

Matthew 15:22-28 ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." ²³ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." ²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶ But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs." ²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

How foolish are those who are always trying to prove the bible wrong. Recently there was an article in talking about how the bible is wrong because it says the Canaanites were wiped out but that they found Canaanite DNA in people in the Middle East. But their supposition that this is at odds with the bible is so foolish. The second verse of our text shows that the Canaanites were never wiped out. The Bible does say that the Israelites were supposed to wipe out all the Canaanites, but it also tells us that they never did. Rather than prove the Bible they have actually proven the authenticity of the Bible.

This does however bring up a good point; the Canaanites were the sworn enemy of the Israelites. Our story today isn't just about a woman who wants to be healed and Jesus. It is also about a ethnic divide. A people whom the Israelites despised and Jesus teaching us that ethnicity does not matter. That He did indeed come for the whole world.

This same question comes to the front also in the story of the Samaritan Women, and perhaps even more so there. The Israelites do seem to have more of a hatred for the Samaritans than they do the Canaanites , probably simple because the Canaanites were a threat anymore.

I made a comment to my wife last year about Troy Aikman. Her response was to ask what I had against Troy Aikamn. This just proves she didn't pay attention to Packer games in the 90s. How many times was it packers versus cowboys in the NFC championship? Brett Favre vs Troy Aikman, now we really don't care that much about the cowboys, because they aren't the real threat anymore.

So yeah the more hated group was the Samaritans but nevertheless the Canaanites were the ancient enemy, there was definitely some animosity there. Perhaps you see that in the way the disciples treat this women, they aren't concerned that Jesus isn't helping her, they just want her to be sent away.

What about Jesus, is Jesus showing favoritism, is he showing racism? Jesus himself says, "I was not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel". He calls her a dog, he ignores her, and it was Jesus himself who told the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites. It certainly sounds like Jesus and even God himself is racist.

But there is a serious flaw in that thinking in our text. Jesus doesn't send her away not only that but in the end praises her faith. Something which he never does for the disciples. He praises this woman beyond the disciples and gladly helps her out. These are not the actions of a racist.

The Canaanites were cut off and destroyed because of their wickedness and their refusal to repent. Even at the time of the conquest the Canaanites who repented were saved. Rahab is one such example.

On the other hand the Israelites who committed wickedness and refused to repent were destroyed such as Achan, or the 40 years before him the entire people of Israel who listened to the spies instead of trusting the Lord and again how many times in the book of Judges when the Israelites turned away from the Lord, did not the Lord send the Canaanites to destroy the Israelites.

So then there is no partiality with the Lord, no favoritism of one ethnic group over another. But whoever repents and believes shall be saved, as the scripture makes it clear.

Whatever special treatment the Israelites received, whatever special grace they received as a nation, was not for their sakes but for the sake of the whole world. As the Lord made clear to Abraham, "in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"

What did Paul say in our epistle reading two weeks ago

"They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen."

It is not for their own sake that this special grace was given to the Israelites, but because through them was preserved the Word of God, and through them would come the Christ

And so that nation MUST survive in order for God's plan of salvation FOR THE WORLD to be fulfilled - and so it was for the sake of the WORLD that the Israelites received this special grace

And when the Christ had come, and God's plan had been fulfilled, they also were destroyed because of their unbelief. But those who repented like this Canaanite woman were saved "by faith"

Why then did Jesus treat her in this manner? To test her faith, to show the disciples the great faith of this woman, to make it clear to us that she was saved by faith, perhaps one or all of those reasons, it doesn't matter.

What matters is that she was saved by Faith that is through repentance she received what she did not deserve, the grace of God and Salvation.

What happened in Charlottesville Virginia the other weekend is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. For one group to think they are better than another because of the color of their skin or their cultural heritage or their gender, indeed for any reason, shows that such people are not repenting and acknowledging their own sin and turning to Jesus for salvation but instead are looking to themselves.

Many blame scripture for such thinking, but this thing is not from God. But scripture clearly tells us that ALL are condemned, ALL our wicked, so that ALL might be saved by grace alone through faith

The really sad part is not what happened in Charlottesville Virginia but the fact that in our hearts we all think this way. The pride and arrogance, the sin, of the human heart is so great. We look for every excuse to find a reason to consider that we are better than others, even when we know that we ourselves are not, we tried to puff ourselves up. We think well our culture, our nation, our church, our gender, our family, our political party, etc.

I remember in college it was those studying to be teachers versus those studying to be pastors. If there were ever two groups that should be able to get along and work together for the sake of the kingdom, its pastors and teachers. And yet pastors have tendency to think how great are we. And I have heard plenty of teachers going on and on about how pastors don't know how to teach. I've know teachers who aren't very good at teaching and pastors who are excellent at it.

Whatever the division is whatever the group is "us versus them" is the way we tend to think and it isn't because "evolution has taught us to be loyal to the group" it's because the sinful and wickedness of our hearts is beyond even our understanding. It's because in our pride we want to find an excuse to think we are better

We are all dogs, we are all to be despised, we are all unworthy of even the scrapes from the table as Jesus says to this woman, and yet we are all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, cultural, language, vocation or any other man made division, we are all saved by grace alone through, not because of anything we have done to earn or deserve it, but because God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And that is the whole point of this miracle. It doesn't matter that this woman is a Canaanite. Yes Jesus tests her faith, but he doesn't despise her he doesn't withhold his grace from her. She comes to him in faith and receives a miracle. She repents and receives so much more, all the grace of God. Even as do we.

Amen

The Peace of God that surpasses all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.