

# "O woman, great is your faith!"

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 0 0 ] us for the service of worship from Stornoway Free Church. We want our time to be God-glorifying and of benefit to ourselves and we pray to that end that God will bless us richly today as we come together in this way. Just one intimation to give you, we are really sorry to hear of the passing of Callum MacLeod, who lived latterly at Lewis Street in the Trust Homes. We are sorry to hear of Callum's passing. We pass our condolences today to his remaining siblings, to Isabel and Eleanor and Anne and to Colin and Innes and we assure them today of our prayerful remembrance of them in their sad loss. We are going to begin ourselves today praising God from Psalm 65. Psalm number 65 in the St. Psalms version that's on page 82. I will seem to tune Huddersfield, Psalm 65, verses 1 to 5.

In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray. Psalm 65, verses 1 to 5.

In Zion praise awaits you, Lord. To you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near. You hear us when we pray.

When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay. You pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt We are filled away. How blessed are those you choose and bring within your hearts of grace. We're filled with blessings in your hearts.

In your most holy place. With awesome deeds of righteousness. You answer us, O God. With awesome deeds of righteousness. You answer us, O God. Our Saviour, O Father.

[ 2 : 5 1 ] Our Saviour, O Father. You answer us, O God. Our Saviour, O Father. Our Saviour, O Father.

Our Saviour, O Father. The Seas and all the earth abroad.

The Seas and all the earth abroad. The Seas and all the earth abroad. Let's read together now from God's word. We're reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15. Matthew, chapter 15, verses 1 to 20.

Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.

He answered them, And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, Honour your father and your mother, and whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.

[ 3 : 5 8 ] But you say, If anyone tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God. He need not honour his father. So for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God.

You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. 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, but 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.

[ 5 : 0 4 ] 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, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. Amen. We pray God will bless a reading of his word.

Let's now call upon him in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. Our gracious and eternal God, our Father in heaven, our Creator, our Redeemer.

We bless you today for this opportunity of coming to draw near to you in worship, with the promise that if we draw near to God, God will draw near to us.

[ 6 : 14 ] Lord, we thank you today for the reminder that you have given us in your word of our need of your cleansing. You have reminded us of our sinfulness, where our sin proceeds from, that we have a sinful heart, that we need that you should create a clean heart within us.

Lord, we confess that the sins that we are aware of in our lives are too great for us to understand completely, and that our sinfulness is known perfectly only to you.

We give thanks for this, that you know us so much, so perfectly, so inwardly, so minutely. And even though that at times, Lord, causes us to feel challenged and even disturbed, we give thanks nevertheless that there is no aspect of our sinfulness or our need that is beyond your reckoning and beyond your remedy.

We thank you today, Lord, for the way in which you have provided for us, provided for us salvation, redemption, cleanness in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through him that you are pleased today to receive us and to accept us, and to account us righteous for his sake in his righteousness. We thank you that he came into the world, that you sent him from heaven into this world, that he willingly came in order that we might find salvation through him, that he came to call sinners to repentance, and that he does so still to this day through his gospel.

[ 7 : 54 ] Our Lord, we thank you today for everything that encourages us, for everything that humbles us in your presence, for every aspect of your word that rebukes us.

For we need all these aspects of your truth to affect our lives and our minds. And we thank you that the faith that you have given to your people responds to these various aspects of your truth, so that we come to rejoice at the promises and tremble at the threatenings.

And we thank you, Lord, that it is good for us to do so. For thereby not only are we reminded of our own need, but also of your compassion and your holiness.

O Lord, we come before you today as those who live in a world of pain and of sorrow, and who carry much sorrow in our own hearts too from time to time.

Lord, we look out over our world and we know the devastation that we see that has come from its fallenness, from the way in which we have rebelled against you as human beings.

[ 9 : 01 ] And we thank you, Lord, today that your provision for us includes the whole creation that you will ultimately bring to restoration and renewal. And we thank you that we can look out over our world today and know that God is in control, that God sits upon his throne, that every event that comes in the way of our experience and in the way of the passing of history is already appointed by you and in your plan, and in your plan especially for your church, for your believing people.

