

CRUMBS FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE

Matthew 15:1-39

REVIEW OF MATTHEW 15:1-20

- Jesus condemned the Pharisees and scribes for not applying the 5th Commandment to their own situation and to the needs of parents (Matthew 15:4 with Ex.20:12//Dt.5:16; Ex.21:17; Lev.20:9).
- The Pharisees and scribes had failed to apply the law according to the weighty principles of love, mercy and compassion (cf. Matthew 9:13; 12:7).
- Jesus portrays the wickedness of man's heart as being dirtier than a latrine! (Matthew 15:17)
 - ✓ No matter how clean the Pharisees' hands are when they eat, they always end up dirty!
 - ✓ If your hands are so clean when you eat, then why is the latrine so dirty?

"We close the church the Sunday after Christmas. Sunday after Christmas nothing happens here. No services. We put a big closed sign on the door and it's wonderful. It's just the best thing. All the leadership, all the staff, all the volunteers—because Christmas you're doing double duty anyway — with Christmas Eve, your choir programs. So the Sunday after Christmas: nothing." Citation: Andy Stanley in *Preaching Magazine*, "Preaching Without Fear: An Interview with Andy Stanley" (July-August, 2004)

I. MATTHEW 15:21-28 IS A RACIAL STORY

- A. There is a great contrast between the Jewish delegation (15:1-20) and the Canaanite woman (15:21-28).
1. The Jewish leaders thought of themselves as the epitome of "clean" while the Canaanite woman was the Jewish epitome of "uncleanness."
 2. The Jewish delegation was part of a chosen race. The Canaanite woman was part of an accursed race.
- B. There are at least four things that highlight the woman's uncleanness:
- (1) "Tyre and Sidon"(v.21)
 - a. Tyre and Sidon were two Old Testament cities that epitomized wealth (Psalm 45:12) and the betrayal of brotherhood.
 - i. Hiram, king of Tyre, built King David's home (2 Sam.5:11).
 - ii. Hiram provided cedars of Lebanon for the building of the Temple (1 Kings 5:1,11).
 - iii. Both David and Solomon were close to the King of Tyre (1 Kings 5:1).
 - b. Tyre and Sidon were infamous cities of slave trade! They betrayed Israel's covenant of brotherhood (Psalm 83:7; Ezek.26:2; Joel 3:5-8; Amos 1:9-10)
 - c. the Jews of Jesus' day hadn't forgiven the people of Tyre and Sidon for betraying the covenant of brotherhood:

In Ezekiel's seven oracles against the nations he condemns Tyre (Ezek.26:1-28:19) and Sidon (Ezek.28:20-24).

Matthew 11:21

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! (Jewish cities!) For if the miracles had occurred in **Tyre and Sidon** which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matthew 15:21

Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of **Tyre and Sidon**.

- (2) "Canaanite" (v.22; cf. Gen.9:22-27; 38; Deut.7:1,2 with 9:5; cf. Ruth 4:12,18-22; 1 Chron.2:4; Matt.1:3)
- (3) "Demon-possession" (v.22; cf. Revelation 18:2)

Is there anything more "unclean" than a Canaanite woman with a demon-possessed daughter?

- (4) "dogs" (v.26)
 - a. The Bible always speaks of dogs disdainfully (cf. Philippians 3:2).
 - i. They were unclean (Exodus 22:31; cf. Psalm 59:6,14).
 - ii. Male temple prostitutes are called dogs (Deut.23:18).
 - iii. "A dog returns to its own vomit" (Prov.26:11; 2 Peter 2:22).
 - iv. There will be dogs in the New Heavens and the New Earth, but they will be outside the city! (Revelation 22:14-15)
 - v. Solomon says that there is no hope for the dead; in fact, so hopeless is death that even a live dog is better, but just barely, than a dead lion! (Ecc.9:1-6)
 - b. If you are offended at these biblical observations about dogs – just imagine how much more offensive Jesus' statement to the Canaanite woman was!

- C. Jesus deals with the Canaanite woman as harshly as or perhaps even more harshly than the Jewish delegation! But unlike the scribes and Pharisees, the Canaanite woman did not take offense. (cf. Matt.15:12)
- D. Just as there were leftovers from the feeding of the 4,000, so too there were leftovers for this Canaanite mother. (Matt.15:27-28)

NOTE: The Canaanite woman's faith is the second greatest statement of faith so far in Matthew's Gospel, and for the second time it comes from the mouth of a Gentile and not a Jew! The first time was in Matthew 8 when Jesus healed the Centurion's servant (see Matt.8:8-11).

II. SAVING FAITH NEVER WALKS AWAY FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE HUNGRY! SAVING FAITH DOES NOT GO TO JESUS SELF-SATISFIED, AND IT NEVER WALKS AWAY FROM HIM UNSATISFIED. SAVING FAITH DOES NOT TAKE OFFENSE AT WHAT THE LORD SAYS ABOUT OUR SINFUL NATURE AND THE SINFUL NATURE OF OUR CHILDREN APART FROM GRACE.

- A. What keeps many people from a saving faith in Jesus is that they do not realize their unworthiness. They are offended when they learn what the Bible teaches about the depravity of their hearts, and they are offended when they learn that their own good works are as filthy rags in the sight of a holy God (Psalm 36:1-3; **Isaiah 64:10**; Romans 3).
- B. We need to pray that God would bring "Canaanite dogs" to our church! We need to pray that our church would reflect the diversity of the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; cf. 1 Cor.5:9-11).
- C. We don't need to downplay the depravity of man out of fear that it may be offensive because Jesus never downplayed it!
- D. Even the converted must still come to Christ by faith alone. Christians are now clean and don't come to Jesus as dogs anymore, but as adopted children. Nevertheless, we still must approach Him on our knees and by faith alone.
- E. True greatness is not preaching to crowds of thousands of people. True greatness is not based upon any of our accomplishments in the flesh or our ethnic background (Philippians 3:4-10). True greatness is found only in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Confidence in anyone or anything less is rubbish. There are no "VIPs" in the Kingdom of God, no "Distinguished Benefactors" or "Gold Club Members." There are only sinners saved by grace (cf. 1 Tim.1:15), and only sinners whose filthy hearts have been washed pure by the blood of Jesus.

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:26-29)

QUESTIONS FOR SABBATH DISCUSSION & MEDITATION:

Take what you have learned this morning and make it into a prayer. Do you realize just how unclean your heart is apart from faith in Jesus? Have you trusted in Him for the forgiveness of your sins? Pray that God would bring more "Canaanite dogs" to our church and that we would reflect the diversity of the church at Corinth.

What was the title of this morning's sermon and why?

Compare and contrast the Jewish delegation of scribes and Pharisees (Matt.15:1-20) with the Canaanite woman (Matt.15:21-28).

What was Tyre and Sidon the epitome of?

How do the Scriptures portray dogs? Were you convicted that maybe you should buy a reptile or a fish instead of a dog? ☺

Why doesn't our congregation pass out white roses to parents before their infants are baptized?

Why did the scribes and Pharisees take offense at Jesus and why didn't the Canaanite woman?

How would you define saving faith based upon the great faith of the Canaanite woman?

What is the danger of "VIP Christianity?"

