldn't do it anyway. They're two different sides. And they're not friendly to each other. A group, I'm sure, of fishermen. Big men, you can imagine. The disciples weren't weedy.

They were fishermen and workers. A few tax collectors thrown in. They weren't small men. They were big, gruff-looking men, you can imagine, of the day. They weren't tidy and looking good. They were just normal men.

Jewish, clearly Jewish. But she approaches this group of men. She's also willing to approach the rabbi, willing to approach the saviour. And we'll see just now in a second, she is willing to fight her corner because she loves her daughter that much.

[ 33 : 33 ] Here we see this exchange taking place. This unusual, if we're honest, this confusing to us at times exchange taking place.

And this conversation, it demands our time. It demands our understanding. It demands we just take the word for what it says to us. So she comes and she falls down at the feet of Jesus.



And we see all in Matthew, we see in Mark, she cries out to him. And she begs. And she begs that he cast this demon out of her daughter.

And briefly just outline the conversation itself. Without going into it, just the conversation. She approached Jesus, she falls at his feet. There's no response from Jesus.

He is silent. Matthew tells us. There's a crying woman here. And she's begging and she's begging. And see that she begs. And the grammar there is an ongoing verb. It's an ongoing sense.

[ 34 : 37 ] She won't keep quiet. And it's not just the grammar that shows us that. Matthew records that. The disciples tell Jesus, please respond to her to keep her quiet. She is begging and begging and begging.

She won't keep quiet. The disciples are saying, they can't handle her anymore. She just won't keep her mouth shut. She keeps begging Jesus. She loves her daughter. She's going to see her daughter healed one way or another.

She wants to get help. And Jesus is silent. And then Jesus finally responds to this begging woman. With what is one of the most, on the surface, harshest of responses.

From the mouth of her loving saviour. Where Jesus says to this poor begging woman. Let the children be fed first. It is not right to take the children's bread.

And throw it to the dogs. In other words, Jesus is saying he has come to help and look after his own people first. The people of Israel. He has come to bring the gospel to them.

[ 35 : 39 ] Come to bring salvation to them. And the Gentiles, the dogs. They might get the after effects. But he won't feed them first. He's here to feed his own people first.

Not the Gentiles. The Gentiles have to wait. And this woman answers Jesus back immediately. He acknowledges her faith.

And he heals her. Now we could end the sermon there and go home. That is what the Bible tells us. It takes place. But we might go home with more questions perhaps than answers. The problem is, if you read it just a cursory reading.

If you read it just flying through it. As our atheist friends often do. This is a real favourite of the atheists. This passage is show that Jesus is truly not who we think he is.

And they'll say, well, it sounds like Jesus just is bothered. He's annoyed by this woman disturbing his peace. He's come to rest. And this woman comes to him. And she won't keep her mouth shut.

[ 36 : 38 ] And she annoys him. And she annoys him so much that Jesus then snaps at her. Calls her a dog. That's what we see written down, do we not, in these pages.

In these verses. We see a saviour with little pity. Little care for a woman. We see Jesus insulting a woman. And Jesus reluctantly helps her.

Brothers and sisters, I know it sounds like I'm being a bit dramatic. Sadly, I went in search. I should not have wasted my time. But just out of interest.

I went in search of some more, perhaps we could say liberal, Christian interpretations of this chapter. It was a miserable afternoon. A miserable few hours.

There are some Christian interpretations. Some Christian commentators. I use that word very carefully. Because their view of who Christ is, I would say, bars them from being called Christians.

[ 37 : 36 ] But nevertheless, they say that, yes, Jesus was annoyed. And Jesus, at this point, he learns at this point to be nice to Gentile women. What?

There's no time today to go into that. That's where that kind of thinking leads you. Is Jesus being harsh here? Is he being nasty here? What really took place?

Well, look at the text once more and see what's really taking place. It's not harsh. It's not confusing. It's actually beautiful. And quite the opposite of what some might claim.

Jesus is giving this woman time and space. And he's giving her attention. Note a few things, first of all. As we said, why is Jesus here?

To rest, yes. But no, why is Jesus here? He's here to be there for this woman to come find him. Jesus, if nothing else today, think of this.

