

grant favors to Gentiles intended for Jews.

3. In substance she said, "If I, a Gentile, should receive the appellation of dog, still, as one, I am entitled to the one crumb of mercy, even though the full meal of loving-kindness should go to the Jews. Perhaps no plea was ever made with purer motives or more touching sincerity." --John T. Hinds, A. L. Commentary, 3-18-34.

IV. THE WOMAN'S FAITH DOUBLY REWARDED (7:29,30; Matt. 15:28).

- A. Her faith commended: "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith" (Matt. 15:28).
1. Behind her prayer was great faith from a surprising, unexpected source.
 2. Her faith is one of the brightest and most encouraging moments in the life of Jesus during his personal ministry.
- B. Her appeal granted: "For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out" (Mark 7:29,30).
1. "Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour."
 2. "She knocked and knocked until the door opened" (cf. Matt. 7:7-9).
 3. Unselfishness and persistence in prayer do not go unrewarded (Luke 18:1-8).
 4. Her appeal helped her daughter, but it helped the mother even more.
- C. What about your faith in Jesus?
1. Do you take your burdens to God in prayer in His name?
 2. Are you praying as earnestly for your children that they might be granted freedom from Satan's diabolical influences?

CONCLUSION -

- I. Let us utter specific prayers for those things nearest our hearts.
- II. Unselfishness, persistence, reverence, humility, definite entreaty, and expectancy should characterize our prayers in Jesus' name.
- III. The Lord who created all men, and who came with the gospel for every creature, is no respecter of persons. Yet his divine plan was that "the children first be filled." Let us remember that all things are to be done decently "and in order."

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON NINETEEN

Healing the Syrophenician Woman's Daughter

Mark 7:24-30; Matthew 15:21-28

INTRODUCTION -

I. LESSON LINKS AND CONTEXT.

- A. The time of this miracle was probably the spring or summer of A.D. 29.
- B. Shortly after the feeding of the 5,000, the twelve tried to row back across the sea of Galilee and Jesus walked upon the water. Then came the address on the bread of life in the Capernaum synagogue.
- C. Failing to attend the feast in Jerusalem (the third Passover, or the Feast of Tabernacles?) because Jews "sought to kill him" (John 7:1-9), the scribes and Pharisees reproached him for disregarding tradition (Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23; John 7).
- D. After this, Jesus "went out thence," to try to find rest and escape (Matt. 15:21).

II. NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE LESSON.

- A. This is the only time recorded that Jesus left his native soil, except for his journey into Egypt as an infant with his parents (Matt. 2:13-15).
- B. The Bible mentions two Syrophenician women for whom a miracle was wrought. The first was the widow of Zarephath in Sidon to whom Elijah was sent, after he was fed by the ravens at Cherith. Elijah sustained her and her son during the entire drouth by causing her jar of meal and cruse of oil not to waste (1 Kings 17).
- C. It is remarkable that the two examples of faith the Lord commended most were Gentiles: This woman, and the centurion whose servant Jesus healed (Matt. 8:8,9).

DISCUSSION -

I. JESUS TOURS HEATHEN TERRITORY (Mark 7:24; Matt. 15:21).

- A. Into the borders of Tyre and Sidon: "And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (24a).
 1. Some assume that his going "into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" does not mean that he actually crossed the borders into Gentile territory. But Mark 7:31 reports the fact that "he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee....," which was certainly on Gentile soil.
 2. His reasons for going were most likely (a) to

- attempt to gain needed rest, (b) to escape from his enemies for a season at a time of intense hostility, (c) to avoid for a time the mistaken movements of his overzealous friends who were ready to make him king, and (d) to spend extra time in private teaching of the apostles.
- B. Could not be hid: "And he entered into a house and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid" (24b).
1. He obviously did not go to preach and to heal.
 2. Though he was perhaps seeking time alone to instruct the twelve, his fame would allow him no privacy, even away from his homeland.
- II. A MOTHER'S PRAYER FOR MERCY (7:25,26; Matt. 15:22-25).
- A. Fell at his feet: "But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet" (25).
1. According to Matt. 15:22, "she cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon."
 2. Her sympathy for her child was so intense she prayed, "have mercy upon me," rather than "my child." Having made her daughter's burden her own (Gal. 6:2), she identified herself with the needy one.
 3. She prayed a specific prayer, asking for a definite thing, which her heart desired most, as we are taught to do (Phil. 4:6).
 4. "Son of David" shows that she shared, to some extent, the hopes of Israel.
- B. A Syrophenician: "Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the demon out of her daughter" (26).
1. This means that she was a Syrian in the province of Phoenicia; and not among those in God's plan for the Lord's personal ministry.
 2. Matthew tells us she was "a Canaanite," revealing she was one of the original Gentiles of that land, a Gentile of the Gentiles (15:22).
- C. The Lord's silence: "But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us" (Matt. 15:23).
1. His silence was evidently to test her faith, and bring out a lesson.
 2. God's answering silence also tests our faith.
3. The reason for the attitude and opposition of the disciples was either (a) the woman's race, or (b) her action was preventing the Lord from gaining the privacy he sought. (Did they ask him to "send her away" without mercy, merely to be rid of her, or with mercy? Likely with).
- D. The Lord's first answer: "But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24).
- His hesitation and silence were not based upon absence of feeling for the mother, but the principles of God's plan for his mission.
- E. Her reverence: "But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me" (Matt. 15:25).
1. By casting herself at his feet, and beseeching him to cast the demon out of her daughter (Mark 7:25,26), she earnestly worshipped him.
 2. By faith, she could see the Lord's love lurking behind his apparent severity and unwillingness to grant her request.
- III. THE WOMAN VINDICATES HER APPEAL (Mark 7:27,28; Matt. 15:25,26).
- A. The Lord's second reply: "And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." (Mark 7:27; cf. Matt. 15:26).
1. It was not yet time for the Gentiles, according to God's plan.
 2. The Lord's use of "the diminutive for the word dog, thus indicating a tame pet," did not repel or infuriate the mother. It rather gave her "an argumentative handle which she was not slow to grasp"--McGarvey-Pendleton. In this way the Lord emphasized the relative position of the Gentiles, not their uncleanness. He did not share the Jewish concept of Gentile inferiority (Acts 10:34,35).
- B. Her humility: "But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs" (7:28; cf. Matt. 15:27).
1. Her reasoning, in asking for the crumbs to which even the dogs are entitled, even while the meal is in progress, revealed a determination and clarity of faith which wholly vindicated her appeal.
 2. She recognized his meaning instantly, that it would be improper with his mission to Israelites to