



A HOUSE OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL

Matthew 15:21–28 and Mark 7:24–30

²¹Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” ²³But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.” ²⁴But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” ²⁶But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” ²⁷And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

—Matthew 15:21–28

²⁴From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. ²⁵For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. ²⁶The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷But Jesus said to her, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.” ²⁸And she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.” ²⁹Then He said to her, “For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.” ³⁰And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

—Mark 7:24–30

Read Matthew 15:21–28 and Mark 7:24–30

Have you ever been identified as a Christian because someone commented on your joy, your light, or your peace? Jesus said, *You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden* (Matthew 5:14). When Jesus, who is the light of the world (John 8:12), lives in someone's heart by faith, it cannot be hidden. People are drawn to the light of Jesus in you. This is why Jesus also said, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven* (Matthew 5:16). As you simply let Jesus shine in and through you, the veracity of Jesus' presence is seen.

Even in the idolatrous region outside of Israel (Syro-Phoenicia), Jesus' presence in the house could not be hidden. A Gentile woman (who had no right to the privileges and promises God had given to the Jews—Ephesians 2:11–13) sought out Jesus. She refused to be discouraged, silenced, or sent away. She would not relent until she met with Jesus, spoke to Him, and received His promise. She knew Jesus was in the house!

At first reading, Jesus' response to this Gentile woman seems off-putting. However, a closer examination of the entire conversation reveals Jesus' intention: Jesus was not only drawing out this woman's faith, but He was also drawing attention to her faith. Unlike many in Israel who refused to believe in Jesus or follow Him, this woman was relentless in her pursuit. Any word from Jesus encouraged her, and she was willing to receive whatever Jesus was willing to give her—even the crumbs that fell from the table.

Jesus wants us to see and emulate the faith of this woman. When you pray and don't receive an immediate answer, keep praying! When the answer comes and seems off-putting, keep seeking, keep praying! When the Lord is speaking, be willing to receive whatever He wants to give to you. Let Jesus draw out your faith and let it shine!

As you study Jesus' interaction with this Gentile woman, let the Spirit of God work in you the same relentless faith that this woman manifested.

1. Use Mark 7:24 to cite anything you find intriguing about Jesus staying at the house in the region of Tyre and Sidon.

2. Share your insights as you answer the following questions from Mark 7:25–26:
 - a. What was the issue with the woman who came to Jesus?

 - b. What was her demeanor toward Jesus?

 - c. What was her lineage?

 - d. What did she do?

3. According to Matthew 15:23:
 - a. What was Jesus' first response to her?
 - 1) Why do you think Jesus responded to her this way?

 - b. What did the disciples urge Jesus to do?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Tyre and Sidon were denounced in Isaiah 23 and Ezekiel 28, and because of this, many Jews considered this territory as wicked.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Matthew draws attention to the fact that this woman was *a woman of Canaan*, the ancient enemies of Israel.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This Canaanite woman could have gone to the temple of Eshmun, the Syro-Phoenician false god of healing, just three miles from Sidon, but she sought out Jesus.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Greek word for *dogs* (*kynarion*) was used as a term of endearment. “It typically referred to house dogs that slept in the master’s lap. Jesus’ metaphorical statement merely implies that He had a higher obligation to serve His fellow Jews, not that He despised Gentiles.”¹⁶

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

*The Syrophoenician woman does not change Jesus’s mind. Rather, their interaction gives her the opportunity to show her humble faith.*¹⁷

4. Using Matthew 15:24–27, observe and remark on the conversation that took place between the woman and Jesus:
 - a. His first answer (Matthew 15:24)
 - b. Her response (Matthew 15:25)
 - c. Jesus’ statement (Matthew 15:26)
 - d. Her answer (Matthew 15:27)
 - 1) What do you find most thought-provoking about this conversation?
5. Note and comment on Jesus’ commendation of this woman:
 - a. Matthew 15:28
 - b. Mark 7:29
6. What did the woman discover? Mark 7:30
7. What is your greatest takeaway concerning Jesus in a house outside of Israel?