For you have made your son to be head over all things to your church. So that even at times such as this great pandemic and world wars in the past and other great events that we know of in history, the Lord has been on his throne and you have continued to reign supremely, and you are bringing all things to the end that you have purposed.

Oh, help us to trust in you as God, to trust in your wisdom, to trust in the unfathomable love that you have for sinners like us.

Help us, Lord, today to come to trust in your word and the authority of your word and to know that you speak to us today as you have done before through your word that we read and that we come to preach from.

We pray that you would apply it to our hearts. We ask especially, Lord, today in the situation that we face in the world, that you be pleased to rescue us, to come to our help and to our aid.

[ 10 : 37 ] For whatever medical means that may be available to us, and we thank you for all of them. Yet, Lord, we pray that they may never turn us from yourself, that we may never trust in them as we should trust in you, and that we should see that all the provision you make for us there are your gifts for which we give thanks.

We pray that you would help, Lord, each of us as we face this situation for ourselves. Help us individually and collectively. Help us in our homes and families, communities, throughout our nation. And again, we pray for the world in which we live. Bless our leaders at this time once again. We pray for them and commend them to you. And ask that you bless all those who have places of authority and importance and influence in our land.

Not only in terms of political influence and government, but also influence in terms of law and order, justice, medical expertise. We thank you for them.

We pray that you bless them and all that they do in order to seek that we be kept secure and safe and on a right footing and order. Gracious Lord, help them all to look to you and help us to look to your word at all times.

[ 11 : 52 ] We pray as well today for those who have believed, those who mourn the passing of loved ones. We think of those who lost loved ones in recent times and also in these very days themselves.

We pray that you bless Lord, the family of Callum McLeod. We thank you as we remember Callum and his place in the congregation and in the community as well.

And we pray that you would bless Lord, his siblings as they mourn his passing. Be pleased today to draw near to them all, to Isabel and Eleanor and Ann and Colin and Innes.

We commend them each of them to you and their own loved ones. And we pray that you would bless them at this time. We pray that your blessing will be with all who are ill, those who are seriously ill, those who are suffering from other illnesses apart from Covid.

We pray, O Lord, that we would remember them too. And we pray that you would be pleased to draw near to them and to their loved ones. Remember, we pray our children once again.

[ 12 : 54 ] We thank you for them. We thank you for their participation in gospel services and Sunday school classes and tweenies. And everything, Lord, that we seek to do to bring knowledge of Jesus to them.

We ask that they may be blessed as they receive that message of your word. We thank you for their enthusiasm and for the way in which they have entered into a situation where they cannot be gathered together and yet partake of online teaching and online services as well.

Bless those who have prepared these and continue to give of their time and talents so willingly. And we ask that that may bear fruit in days to come. Hear us, Lord, we pray now and continue with us. Receive our thanks. Cleanse us from all our sins. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Okay, then just a word to the children at this point, as we usually do.

I'm going to move today to look at some of the ways in which we find Jesus in the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms is something we're all familiar with. We sing the Psalms regularly in their metrical form.

[ 14 : 04 ] And the book of Psalms is important in many respects for us. But we find Jesus in the book of Psalms quite often by way of prophecies about him, telling us about someone who was going to come as our king and as the saviour.

And today I want to just mention one of those passages. We know that the Psalms have a lot about Jesus that don't mention Jesus by name. And we know that because there are passages in the New Testament that actually tell us that these passages in the Old Testament are actually about Jesus. And this is one of them, Psalm 45. Psalm 45 is a marriage celebration. The Bible tells us that Jesus is married to his people.

He's married spiritually to those who love him. It's a love relationship. Just as a husband and wife love each other, so Jesus and his people love each other.

He loved them so much that he gave his life for them to die on the cross for them. And Psalm 45, because it's a marriage psalm, you can find things about Jesus throughout it.

[ 15 : 18 ] But I want to just mention verse 2 today. You are the most handsome, or the most beautiful we could say, of the sons of men. Grace is poured into your lips, therefore God has blessed you forever.

And if we take these words, and they are true about Jesus, we can see the beauty of Jesus, and the words of Jesus, and also the throne of Jesus, the rule of Jesus, where God has blessed him by placing him on the throne of heaven.

First of all, you are the most beautiful, the most handsome of the sons of men. Jesus is the most beautiful person that exists.

