

AUGUST 5, 2020  
Wednesday of the 18<sup>th</sup> Week in OT  
Matthew 15: 21-28

“WOMAN, GREAT IS YOUR FAITH.”

How do we describe our faith? Is our faith strong enough to move mountains, to move for action for change, to move to help others in need? In our gospel, a woman was so persistent, her faith was steadfast. At first, Jesus was dead silent to the plea of the woman, and of course to test the faith of the woman and for the greater glory of God at the end. This gospel account was the only occasion in which Jesus ministered outside of Jewish territory. This account happened at Tyre and Sidon, fifty miles north of Israel which still exist today in modern Lebanon. We can see here the “future” mission of His apostles and followers to preach the good news to the Gentiles.

How Jesus Christ test the woman’s faith? He even said, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”<sup>1</sup> If we are in that situation, we will be hurt but the woman did stop asking, pleading to Jesus. “What did Jesus mean by the expression “throwing bread to the dogs”? The Jews often spoke of the Gentiles with arrogance and insolence as “unclean dogs” since the Gentiles did not follow God's law and were excluded from God's covenant and favor with the people of Israel. For the Greeks the “dog” was a symbol of dishonor and was used to describe a shameless and audacious woman. There is another reference to “dogs” in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus says to his disciples, “Do not give to dogs what is holy” (Matthew 7:6). Jesus tests this woman's faith to see if she is earnest in receiving holy things from the hand of a holy God. Jesus, no doubt, spoke with a smile rather than with an insult because this woman immediately responds with wit and faith - “even the dogs eat the crumbs”.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 15: 26 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA

<sup>2</sup> [www.dailyscripture.net](http://www.dailyscripture.net)

In one occasion Jesus told His disciples that we need to believe be persistent in our request: “Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you.”<sup>3</sup> The woman’s faith certainly moved our Lord and granted her request without delay because Jesus saw in her the faith so strong, and her request was not for her but for her daughter. My brothers and sisters, this woman is teaching us, inspires us and encouraging us to remain faithful even the foundations for faithfulness seem to be very weak. She motivates us to keep pursuing and seeking our Lord, even when the Lord appears to be silent and distant. Let us always remember His love and mercy has no boundaries. Let us put our trust in Him and pursue Him with strong persistence as the woman did. So, my brothers and sisters, do we seek the Lord and have a persistent faith like the woman? In this time of pandemic and uncertainties, let us keep our strong faith, hold on and be persistent. He is will always be with us. He is just testing our faith.

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<sup>3</sup> Mark 11: 23 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA