

“How much more! God’s amazing generosity for you

Bible reference for sermon: Matthew 15:21-28

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”

²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed from that moment. Copy text of sermon in place of text below.

Last Sunday we heard that the gospel is for everyone not just for the house of Israel. This is radical. God is the God of order and yet God is the God of great and amazing surprise in the grace he shows in his Son Jesus.

Today we hear about this in Isaiah and in the story of the Canaanite woman whose daughter is tormented by a demon. Today we hear our story... Your story...

As we unpack what is happening here, I ask you to consciously reflect on what God has done for you, what God is doing now for you, and what this means for your response to God every day.

It seems to me that as we read and hear today’s gospel reading that there are some distinct movements or acts just as there are in a play or story line:

Movement 1: Jesus goes from the Jewish territory in Galilee and withdraws to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **THIS IS GENTILE TERRITORY and Jesus chooses to go there.** This territory was never part of Israel. So this is not just a trip to the tropical north coast for a holiday for Jesus. He chooses the gentile unclean territory.

Movement 2: he is met by a Canaanite woman, shouting out to him, “have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon! If he’s in Gentile territory by choice its not unexpected that he will meet some gentiles. But this is unique! Unlike the Jewish leaders the Canaanite woman speaks like a disciple of Jesus.

Movement 3: Jesus plays a straight bat. At first he does not answer her. This energises the disciples who think they know Jesus’ heart. Send her away Lord. She doesn’t belong and what’s worse she shouts and wont give up. **Jesus answers “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel”** Matthew emphasises this reality. He writes primarily to Christians who have come from a Jewish background.

Matthew tells the story of God’s salvation story as continuing from the Old Testament times and promises of the Messiah being fulfilled fully in Jesus. So, this is all to be expected. Jesus is sent first to the lost children of Israel. All as expected.

Movement 4: But the decisive movement, the twist in the story line now comes.

Grace has come to the land and this grace is met by and already received in faith. What is not expected is the faith is already in the heart of this outsider, this foreign woman

which will show's up in the misguided foolish law focused Jewish leaders and even Jesus' closest disciples at this point.

'But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."²⁶ He answered, ***"It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."***²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Totally unexpected! In effect she is saying "yes Lord of course. You are right. I know your mission is first to the lost sheep of Israel. I am unclean. I know. But I also know you and even just a crumb is enough. You are enough. Like the woman who had bled for 12 long hard years of exclusion and who says "if I just touch the edge of his cloak I'll be healed, this woman from the wrong side of Jewish tracks has heard and trusts in the heart of God that God is grace for all who put their hope in him.

Movement 5: and the result: "Jesus answered her, ***"Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."*** And her daughter was healed from that moment."

The grace filled heart of God is shown and known and trusted.

Just a crumb Lord.

Just a touch.

Just a word from you.

This is the heart of God meeting the heart of someone who puts their whole hope in Jesus.

Do you know the heart of God for you? Look at the cross. Can you see and hear and learn God's heart for you? What is your response? How does your daily life line up to the faith of this Canaanite woman. Its not a competition to see who has the strongest faith. That's the silly game played by silly disciples. But Jesus' interaction with this woman calls me and calls you again to God's heart and our response of faith.

Just the crumbs.

In our Old testament reading today in Isaiah 56 God already says his mercy is not just for Israel but that he will gather people from all nations.

And in the chapter before this he has shown his heart of grace:

55 Hear, everyone who thirsts;

come to the waters;

and you who have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without price.

2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread

and your earnings for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,

and delight yourselves in rich food.

3 Incline your ear, and come to me;

listen, so that you may live.

This is what the Canaanite woman and her daughter receive.

This is God's plan for you. "I have come that they (my sheep) might have life and have it to the full.

God's heart and plan are so much more than crumbs

How Much more? **"More than enough"** as we heard in Pastor Sue's sermon just a few weeks ago.

This is God's plan and heart for you.

In his teaching on prayer, for example, Jesus says "if you then, even though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **HOW MUCH MORE** will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! **So ask!** (Matthew 7 and Luke 11)



And Romans 5 where Paul compares the sin of Adam with sacrifice of Christ, contains numerous **"Much more"** sayings for example in Romans 5:17 "If, because of the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one, **MUCH MORE** surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."

And Paul says:

Jesus for you

Sacrifice

Cross

New life

Faith.

Foretaste of the eternal feast to come.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honour, blessing, and glory are His.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

And it will be for people from every nation, land, tribe and tongue:

God says in Isaiah 56 today

"for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

8 Thus says the Lord God,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel:
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered."

No monoculture here. God's multicultural, multi layered, multi language people of faith.

Unified in Christ
Diverse in gifts
God's Kingdom
God's Church

And that's us here at St Paul's and in partnership with the CLC

Sing with the Canaanite woman and all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation;

Blessing, honour, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

Amen?

Our gift

Our life.

Grow in that richness of the feast for you

Go with the richness to the people of every place...beginning at your home and with the people of your life. **Just the crumbs are enough**

But our God is the God of **"how much more grace."**

And so are you and your story. And you are bearers of this gift for others. Be bold not in acting it out but in living it for others.

Amen

Video of the service including the above address can be found on the St Paul's Lutheran Church Youtube page <https://www.youtube.com/@stpaulslutheranchurchboxhi1133>