No human being has ever been as beautiful as Jesus. What is it that makes Jesus beautiful? What was it that made him beautiful as people saw him while he was actually physically in the world? The beauty of Jesus is seen in many ways. I want to mention too, you see Jesus beauty in his love. It's the most beautiful thing to see the beauty of Jesus in his love.

[ 16 : 30 ] Because the beauty of that love went so far as to give himself to die instead of his people in place of his people. As he said himself in the Gospel of John, greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

And you are my friends if you do whatever I have commanded you. You see the beauty of Jesus in his love, and you see his love in the way that he went to die on the cross, that death of the cross that the Bible speaks so much about.

And so today, you love Jesus because he loved you. You love Jesus because his beauty is seen in the love that he has for his people.

And that beautiful love cost Jesus his life. He gave his life willingly so that we might live. He came into the world to free us from our sin, and our sin tied us to death.

And that death is what Jesus died so that we could come to be delivered from death and from sin through that. Second to the words of Jesus, grace is poured upon your lips.

[ 17 : 45 ] Many times in the Gospels, we read about how people were amazed when they heard Jesus speak. Because he spoke differently to any of the religious leaders, and even they themselves said that he spoke with such authority.

There was just something about his words that many people couldn't actually work out what it was. But those who loved him knew that they were actually the words of God. He was the Son of God as he lived in this world, just as he's the Son of God now and before he came.

And his words were powerful words. Words of authority. Words that really affected people's lives. And you know, every single one of us that has come to know the Lord as our Saviour has come to know the authority, the power of his word.

Because Jesus still speaks to us through the Bible, through the Gospel, through his word. And as he speaks to us through his word, we come to also be amazed at the power of his word.

A power which changes our thinking, our hearts, our minds, which opens our hearts to Jesus himself. And so you see the beauty of Jesus in his words as well as in his love.

[ 19 : 03 ] And also you see it in his throne. It says here, therefore God has blessed you forever. And when we come to the New Testament, we see that Jesus has been exalted, has been raised up.

Not just from the dead, from the grave, but also exalted, raised up to sit at the right hand of the Father on high. And that means the place of the highest rule and the highest authority.

And we love him because of that. We see his beauty in that. It's the beauty of his kingship. And this Psalm, Psalm 45, is about the marriage of this king to his bride.

And as we think of Jesus, we think of Jesus the king. We think of Jesus the high priest in his death. We think of Jesus the prophet in explaining his words to us through his Holy Spirit.

You have all of these things in the psalm and in this passage, in this verse, in fact. Jesus, the beautiful, most handsome of the sons of men.

[ 20 : 11 ] The beauty of his words and the beauty of his kingship and of his rule. Today, as Jesus becomes more and more beautiful to us as we believe in him, so our love should be shown to him in return.

So let's say the Lord's Prayer. Let's pray the Lord's Prayer together again. Amen.

Let's turn to read that same passage. This time we read the next part of it in Matthew 15 verses 21 to 28. And this is the passage we're going to look at for a short time this morning.

Matthew 15 from verse 21. And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David.

My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. But 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.

[ 21 : 44 ] He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered, It is not right to take the children's bread and to throw it to the dogs.

She said, Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith.

Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. And the third miracle of Jesus that we are looking at in our short series of studies of the miracles of Jesus.

Remember the last time we mentioned that the three miracles we are looking at last weeks, this weeks and the previous weeks as well. We're looking at three miracles that are tied together by this particular feature of people overcoming difficulty in accessing Jesus.

Whether it's the difficulty of not getting to him because of the great crowd, the man who was laid down through a hole that he made in the roof. Or the difficulties that you find with regard to this woman here who had difficulty because Jesus himself spoke to her in a certain way.

[ 23 : 15 ] We find that that's the main difficulty that this woman actually had to contend with. All difficulties in accessing Jesus, getting to where Jesus is, if you like.

And of course that means spiritually as well that there are difficulties sometimes in accessing of Jesus that we have to overcome and by faith actually rise and deal with and get on top of.

So this woman, the difficulty for her wasn't the words as much of the disciples or the words of anyone else or the physical difficulties of getting to Jesus. The difficulty was actually in the words of Jesus himself as well as the silence that Jesus showed to begin with.

