

# Stories of the Master

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## ~ Crumbs from the Master's Table ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:21-28.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

### 1. Read the text of the story.

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NASB		NLT	
Matthew 15:21-28	Mark 7:24-30	Matthew 15:21-28	Mark 7:24-30
<p>Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and <i>began</i> to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.” <sup>23</sup> But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.” <sup>24</sup> But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” <sup>25</sup> But she came and <i>began</i> to bow down before Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” <sup>26</sup> And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>27</sup> But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” <sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter</p>	<p><sup>24</sup> Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know <i>of it</i>; yet He could not escape notice. <sup>25</sup> But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. <sup>26</sup> Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup> And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup> But she answered and <i>said</i> to Him, “Yes, Lord, <i>but</i> even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup> And He said to her, “Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.” <sup>30</sup> And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.</p>	<p><sup>21</sup> Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> A Gentile woman who lived there came to him, pleading, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely.”</p> <p><sup>23</sup> But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples urged him to send her away. “Tell her to go away,” they said. “She is bothering us with all her begging.”</p> <p><sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to the woman, “I was sent only to help God’s lost sheep—the people of Israel.”</p> <p><sup>25</sup> But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, “Lord, help me!”</p> <p><sup>26</sup> Jesus responded, “It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.”</p> <p><sup>27</sup> She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even dogs</p>	<p><sup>24</sup> Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre. He didn’t want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he couldn’t keep it a secret. <sup>25</sup> Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit, <sup>26</sup> and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter.</p> <p>Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia, <sup>27</sup> Jesus told her, “First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.”</p> <p><sup>28</sup> She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children’s plates.”</p> <p><sup>29</sup> “Good answer!” he said. “Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup> And when</p>

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<p>was healed at once.</p>		<p>are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their masters' table.”</p> <p><sup>28</sup>“Dear woman,” Jesus said to her, “your faith is great. Your request is granted.” And her daughter was instantly healed.</p>	<p>she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.</p>
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### 2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.

- The fact that Jesus does not want his presence known shows that his fame has spread beyond the borders of Israel.
- Non-Israelites were known to seek help from Jews for folk remedies or exorcisms.
- This is the only time Jesus addresses a Gentile directly outside the borders of Israel.
- The woman lived in modern day Lebanon. These were wealthy Greek areas. They were devoted to the Roman cause of empire in their part of the world and regions to the east.
- They knew of Judea to the south but viewed the Judeans as small and provincial.
- Tyre was the southernmost coastal city of Syro-Phoenicia (SPs).
- When David conquered the Philistines, the SPs defeated their navy making SP the strongest naval power.
- They helped build David’s palace (2 Sam 5:11) and Solomon’s temple (1 K 5:16-20).
- Alexander the Great conquered the mainland city in 332 and used the rubble to build a causeway to the island city which he also conquered. Then he made it a new important Greek seaport.
- Matthew calls the woman a Canaanite which referred to the people who lived along the northern coasts. Mark says she is a Syro-Phoenician, i.e., from that province.
- By her words, she shows three things:
  - Respect – Lord
  - Son of David – she knows something of Judaism and acknowledges Jesus as the ruler
  - Have mercy – she knows Jesus is generous.
- Dogs in first century Judaism
  - Scavengers
  - Roamed in packs outside villages
  - They would eat garbage, dung, and corpses
  - They were never pets
  - Jews compared them to pigs and were considered unclean – Isa 66:3; 2 Pet 2:22
  - Thus they were looked upon with contempt and became a metaphor for things to be despised (See Psalm 22:16, 20; Matthew 7:6).
- Sometimes Gentiles would raise dogs as pets who could clean up scraps of food.

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*These insights were taken from A Social Science Commentary on the Synoptics by Bruce J. Malina, The NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, and Encounters with Jesus by Gary Burge*

## Answer these reflective questions.

**In several places, the Gospels mention that Jesus would often get alone to pray or rest. What does this say about Jesus' humanity and the needs in his life as a man?**

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**Why do you think Jesus said nothing to the woman at first?**

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**What does it mean when Jesus said he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel? How does this compare to John 3:16?**

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**Jesus said the woman showed great faith by what she said. Do our words show faith in Jesus or unbelief?**

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**Do you have any desperate needs in your life, or do you know someone with a desperate need who needs to take them to Jesus?**

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