

SERMON NOTES - January 29, 2023 #193
Mt.15.21-28 - "THE QUALITY of GREAT FAITH"

The Bible speaks of little & great faith. Our text contains the **second** reference in Matthew's Gospel. The person expressing great faith was a **Gentile**; & the woman's faith was also for personal **salvation**.

I. THE SETTING v.21

Jesus was under pressure from the **multitudes** who followed Him from place to place.

Jesus was under the pressure of possible arrest & execution by **Herod Antipas**.

The greatest pressure, however, was from the **Jewish** religious leaders.

Jesus withdrew out of the land of Israel & beyond the **jurisdiction** of both Herod & the Jewish leaders.

The district of Tyre and Sidon was the Gentile territory of ancient **Phoenicia**, now in southern Lebanon.

Palestine afforded no privacy & numerous dangers, but Jesus did not withdraw out of **fear**.

It is true that the Lord did not go to this area to minister but to **rest**.

The Jewish multitudes often took Jesus' healings as a matter of their rightful **heritage**.

Jesus' first priority was to minister to God's people **Israel**, to reveal Himself as their **Messiah** & to offer them the **kingdom**; but He never refused a person of any race or culture who came to Him in **faith**.

The person who came with an empty but open heart left with a **filled** heart.

Israel was the **channel** through which the Gospel would be carried to the entire world.

the Gospel was never intended to be only for the Jews.

II. THE QUALITIES OF GREAT FAITH vv.22-27

Great faith is, of course, a **relative** term. This woman's faith based on **so little light**.

✚ **Five qualities of Great Faith:**

(1) REPENTENT v.22a

In turning to **Jesus**, she turned from the way of Satan & **sin** to the way of God, & that is the essence of repentance.

The person who asks for mercy asks for something **undeserved**.

Mercy is integral to God's redemptive work for man.

"Repentance is the inseparable companion of faith."

(2) RIGHT DIRECTION & REVERENCE v.22b

Great faith must, of course, be directed at the right **object**.

Faith in faith is to have no faith at all.

❖ For faith to make sense & to have power it must be placed in a **trustworthy** object;

The Canaanite woman had heard of the Messiah's great **power** & sensed His great **goodness**;

Her faith was great because she turned **from** faith in false gods ... to **faith** in Jesus Christ.

(3) PERSISTENT vv.23-24

❖ Some people have to struggle against strong **doubts** before they come to fully trust Christ.

❖ Others have to struggle against the **objections** & arguments of friends & family.

❖ Still others struggle to believe because they have never **heard** the Gospel clearly presented.

❖ Some see inconsistencies in the **lives** of Christians they know.

The disciple's response was **insensitive** & **prejudiced**.

Jesus does nothing **unloving** & nothing without a divine **purpose**.

Barriers are sometimes intended to draw people closer.

(4) **HUMBLE** vv.25–27

Knelt before Him literally means to **prostrate** oneself & is translated to “worship.”

III. THE **LORD'S** RESPONSE v.28

The seeking heart will never give up.

After putting up a barrier of **silence** & Jesus heard what He wanted to hear.

Like Abraham, she grew strong in faith through God's **testing** (Ro.4.20).

CONCLUSION:

Spurgeon observed,

“The Lord of glory **surrendered to the faith** of the woman.”

She kept...

- + asking until she **received**,
- + seeking until she **found**, &
- + **knocking** until it was opened to her (7.7).