He didn't answer her at all to begin with. And then the words that he spoke seemed to be a barrier to her actually gaining access to him, to the blessing especially that she wanted from him.

The woman actually was from Tyre and Sidon, from the district of Tyre and Sidon. And that was a district, as this woman herself is called, a Canaanite woman.

[ 24 : 23 ] A district that had much of paganism involved with the practices of people there. And this woman was a Canaanite. She's deliberately mentioned as a Canaanite, but is not named.

And the fact that she's mentioned as a Canaanite is a deliberate contrast to the continued refusal of so many of the Jewish people and of their leaders in particular to accept Jesus, to come to Jesus and to place their trust and faith and see him as the Savior.

And you notice here, despite the fact that she's a Canaanite, that she is not from a believing background, yet she came out after Jesus.

You notice these words there, she came out and was crying. She came out from that region. She came out from her home. She came out from her own territory and began following Jesus, but began following him by crying out after him.

And that's a very deliberate contrast to the religious leaders that you read of in the early part of the chapter. The scribes and the Pharisees that found fault with Jesus and with his disciples, always finding ways by which to accuse Jesus and eventually coming to find a way by which he would be led to his crucifixion.

[ 25 : 42 ] What a contrast there is in this non-Jewish woman who came out after Jesus, crying out after him for help. That's a deliberate contrast between those who knew their Old Testament, who knew their laws, who knew God's revelation to them, but who did not accept Christ as the fulfillment of much of that Old Testament revelation.

And what a great encouragement there is, not just a contrast to the religious authorities, but it's a huge encouragement to ourselves and to our evangelism, to our evangelistic endeavors, whatever they are.

And especially whenever we might get back, God willing soon to be able to engage in ways in which we used to and in worship the way we used to.

Here is a huge thing that we need to keep in mind. Here is something that encourages us in that evangelism. Here is what we want to see and hope to see after this COVID business is over.

These restrictions are over, this terrible situation that God is in control of and yet proves so challenging to ourselves. We want to see people coming out after Jesus.

[ 27 : 00 ] We want to see people who have already begun to follow him, who are joining in online services and perhaps weren't in the habit of coming to church. We want to see the likes of you today, if that's a description of you, coming out openly after the Lord, coming to seek the Lord meaningfully and fully and giving your heart to him and crying out after him and seeing that he is the ground on which you must seek help.

Maybe if that describes you today, I hope that through this passage itself today, you will come to find the peace that this woman came to find through crying after Jesus and persevering after him in

her crying after him.

Oh, how wonderful it would be today if there is one listener today who can say, I end this day differently to the way I began it because I began it unsaved and I'm ending it by knowing the Lord, by coming to have his response to my crying after him.

Well, that's just by way of introduction, but it's something important for us to remember as we look forward, God willing, to better times, to a better day than we're facing providentially at the moment. Three things about this woman. I'm going to mention three things. I'm going to deal with the second one more fully. First of all, we'll look at her predicament, which is very easy to describe.

[ 28 : 28 ] Secondly, we'll look at her perseverance, the way that she came persevering after Jesus until he eventually responded in a way that gave her peace. Her predicament, her perseverance and her peace.

Well, here's her predicament. This woman, this Canaanite woman, came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

She has a situation at home over which she herself is helpless. A severe situation. A situation the likes of which you probably cannot imagine a worse.

A demon in her daughter. She is demon-possessed. She has that constant stress to live with.

Every single day she has this on her mind and in her life. She cannot meaningfully share that with anyone else. She hasn't anyone to go to that can deal with this and deliver her from this.

[ 29 : 38 ] The Pharisees can't do it. The scribes can't do it. Her own people can't do it. But she's heard about Jesus. Probably heard about him from his having been in this district before.

In any case, she knew about him sufficiently. And she knew about him as the son of David. Very like Bartimaeus. The last time blind Bartimaeus.

This is the way he called after Jesus. Jesus, the son of David. She's saying here, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. She gives him this messianic title. And here she is coming out after him. With this stress. With this tremendous problem. That she needs dealt with. And has come to seek help from him. We all have things.

