



THE CANAANITE WOMAN: A WOMAN OF GREAT FAITH

INTRODUCTION

She is known only as the Canaanite woman in Matthew's Gospel and the Syro-Phoenician woman in the Gospel of Mark. Jesus singled her out as a woman of great faith. In her anguish, she sought Jesus to heal her tormented, demon possessed daughter.

The Canaanites were Gentiles and enemies of the Jews, but this Canaanite woman did not allow her religious, political, cultural or ethnic differences to keep her from pursuing Jesus. She humbly accepted her inferior position, yet she was unwilling to give up until Jesus helped her. She persevered through His initial silence. Even after Jesus shared with her that His mission was to the Jews first, she pressed on, displaying a strong and persistent assurance in Him. This story depicts our Lord Jesus responding to faith wherever it can be found.

As you do the homework, prayerfully ask God to develop within you a persevering faith. Pray that you may continue to delight and please the heart of God and that your faith in Him would deepen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

Names Given to the Canaanite Woman

Canaanite	<p><i>And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him . . . (Matthew 15:22).</i></p> <p>The word <i>Canaan</i> in Hebrew means - humiliated. Canaanites later became known as merchants and traffickers. The Canaanites were the ancient ancestors of the woman in our homework and the bitter enemies of the Jews. Because Matthew's audience was Jewish, they would have easily understood the significance of Jesus helping this woman.</p>
Syro-Phoenician A Greek	<p><i>The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation . . . (Mark 7:26).</i></p> <p>The title identified her as a woman from Phoenicia, a region of Palestine. Mark's Gospel was written to the Roman Christians. They would identify the woman easily by the region of the Roman Empire she was from.</p>

SECTION I - Seeking God's Mercy in Tribulation

After dealing with the opposition and unbelief of the Pharisees¹ and Scribes,² Jesus and His disciples withdrew to the Gentile area of Tyre and Sidon³ for a time of rest.

READ Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30.

1. Where did Jesus go (Matthew 15:21, Mark 7:24)? _____

- What was His purpose in entering the house? _____
2. Where was the woman from that cried after Him? What was her nationality (Matthew 15:22a, Mark 7:26a)?

3. With what titles did she address Jesus (Matthew 15:22a)? _____

This title *O Lord . . . Son of David* was reserved for the promised Messiah. The Canaanite woman, by addressing Jesus in this manner, showed that she recognized and acknowledged His Messianic role.

LOOK DEEPER

TRACE on a Bible map Jesus' journey from northern Galilee to the northern area of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 15:21).

¹ Pharisees: in the Hebrew culture, the Pharisees pretended to be the authoritative opinion on righteousness and the law; a person having zeal without knowledge.

² Scribes - Greek *grammateis* experts versed in the law: a class of learned men who made the systematic study and its exposition their occupation.

³ Tyre and Sidon: Tyre is a Phoenician port south of Sidon and north of Carmel. Phoenicia is a coastal strip backed by mountains. Sidon is a Phoenician city between Beirut and Tyre the chief city of Phoenicia; a center for trade and enterprise; a residence of early Christian disciples and a port of call of Paul.

4. In her great anguish, the Canaanite woman believed Jesus could help her. What divine compassion did she cry out to the Lord for (Matthew 15:22)?

What was wrong with her daughter? _____

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The definition of *mercy* is receiving compassion while deserving punishment. The Greek word for *mercy* is *compassionate* (by word or deed especially by divine grace, which is unmerited favor).

LOOK DEEPER

DESCRIBE the mercy of God according to the following Scriptures.

Psalm 23:6 _____

Psalm 86:5 _____

Psalm 103:8 _____

Psalm 108:4 _____

Psalm 136:1 _____

Psalm 145:8, 9 _____

II Corinthians 1:3 _____

Ephesians 2:4 _____

Who receives the mercy of God?

Deuteronomy 7:9 _____

Psalm 32:10 _____

Proverbs 28:13 _____

Isaiah 49:15 _____

Romans 9:15, 18 _____

⁴grievously vexed: wickedly possessed.

PERSONAL

TELL of a time you received God's abundant mercy and favor although you did not deserve it.

5. What other name is given for this devil (Mark 7:25, 26) _____⁵

What did this Greek⁶ woman want the Lord to do for her daughter? _____

The woman understood that Christ had authority over Satan and all His demons.

LOOK DEEPER

DESCRIBE Christ's supreme authority over the Devil, demons, principalities, and powers.

Ephesians 1:19-23 _____

Philippians 2:9-11 _____

Colossians 1:16, 17 _____

Colossians 2:15 _____

I John 4:4 _____

How does Christ impart spiritual authority to the Christian?