[ 38 : 36 ] Jesus traveled to a pagan place, to a Gentile place, to find this woman or to be found by her. So the second this healing is done, he goes back again, as we said, back into Galilee, back to his mission.

He comes to rest and he comes to find this woman. He knew what would take place. He knew this woman. As we sang in one, Psalm 139 for a reason, that Psalm reminds us, God knows us.

He created us. He gave us our personalities, all our quirks, all the ways we tick, always we work. God made us like that. Jesus knew this woman.

Keep that in the back of our minds. He knew her. And he knew that she needed help from him. He goes and he positions himself in a place where she can find him. And she comes to him.

Then note that she falls at his feet. She knows, how much she knows, we don't know, but she knows some way that he is the Messiah. That he deserves her to fall at his feet.

[ 39 : 39 ] And she calls him Lord. She calls him, we saw in the Matthew, son of David. She has some understanding of who he is. She knows that he is, at least claimed to be the Messiah.

That he deserves her respect. That he is God. And she treats him accordingly. Also note that Jesus' response isn't wrong.

He has come to his people first and foremost. There is no controversy in that. He came to his people. He came to his people of old. He came to his ancient people to bring the gospel to them.

We know that. To tell them that the Saviour had come, that he was the Messiah. But one promised from the very start. He has come to save them. But also we see that Jesus has come to prepare.

As it were, the Gentile mission that would begin after him. So there is no lie there. Jesus is not being harsh there. He is saying the truth.

[ 40 : 42 ] He has come first and foremost for his people. The problem that one has, or many people have, is now in verse 27.

The end of verse 27. Where he says, It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. He's calling this Gentile woman a dog.

Does this show that Jesus, like all the other bigoted, first century rabbinic teachers, who has such a low view of women? Well, not quite.

Yes, he calls her a dog. But here's where the Greek helps a wee bit. He calls her a kainarion. Kainarion.

The exact wording of that tells us he calls her, literally a small dog. But in context, a pet dog. A puppy.

[ 41 : 45 ] If you miss it, you miss it. That changes the whole story. What's going on here is not an insult match where Jesus tries to degrade this poor woman. No. Again, he made her.

He knows her. He knows he has to think of someone who has no pushover. That she is smart on her feet. She is quick on her feet. There's a sense of a test here. He throws this statement out and he knows that she can respond.

This woman, we don't know anything else about her, but we know she's smart. She's witty. She's quick on her feet. Jesus knows that. He made her like that. He throws out this test and he knows she is capable and able to answer.

And there's a sense here of Jesus inviting her to answer him. There's a dot, dot, dot. There's that question mark at the end here, really. There's a space here. Jesus says, I've come to feed my own first.

It's not right, is it? To feed the dogs. Silence. And she jumps back in there and she has an answer straight away. She knows what she wants to say.

[ 42 : 50 ] If she bows down to worship Jesus at the start, she knows he is Lord. She knows he is worthy of some form of worship. She wouldn't answer back to God if she didn't think that's what he was wanting her to do.

She's no idiot. She knows he is doing this to give her a chance to answer him back. This is not harsh. This is friendly. There's a tone here to the chat with Jesus and the woman that we might miss if we come to the text with preconceptions.

It's a friendly, it's almost, with respect, a tableside, a banterous tone where Jesus knows her. He gives her his chance to prove her faith.

Friends, of all cultures, we ourselves should understand this. We are one of the worst cultures for us. Oh, the best. We are so harsh to one another, those we love and those we care for.

The insults we give one another. Friends and brothers, sisters and family members, we're so off one another in a friendly way. We jive at one another, don't we? It's what we do as a culture.

[ 44 : 01 ] This is not a time for personal reflections, but I was thinking of an example of that. There's an ETS lecturer who's got Lewis Roots, who I knew well before I went to ETS, and I knew him personally quite well.

And we're doing a lecture on, very early on in ETS, on how we're head, we're heart, or we're hand. We either serve intellectually, serve in our hearts, or we serve by doing God's service.

Head, heart, or hand. That's a whole different sermon, a different day. And the lecturer looks at me, and this is the first few classes. We're all new to each other. The classmates, we're all new. And no one in the class knows, the lecturer knows me.