Which cause us stress. And today maybe. As you're listening to this. And as you're reading this passage. Maybe there's something in your life.

[ 30 : 41 ] That you cannot share with anyone else. Something of a real burden. That you need help. To deal with. To overcome. Maybe it's not like this woman.

Somebody in your family. Maybe it is. It's often the case. Many have a similar situation. In their homes. They have loved ones. That have gone astray. That have gone into the way. Of addictions. Or whatever way.

They've actually fallen by the wayside. And proved to be a constant burden. And constant stress. And stressed to themselves. As well as to their loved ones. Or maybe it's something in your own life.

Something that you know. Is causing you to be stressed out. Something that. You can't meaningfully share with anyone else. But you really want to be unburdened of. Well. Look at what this woman did.

She took it to Jesus. The source of her problem was at home. The demon in her daughter. But she took the matter to Jesus. She cried out after him. Have mercy upon me.

[ 31 : 38 ] Remember last time we looked at. The meaning of that word. Mercy. Same here. It's. Something that. Is done. When you. Have a response.

To a beggar's cry. You give them something. Out of compassion. That's what Jesus was doing. That's what Jesus doing. That's what Jesus does to this day.

When he forgives us our sins. When we come to cry out after him. And he responds with his compassion. And in his love. And in his power. He's actually. Giving us alms.

Spiritually. He's responding to us. As needy beggars. She doesn't plead any rights. Of her own. She knows she doesn't have any.

She's not saying. That she deserves this. She's simply casting herself. On the mercy of Jesus. And as we'll see.

[ 32 : 38 ] That's the way in which we access. In which we access. The power. The love. The influence. That we need to deal with all our problems.

That's her predicament. And it's illustrative of your predicament. And mine as sinners today. That we need someone to deal with this problem. That's too big for ourselves.

The guilt of our sin. The defilement of our sin. The alienation that our sin has caused. Between us and God. Our holy God. But here is. The one God has sent to deal with it. And here is the means by which. When we bring it into his presence. And cry for his help. We're in the right place. And as we'll see now. Her perseverance. Teaches us. That's what we need to keep doing. Now her perseverance. As we'll look at it next. The second point. But there are four tests here. [ 33 : 38 ] For this woman. By which you can see her perseverance. Very clearly. The first test. Is the silence of Christ. Have mercy on me.

Lord son of David. But he did not answer her. A word. And that's most unusual. It's very unlike him. And some people around him might have said this. Well it's not like him to say nothing. Even if it's something that corrects somebody's statement. Or further questions somebody. At least he speaks. But he's not speaking. He answered her. Not a word. And Matthew is deliberately recording that for us. And that's really very like sometimes our own Christian experience. Because God doesn't always answer us instantly. Sometimes it appears that he has no answer to us at all. When you're praying for something. Or for someone. [ 34 : 35 ] Or for yourself. You're maybe wondering. Why hasn't he answered? Why isn't he responding? Why isn't he dealing with us? Why doesn't he speak to me? Why don't I get something from his word that answers the cry of my soul?

Why is he dragging things out? Why is there such a delay? Why is all of this contrary to what he usually does? To what I read elsewhere in his word? Well that's the first test for this woman. But it's teaching us not to give up. It's teaching us to press on. It's teaching us to do what this woman did. To face the silence of Christ. By a further crying out after him. It's teaching us to continue to believe. To believe in him. To trust in him. To trust his word. To believe in his authority. Even if it seems that he's silent towards us. And as your Christian life goes on today. As you're a Christian listening to this. Reading this. You know what I'm speaking of. [ 35 : 37 ] You know that there are times when you can't pray the way you wanted to pray. And the way you used to pray. And that even if you are praying and crying out. It seems as if Jesus isn't listening. Well what do you do?

Well there's no one else you can go to. And he always has a purpose. And what seems to you to be a refusal. And that purpose. Part of it at least. Is that you will keep crying out after him. And in fact you get the impression from this woman. Without really having it described to us. She came crying. Came out after Jesus. She obviously came near to him. And you get the impression as you go through the passage. That the more she seemed to be challenged not to come further. The more determined she was to get nearer to him. And to cry out even more. That's faith. The faith that Jesus actually commended here. That's the first test for her. The silence of Jesus.