Matthew 10:1 _____

⁵ unclean spirit: fallen angelic spiritual being of the underworld; demon-spirit; demonic spirits operate above the laws of the natural realm and are invisible and incorporeal. As spirit personalities, demons have an intellectual nature through which they possess superhuman knowledge and strength; they are mentally, morally, physically, and spiritually depraved.

⁶ Greek: a Gentile in religion; a non-Israelite.

Mark 16:15-18 _____

Acts 1:8 _____

James 4:7 _____

I Peter 5:8 _____

With whom is our spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:12)? _____

How are we strengthened and enabled to stand up to and defeat these enemies (Ephesians 6:10-18)?

SECTION 2 - Persevering⁷ in Prayer

RE-READ Matthew 15:21-28.

1. After the Canaanite woman fell at Jesus' feet begging Him to drive the demon out of her daughter, what did Jesus do that could have discouraged her faith (v. 23)?

⁷persevering: sticking to a purpose or aim; never giving up what one has set out to do. It also means continuing in a state of grace leading finally to eternal salvation.

Why were the disciples frustrated with her? _____

LOOK DEEPER

There are times when God is silent and we must persevere until our prayers are answered. As we wait for God to answer, what are we to do (Psalm 123:1, 2)?

What are God's expressions toward the righteous (Psalm 34:15-22)? _____

PERSONAL

Have people become frustrated with you when you were in need of help from the LORD? EXPLAIN.

Has there ever been a time when you were bothered with someone who is in agony and discouraged them from seeking God, either in your words or actions? Take this time to ASK God to forgive you. How will you change your attitude toward them?

LOOK DEEPER

God is from everlasting to everlasting: He neither faints nor becomes weary. His wisdom is infinite. How will He answer your prayers as you wait upon Him (Isaiah 40:28-31)?

2. How did Jesus then answer the woman (Matthew 15:24)? _____

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3. How did she respond (v. 25)? _____

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What did she ask for herself? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What is worship? How is one to worship?

Psalm 29:1, 2 _____

Psalm 95: 6, 7b _____

Psalm 99:5 _____

PERSONAL

We must worship the One True God in the right manner. Worship of God involves the spirit¹⁰ and soul¹¹. Some examples of worship include: exalting God for His awesome character, thanksgiving, singing praises, and giving ourselves in obedience to serve God. Take a few moments to think about your worship of God. Ask Him to search your heart. What is your motivation for what you do for Jesus? Take time to ask God to teach you to worship Him in a pleasing manner, in all areas of your life.

4. What did Jesus explain to the pleading woman (Matthew 15:26, Mark 7:27)? _____

⁸ lost sheep of the house of Israel: Israel, God's special possession, His chosen people; children.

⁹ worship: to fall upon the knees and touch the ground with the forehead as an expression of profound reverence.

¹⁰ spirit: inner most being, where we have intimate communion with God.

¹¹ soul: mind, will, emotions.

5. She continued to persist. What did she wisely answer Him (Matthew 15:27, Mark 7:28)? _____

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Jesus made His mission clear to her, He came first to minister to God's chosen people, the Jews. After His death and resurrection, the Gospel would go to all the Gentiles as well. She acknowledged that Christ's Words were *truth*. Though the woman had no claim to Jesus because of her persistence, He heard her cries and commended the strong faith He saw in her.

SECTION 3 - Faith Rewarded

RE-READ Matthew 15:28 and Mark 7:29, 30.

1. How did Jesus commend the Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:28a)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What is faith (Hebrews 11:1)? _____

Why is it impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6)? _____

How can one obtain faith (Romans 10:17)? _____

2. Jesus finally answered her prayer. What did He say (Matthew 15:28)? _____

When was her daughter healed? _____

¹² dogs - Greek *kunarium* a puppy; little dogs; referring to household pets. In Bible times dogs were generally despised outcasts known for their ravenous and ruthless nature; to call a person a dog was a deadly insult. She referred to herself as a Gentile puppy.

3. Because of her wise and persistent responses to Jesus, what did Jesus do for her (Mark 7:29, 30)?

Believing His Word, she went home. How did she find her daughter? _____

PERSONAL

The Canaanite woman believed God and sought Him diligently. She was blessed for her faith and rewarded accordingly. Jesus commended her great faith and great persistence.

What would Jesus say to you? _____

What do you feel is lacking in your prayer life? _____

WRITE Hebrews 4:16. _____

The amount of faith you possess is not as important as having a genuine and growing faith in the Lord. As you exercise faith in God through prayer, obedience, and feeding on His Word, your faith grows and you will learn to persevere and prevail through various trials; thus pleasing the heart of God.

MEMORY VERSE

(Hebrews 11:6).

The Canaanite woman teaches us that we can boldly and courageously go to God in prayer. Despite the fact that she was a woman and the cultural barriers, she came to Jesus in humility, demonstrating a persistent faith in Him alone. Jesus rewarded her faith by, not only granting her petition, but also commending her.

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