And this lecturer pointed at me and said, Donald, you're not heart, you're not hand, you're more stomach. Now, to the classmate, they're appalled, the lecturer's called Donald Fat.

What they don't know was, the lecturer and myself had had a discussion that previous day about our weight loss together, and he started cycling, I started walking around Edinburgh, and so on. There was a friendship, there was an understanding behind the scenes.

[ 45 : 08 ] But this wasn't a joke, it was something friendly, that then let me answer him back. Jesus knows this woman. He made her, he knows she's capable of answering him back, and he gives her this challenge, and she answers back instantly.

He knows she's sharp, he knows she's witty. And he uses that side of her personality to show and teach the disciples his purpose, which is, he was on a mission, and his mission would extend to the Gentiles, to outside of the Jewish kingdom.

And rather than take offence, as we might, she doesn't take offence. What does she do? She fires back to Jesus. She fires this answer straight back to him. There's this glorious exchange.

This woman, you can imagine her perking up, and she's so sad of her daughter, of course. She's brokenhearted. But there's a sense of joy here to answer straight back. Still respect, though.

Yes, Adonai. Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. In other words, I understand your missions to your people first, your ancient people. I understand the Gospels for them first.

[ 46 : 21 ] But even we Gentiles, even we deserve the crumbs that fall from the table. She calls him Lord. She's willing to trust in who he is and what he is saying.

She's willing to believe that he can indeed save her daughter. Brothers and sisters, her faith is being tested, quite simply.

And Jesus is sovereign. And Jesus is, with respect, he is allowed to act this way.

He can test our faith, he wishes, he is sovereign. And at times we go to him and we say, Lord, would you not do this for me? Would you not do this for us?

Would you not allow this to happen in our congregation, in our community, in my own heart, in my family, and so on and so on? And the answer is, not yet. When the answer is not yet, do you just give up praying, brothers and sisters?

[ 47 : 22 ] Do you just stop? I certainly hope you don't. When you pray for your unsaved friends and family, and I'm sure you've been praying for them for many years and decades perhaps now, and you say, Lord, would you not save my family?

Would you not save my brother, for example? And you pray for your brother every day to be saved. You pray for him for every year to be saved, the last 10, 20, 30, 50 odd years.

And the answer still is, not yet. Do you give up? Is your faith gone? Of course it's not. Like this woman, you keep on going. Lord, did you not say?

Lord, are you not promise? Lord, are you not the saviour? And so on and so on and so on. What we see here is a beautiful exchange where Jesus uses her own personality to draw out her faith and to show the disciples, never mind, they're watching, and see here, the disciples are the ones who are so sick of this woman, who can't stand her yapping away and crying away at Jesus' feet.

They're so annoyed by her, and Jesus shows them that there's a Gentile woman here, a pagan woman, who has more faith and more understanding than they have shown so far in any of the exchanges we've seen them in.

[ 48 : 46 ] They've shown a lack of faith again and again and again, a lack of understanding again and again and again. This woman, she shows faith, she shows real understanding for a Gentile woman.

We saw in Matthew, Jesus' response, Matthew captures perhaps the joy of it. Jesus doesn't just say, okay, go, your daughter's been healed.

We might think that. That's not what's being said here. For this statement we see here, you may go your way, the demon has left your daughter. We see in Matthew, that's the other angles given to us, where Jesus is, there's joy in his statement.

He is overjoyed she's answered him back this way. Of course he is. She has fulfilled what she's been made to do. The personality he has formed her with, the personality he caused her to be born with now shines through and this witty woman, this smart woman who has answered back in such a beautiful way, who has shown her faith to be so solid, even the face perhaps of God's silence, she still says, Lord, I trust that you can do this even though you're silent, even though you are fighting back against me, I trust you can do this, therefore I will keep asking you.

And Jesus says, go, your daughter's been healed. She goes home and she finds that to be the case. Jesus knows her love. Jesus knows her faith.

[ 50 : 07 ] He knows her humility and he even knows her trust in a Jesus who she perhaps knows very little about. even in the face of situation which might well have dissuaded others, she keeps on going.

Her daughter is healed. Friends, context matters. Study matters. When I remember a younger Christian, a much younger Christian read this passage, I thought, I'll come back to it one day because, to be honest, that passage scares me.