[ 36 : 32 ] The second test was the disciples. And their response to her cry. His disciples came and begged him. He was saying send her away. For she's crying out after us.

And even if we think that there's a modicum of compassion. In the words of the disciples. It seems that far more than that. There's just a reluctance to have her follow them any further. And just a desire that she would just be sent away. That she would disappear. Because I think it's almost certainly the case. From the words that you find there. That they found this whole thing annoying. And found it disturbing. Found it something that really complicated life for them. They didn't want this person coming out and causing a scene as it were. They just didn't have the patience for that. And they really wanted. It doesn't mean that they didn't want the Lord to do what she wanted. But it was only so that she would be sent away. And stop being a nuisance. It seems very clear from the way in which these words of the disciples are recorded here by Matthew.

[ 37 : 35 ] Send her away. For she is crying out after us. She's just going to be a nuisance. This is a problem. This is something we can do without. This is just disturbing our peace.

And it's interfering with our present life. Friends, we must never ever give a semblance of that to the world around us.

It's all too easy to actually have people at least mentally dismissed. If not physically. Because it's just not convenient at that moment in our lives to deal with the problems that they present.

And as Christians and as Christian ministers especially, we must never be like that. We are all sinful. We are all prone to pride.

And we are all prone to tiredness. We are all prone to these human failures. But here is something that tells us we must always be ready and willing to encourage and to help.

[ 38 : 37 ] And to come alongside and to deal with people patiently when they come to us. And you know, after this COVID situation is over, as we anticipate perhaps people coming from a completely non-church background.

People who have personal problems. People who have difficulties in life that they feel they want to actually have someone actually help share that with them. That's going to make inconveniences for us.

That's going to make life complicated for us. We have to be ready for that. We have to put up with that. Even if it's a sense of being embarrassed over people, their need of Christ is the main thing. And we have to be prepared to be bothered and to be put out. I'll never forget the address that the late Reverend Ronnie Mackay gave to me when I was being licensed to preach the gospel.

He took a verse that Paul had written to Timothy, which in the AV goes, Be instant in season and out of season.

[ 39 : 36 ] In other words, be always ready, whether it's convenient or otherwise. Be ready. Be ready for people. Be ready to help people. And I'm not saying in any way that I've fulfilled that or really met that perfectly.

I haven't. But I've never forgotten that. And for every one of us as Christians, it's important that we never have this kind of response.

The disciples showed here. Send her away for she's crying out after us. Lord, deal with it, but only so that I can be rid of it. That I can be eased of the burden of helping them.

Let's be prepared. To be bothered. To be put out. To be embarrassed. To be taken out of our comfort zones.

In order to help sinners find Christ. In order to lead people to know the Lord. I know it's easy to say. But it's something we have to apply principle to ourselves.

[ 40 : 41 ] Here's the third test. The silence of Jesus. The reaction of the disciples. And then the words that Jesus spoke. He answered.

It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. First of all, he said, I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That was the third test. The words of Jesus saying. Looking at the imagery of Israel as God's sheep. God's flock, as it were. He's saying, I've been sent to them.

And I've been sent only to them. No, he wasn't pretending here. You'll find some people trying to explain the passage. As if Jesus was just really acting some sort of pretense here.

To draw the woman further into himself. And to eventually deal with her and answer her. Jesus was actually. What he was dealing with here was. The order in which God had planned out the redemption of his people.

[ 41 : 43 ] The Lord had come to his people, the Jews, first. And only after his ascension to heaven. Was the gospel going to be taken out into the Gentile world?

So Jesus here really is keeping to God's arrangement. It's the son of God keeping to the plan. Of how the gospel was going to be. Firstly to the Jew and then to the Gentile.

So that's the reality of it. Jesus is just keeping to that pattern. When he says, I'm sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. While he's in this world. Before the cross.

Before his resurrection. Before his ascension. That's the order. That's the pattern. That's the third test. She's hearing this. And it seems to exclude her. It seems that she has no possibility of accessing him.

At this point. And then. She comes and kneels. Throws herself at his feet. And said.

[ 42 : 45 ] Lord. Help me. Lord. Help me. But. The challenge isn't over. There's another test.

