

Christ Community Church

A Mom Who Rocks!

May 11, 2014

Mark was written for Gentile believers, specifically to encourage Roman Christians who were undergoing severe persecution at the hands of Emperor Nero. Written around AD 64.

Mark 7:24-30

A Gentile Mother's Faith

Mar 7:24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. :25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. :26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. :27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." :28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." :29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." :30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

From the Greek word "into", it is clear that Jesus enters deep into the heart of pagan territory. He was hoping to find a place to rest. In Mark 6 Jesus was unsuccessful in getting time alone with His disciples to rest. He is still trying to find some alone time with His immediate followers. Also, this incident follows right on the heels of Jesus' explanation that uncleanness does not come from outside of you, but from within. His entering into a region considered totally unclean by the Jews seems to be a continuation of that lesson. The gentile Christians in Rome, Mark's intended audience, would identify with the people of this region.

Tyre and Sidon belonged to ancient Phoenicia (part of present-day Lebanon) Jezebel, King Ahab's evil queen, was from this region. She led Israel into extreme idolatry and worship of Baal. Elijah (I Kings 17:9-24) was fed by a widow from this region. He raised her son from the dead. She may be the reference in Hebrews 11:35 (women received back their dead).

This region was filled with many pagan temples. The region was also famous for its purple dye made from the crushed shells of a marine mollusk that lived along the shores. The dye was extremely expensive, which made the color purple synonymous with royalty.

It is about a 30 mile journey from Capernaum to Tyre. Jesus must have thought

this was removed far enough from the places where He ministered that He would be able to have some privacy. Not happening!!!

The woman in this story is very interesting.

She is a mother.

She is a Gentile pagan.

She speaks the Syrian language.

She is Phoenician by race (Jezebel and the woman who fed Elijah).

She was probably part of the ruling class, and may have been well-to-do.

As a woman and a non-Jew, she would have been considered totally unclean by the Jewish religious establishment!

However, as soon as she heard Jesus was in the region, she went after Him.

The entire picture is one of relentless pursuit. She didn't waste a single moment. She was determined to see that her daughter was delivered and healed. There was nothing casual about her approach.

Begged – Kept right on asking, kept crying out (Matt) erotaho Gr.

Not simply a question, but a request. The tense is progressive, which means she didn't simply ask once. She asked and kept on asking.

Luke 11:9 ask and keep on asking, seek and keep on seeking, knock and keep on knocking,

Luke 11:8 persistence – shamelessness in asking, importunity

This woman, who was probably well-to-do, upper class, thought nothing of begging in order to get what she wanted for her little daughter!

Drive out the demon – Gr. Ekballo, specifically "At once, and by one stroke!"

It is of a violent throwing out, nothing polite about it. She wanted Jesus to move violently on behalf of her daughter! Kick butt!

It seems that Jesus not only rebuffs her, but that He insults her. In the Jewish mind, dogs (Gr. Kuon) are scavengers and very unclean. That would have been a bitter insult.

However, Jesus uses the Greek word Kunarion meaning "little dog," referring to dogs as pets. He doesn't use the Greek word for scavenger. The picture here is of a family where the children feed the little pet dogs from the table scraps.

Dogs, children, and crumbs are all in the diminutive – little dogs, little children, little crumbs.

Jesus is asserting that His mission is first to the Jewish people. There is a clear order to His assignment. He refuses to be drawn off course by the needs of the people. He has a mission from His Father that He is bound to fulfill.

However, this woman has a response that obviously moves Him! She is shameless in her pursuit!

She calls Him lord, recognizing that He is the one with power over the unclean spirits. She declares that He has the authority to heal if He chooses to. It is not clear that she understands that He is King of kings and Lord of Lords, the second person of the trinity, but she clearly acknowledges that He has the ability to address her little daughter's issue!

She humbles herself and accepts the designation of little dog. She is willing to acknowledge that in God's order, she is not first in line for Jesus' ministry. Even so, she is not deterred from asking and asking and asking! It's as if she is saying, even if I and my little daughter are just the little pet dogs in your home, we still should be able to eat whatever falls from the table.

Her faith in Jesus was so great that she did not consider that casting the demon out of her little daughter was a major undertaking. She refers to it as the scrap, the little crumb, that falls from the table. She didn't need the food on the table. The little crumbs on the floor were more than enough to get the job done! She believed only the smallest fraction of God's power was needed to heal her little daughter.

Because of this Logos! Jesus declared that her response of faith created a channel through which He could act. It became a pathway for God's power to be manifested!

Jesus made it clear that He was not doing some sort of magic act. He wanted her to demonstrate faith in God's supremacy. She overwhelmed Him with her response. (Jesus was repeatedly impressed with the faith that He found among the non-Jews of His time, and repeatedly disappointed with the hardness of heart among the Jews.)

In the same passage recorded in Matthew (15:28), Jesus declares that her faith is great – literally megafaith in the Greek! In chapter 5 of Mark, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, insisted that Jesus come to his home and lay hands on his daughter in order for her to be healed. This pagan woman has so much faith in Jesus that all she needs is to hear Him utter the words, "The demon has gone out," and the matter is closed. In Matthew, it makes it clear that from the moment Jesus said the words, the little daughter was healed.

The way the Greek puts it, the demon left, never to return. The deliverance and healing were completely permanent!

This amazing mother respectfully humbled herself at Jesus' feet, while at the same time boldly, urgently, and persistently entreating Him to heal her daughter. God is moved by this kind of approach!