

Did Jesus Call a Woman a Dog?
Mk 7: 24-30 & Matt 15:21-28

Introduction.

- A. A Canaanite woman from Syro-Phoenicia.
 - 1. Came to Jesus begging for healing for her daughter.
 - 2. Cried out so persistently the disciples urged Jesus to send her away.
- B. Initially, Jesus refused to answer.
 - 1. Then, he told her the children get the bread.
 - 2. She responded that the dogs at least get the crumbs.
- C. Criticism.
 - 1. Incredible insolence.
 - 2. Worst kind of chauvinism.
 - 3. Insensitivity and harshness show Jesus was not sinless.
- D. We believe Jesus was without sin (Heb. 4:15).
 - 1. What do we do with this passage?
 - 2. Why did Matthew and Mark include this?
- E. Jesus was always teaching.
 - 1. It is a teaching on faith.
 - 2. Faith could be found even among the “lowest” and “worst.”
 - 3. A foreshadowing of the Gospel going beyond the Jews.
 - a. The centurion (Matt. 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10).
 - b. The feeding of the 4000 (Mk 8:1-13; Mt. 15:29-39).
 - c. The Gadarene demoniac (Mk. 5:1-20).
 - d. The deaf and mute man (Mk. 7:31-36).
 - 4. Great faith.

I. The setting (24).

- A. Jesus had just fed 5000.
- B. Pharisees and lawyers.
 - 1. Accused Jesus of allowing his disciples to eat with unclean hands.
 - 2. Breaking the tradition of the elders.
- C. Jesus turned their accusation back on them.
 - 1. Their traditions violate God’s commands.
 - 2. It’s not what goes into the body, but what comes out that counts.
- D. To escape the crowds, Jesus traveled to Gentile territory.
 - 1. Showing that being with Gentiles did not make one unclean.
 - 2. His accusers were the unclean ones.
- E. Could not remain undetected.

II. The conversation (25-27).

A. The woman.

1. Not highly valued.
2. A Gentile.
3. A Canaanite.

B. She kept on crying out.

1. Imperfect tense = continuous action (cf. Matthew).
2. Her daughter.
 - a. Had an unclean spirit.
 - b. Terribly and cruelly oppressed.

C. Initially, Jesus ignored her (Mt. 15).

D. Jesus's response.

1. The children first.
 - a. Jews had priority.
 - b. Then the Gentiles.
2. Gentiles figured prominently in his life and ministry.
 - a. The Magi from the east.
 - b. The woman at the well.
 - c. The centurion.
 - d. The Gospel to go from Jerusalem to the world.
3. There is hope for the Gentiles.
 - a. The eating theme woven throughout these chapters.
 - 1) The feeding of the 5000.
 - 2) The challenge about his disciples eating.
 - 3) The bread and the crumbs of this passage.
 - 4) The feeding of the 4000.
 - 5) Jesus – the bread of life.
 - b. Foreshadows the Gospel coming to the Gentiles.
4. The proverb.
 - a. Jesus didn't call her a dog – it was a proverb.
 - b. She understood and entered the proverb.
 - c. Very unlikely Jesus was harsh with her.
 - 1) The danger of presentism.
 - 2) Probably a gentle tone, as usual with the needy.
 - 3) To draw out her faith.
 - d. "Kunarion" = a house dog fed from the table.
 - 1) Not a street dog that eats garbage on the street.
 - 2) Part of the household.

III. Great faith (28-30).

A. “Mega” faith (in Matthew, only here and the centurion).

B. Characteristics.

1. Her faith was in Jesus.

2. She begged for mercy (Mt. 15).

3. She was persistent.

a. Desperate.

b. Would not be distracted by obstacles.

4. Humble.

C. Her faith was praised and rewarded.

IV. Conclusion.

A. Jesus did not call her a dog; he quoted a proverb.

B. Critics insert their own bias into the passage.

C. This passage is a teaching on faith.