Because Jesus then says. It is not right to take the children's bread. And throw it to the dogs. And that's really just. A further explanation of the third test there.

Where he said. It's not right to take the children's bread. Where he said. I've come only to the lost sheep. Of the house of Israel. He's really just extending that now. And saying. It's not right to take

the children's bread.

And throw it to the dogs. Now he's not calling this woman. A dog. Even though he's using. The kind of word that. That explained. That meant a house dog.

A house. A pest. As it were. He's not calling this woman. A dog. He's actually. Making a picture. He's drawing a picture. In these words.

[ 43 : 42 ] And it's a picture of a family. Around a family table. At a family meal. Let's touch a picture of that. For ourselves. And there's the father. At the head of the table. There's his little daughter.

To his right. The youngest. And they're having a meal of. Let's say. They're having a meal of pizza. And the pizza's divided equally. Or proportionately.

Amongst all the people at the table. And that's the pizza. All divided out. And the wee girl is there. With her share of the pizza. And her father reaches out. And takes. Her slice of the pizza.

And puts it under the table. So that Roscoe can get it. So that the pet dog. Can actually get it instead. And what Jesus is saying. That would not be appropriate. Would it? That would not be fitting.

That would not be right. That's the picture. He's drawing for her. Of the way that. He had come. To the Jewish people. And now he's saying.

[ 44 : 39 ] It wouldn't be right. Of me to take their bread. And to give it away. To someone else first. And she said. Yes Lord.

Be amazed. At that response. Be amazed. At it. Because it shows. An incredible. Submission. To Jesus.

And to his authority. And to his word. You see. She grasped in her mind. That imagery. Of the children. Around the table. Of the inappropriateness. Of taking the children's food.

And giving it away. To someone else first. Even to the dog. Under the table. And she said. Lord. Yes. That's right. That's absolutely correct. But Lord.

Sometimes. There are crumbs. That fall from the table. That the dogs eat of. You see what she's saying. Lord.

[ 45 : 38 ] Even if they are just crumbs. Let me have them. Let me just have the leftovers. If that's all you've got to give me. I'll accept that. I will take that.

Give the food to the children. First of all. Let the children have their bread. Feed the family. First. First. But I am here. Just waiting for any leftovers.

For any crumbs that might be spared. And that will do for me. That is faith. That's tremendous submission. To the will of Christ.

To the. To the authority of Christ. She's accepting. That Christ's will. Is the key. To her problem.

And she's accepting that. Whatever it takes. She's going to hang on to. These words of Jesus. This authority of Jesus.

[ 46 : 33 ] This ability of Jesus. And so she. She comes to him. And says. Lord. Just give me the crumbs. I've just finished reading a book.

On Elizabeth Prentice. Who was. An author. Lived in the middle 1800s. In America. And this book. Is about her life.

It's called. She actually. Wrote. A well-known book. Stepping heavenward. And she also wrote the hymn. More love to thee. And in the book. She talks about.

She writes about. An extract from a letter. That she wrote. To her sister-in-law. Anna. Who was dying. When Elizabeth Prentice. Wrote. This to her.

And it so happened to be. The 25th anniversary. Of Anna's wedding. To her late husband. Her husband had died. Some years before this. But it was actually. The occasion of her.

[ 47 : 28 ] Wedding anniversary. The 25th anniversary. And there she was. On her deathbed. And Elizabeth wrote to her. She said. You have a rich past. That cannot be taken from you.

And a richer future. Lies before you. For I can see. Though through your tears. You cannot. That the son of God. Walks with you. In this furnace of affliction.

And that he is so sanctifying it. To your soul. That ages from now. You will look on this day. As better and sweeter. Than the day of your marriage. It is hard now.

To suffer. But after all. The light affliction. Is nothing. And the weight. Of glory. Is everything. And that is the next sentence. That really caught my attention.

Especially. The greatest saint. On earth. Has got to reach heaven. On the same terms. As the greatest sinner. Unworthy.

[ 48 : 24 ] Unfit. Good for nothing. But saved. Through grace. And that is what you can take. From this woman's response. To the tests. To her overcoming.

Of these challenges. And these tests. The greatest saint. On earth. Is saved. Reaches heaven. On the same terms. As the greatest saint.