I don't understand why Jesus is saying that, why he's acting that way. I don't like it. I'll study it one day. Study matters. Context matters. Take time. And we'll see this Thursday, God willing, that Scripture interprets Scripture.

If we're something in Scripture we don't understand, we look to other parts of Scripture to interpret it for us, to explain it to us. Scripture is consistent. Our Savior is consistent.

He loved this woman. He loved her so much he allowed her personality which he gave her to shine through. And doing that he teaches a lesson both to her, to the disciples, but also to us.

[ 51 : 25 ] Sometimes the answer is not the answer we think the Lord is giving us. We just keep trusting in faith and relying that we have a God and worship a God who loves us. Jesus is sovereign and he works all things out according to his plan.

And there are times, brothers and sisters, there are times for us to wrestle with him in our readings, in our prayer. There are times to ask the questions.

There are times to be honest, to be genuine. If nothing else, this passage reminds us as Christians we must be genuine and honest as we approach Jesus. He knows our hearts anyway. He sees us anyway.

He understands us. We must therefore respond by being honest and open and genuine like this woman. He knows us. He made us. There are times we must just trust and know.

We are trusting and loving and serving a saviour who knows us and who loves us, who made us and who cares for us. Keep on praying.

[ 52 : 26 ] Keep on wrestling in match your situation just now. Keep on coming to him in prayer and know that a saviour who makes you wait for the answers of your prayers, it's never out of harshness, never out of badness, because he knows and understands eternally in ways we do not.

He knows you. He made you. And we see here he is willing to listen to the answering back of a Gentile woman. How much more is he ready and willing and able and eternally ready to hear the prayers of his precious people.

Brothers and sisters, keep on persevering in prayer and let your faith to the same faith as this woman, tested what it might have been by the saviour. It was genuine and you kept on going.

Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. We come before you, Lord, just now with the truth of your word still in our minds. We give you praise for it. But even the more difficult passages that with your guidance and with your help and with your scripture interpreting itself, that even perhaps sections which complicate us at times, which confuse us at times, that you can make these things known to us.

We worship a saviour who cares for his people. We worship a saviour who loves his people, who has extended his grace out to the Gentile lands as was prophesied of old in Isaiah, that the islands and the nations of the Gentile nations and Gentile islands would one day come and know and one day come and understand that we are one of these people, Lord, that we have heard and seen and found ourselves deeply moved, eternally moved and eternally loved by this saviour.

[ 54 : 04 ] We thank you once more for the gift of praise that we can sing your praises. We thank you once more, Lord, for those who lead the praise as you give them the words to say, Lord, that they would understand our presenters, they would know for themselves that they are doing a vital part of your worship service, your public worship, as they lead us together in song.

We thank you once more for the psalms we sing. You've given us your words and we sing them, we sing them knowing we do so, that the words we sing are perfect, the words we sing are perfect because they come from your word.

Help us to sing these words of understanding, to go home in peace and spend this day in joy and in prayer and praise to the God who made us, who knows us and who calls his people his own.

It's called these things in and through and for Christ in his precious name's sake. Amen. Let's conclude by singing in Sing Psalms.

Sing Psalms, Psalm 146, Psalm 146, it's on page 191. Page 191.

[ 55 : 10 ] Sing Psalms, Psalm 146, on page 191. We're going to sing verses 1 down to verse 6 of the psalm.

Psalm 146, verses 1 down to verse 6. Praise the Lord, my soul, O praise him. I'll extol him all my days while I live to God my Saviour.

From my heart I will sing praise. Psalm 146, verses 1 to 6, to God's praise. Praise the Lord, my soul, praise him.

I'll extol him all my days while I live to God my Saviour.

From my heart I will sing praise. In the earth, the first and fences part of men they cannot see.

[ 56 : 25 ] All their plans will come to love me when they perish in the cave.

Blessed is the one who withdrew me who stole out to cheer us all.

Blessed is the one who kisses all his love upon the Lord.

Hear me with our found heaven and their sins with all their storm.

Hear me Jesus, every promise you will get all evermore.

[ 57 : 42 ] In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit for you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.