And vice versa. Because when it comes. To our need. Of trusting in Christ. We are all. On the same level. Faith. Is the great equaliser.

If you like. And places us. All. On that same level. Of having to trust. In Jesus. And his merit. And not. In our own. And thirdly.

There is the. Perseverance. After her predicament. Out of her predicament. And thirdly. Her peace. And Jesus. Answered her. All woman.

[ 49 : 21 ] Great is your faith. Be it. As you desire. Be it done. As you desire. Our daughter. Was healed. Instantly. All woman. Great is your faith.

There is only one other place. In the gospels. Where Jesus speaks. Like this. To anyone. That's the centurion. You find in Matthew. Chapter 8. That he had not found faith.

Like this. In all of Israel. It's interesting. Isn't it? That. Two non-Jews. Are the only two people. In the gospels. Of which Jesus says. Oh. Great is your faith.

Why was it great? It was great. Because it persevered. Against these obstacles. It was great. Because. It trusted in Christ's authority.

This woman's faith. Trusting in Christ's authority. Persevering against obstacles. That's why Jesus called it. Great faith. That's what makes great faith.

[ 50 : 18 ] Not something that's very showy. Not something that's very spectacular. In the eyes of other people. Simple. Basic.

Trust. In Christ. In the words of Jesus. In the authority of Jesus. In the person of Jesus. Wherever you have that.

Overcoming obstacles. That is great faith. And don't think. That is not. If that's yours today. What a difference.

Our daughter was healed instantly. Like the way Mark chapter 7. Puts it the same instant. Mark using different words to describe it. She went home.

And found her daughter. Laid out on the bed. And the demon gone. Laid out on her bed. Just resting. And the demon gone.

[ 51 : 16 ] When that woman left her house. That day. Whatever time of day it was. She left a house. Of real pain. And agony. And woe. She left a daughter. Demon possessed.

Stressed. And that stressed herself out. And she went back to a house of peace. There was peace in her heart.

With Jesus. Having dealt with her problem. How different. How different. Had returned home. To her leaving home. Earlier that day.

It may be so for you and for me. Today as well. Even if we're advanced. In the Christian life. Or if you today began the day without. Being saved.

May it be a day when we are advanced. On where we were beginning it. As we come to end it. Because we know Christ. And we know his power.

[ 52 : 14 ] And we know his love. And we know his mercy. Let's pray. Lord our God. We thank you for the encouragement.

That these words give us. To continue to plead with you. To continue to refer the aspects of our lives to you. On a daily basis that we meet with.

In your providence. Lord be they small or great. We thank you that we can carry them to you. As the only one who is able to. Deal with us and meet us in our name.

Bless us then today we pray. Bless to us this day and all its privileges. Bless to us all our situations. Help us to draw near to you with them. Receive our thanks now.

And cleanse us from our sin. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. We're going to conclude singing in Psalm 142. Psalm 142. That's again in Psalm page 186.

[ 53 : 16 ] And we're singing to the tune Finart. Psalm 142 verses 1 to 5. I cry for mercy to the Lord. To him I lift my voice in prayer.

Before the Lord I bring my plea. To him my trouble I declare. Verses 1 to 5. Psalm 142. I cry for mercy to the Lord.

To him I lift my voice in prayer. Before the Lord I bring my plea.

To him my trouble I declare. Each time my spirit faints in me.  
You are the one who knows my way. For in the path on which I walk.  
[ 54 : 33 ] A hidden snare for me they lay. Look to my right hand and take note.

There is not one concern for me. I have no refuge.  
No one cares for me. In my adversity. I cry aloud to you O Lord.  
You are my hiding place in strife. You are the one sustaining me.  
You keep me in the land of life. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.  
[ 55 : 53 ] The love of God the Father. And the communion of the Holy Spirit. Be with you now and evermore. Amen. Thank you again for joining us today.

Please if you can join us again this evening. When the service will be conducted by Reverend Kenny I. McLeod. He's going to be continuing. Looking into the book of Ruth. Continuing studies in the book of Ruth.

I encourage you to if you can to come and join us then at 6.30 this evening. Thank you again.  
Please keep safe. And I trust the Lord will bless you in the days to come.