CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JULY312021

Scripture Story: Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 43.

savior to the gentiles



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keytext

"The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' 'Yes it is, Lord,' she said. 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' Then Jesus said to her, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' "

(Matthew 15:25-28, NIV)

flashlight

"Christ knew this woman's situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen world. But these barriers were to be broken down" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 400).

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what do you think?

Many things in today's society cause prejudice against others. Rate each item below 1 to 10 on how powerfully they cause prejudice, with 1 being the least cause and 10 being the greatest.

____ religion
____ race
____ location
____ culture
____ poverty
____ wealth
____ gender
____ political preference

did you know?

During the times Jesus was preaching, prejudices were common, especially against non-Jews. Many places that Jesus walked overlooked the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon, both containing heathen temples, palaces, markets, and shipping harbors. The Phoenician religion was based on the process and power of nature. These extreme religious differences fueled the anger of the Jews and sparked even more hatred and prejudice between the two groups. To be a Phoenician was to be considered beyond notice to many Jews.

INTO THE STORY

"Jesus left and went to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Suddenly a Canaanite woman from there came out shouting, 'Lord and Son of David, have pity on me! My daughter is full of demons.'

"Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away. Jesus said, 'I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep.'

"The woman came closer. Then she knelt down and begged, 'Please help me, Lord!'

"Jesus replied, 'It isn't right to take food away from children and feed it to dogs.'

"'Lord, that's true,' the woman said, 'but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner's table.'

"Jesus answered, 'Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want.' At that moment her daughter was healed."

(Matthew 15:21-28, CEV)



OUT OF THE STORY

What is the main focus of this story?

Who are some of the key characters?

Why do you think Jesus ignored the woman's pleas in the beginning?

Why were the Phoenicians so hated in Jesus' time?

What ultimately caused Jesus to fulfill the woman's plea and save her daughter?

What can we learn about faith in this story? How can we apply this moral to our everyday lives?

What are some different ways in which God can answer our prayers, even if He doesn't grant them as we want them to be granted?

punch lines

"It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed" **(Deuteronomy 31:8, ESV).**

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" **(Isaiah 41:10, NIV).**

"Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" **(Colossians 3:11, NIV).**

"The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them" **(Psalm 145:18, 19, NIV).**

"Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing" **(Psalm 34:10, ESV).**

further insight

"The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 403.

connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 4:16.

This woman demonstrated a powerful amount of faith in Jesus. She was a heathen, and all Jews looked down upon her. However, rather than letting others' opinions of her keep her from moving forward, she came to Jesus with a heart full of hope and faith in Him. In our lives there are many ways in which we let doubt reign in our hearts. Many people saw this woman as a sinner, but we can look to her as an example of how to demonstrate our faith.

We are encouraged to come boldly to the throne of Jesus, yet humbly ask Him for what we wish. Many times we assume our wishes are either too extravagant or too unimportant for God to worry about, but all we have to do is trust and hope in the Lord to do what He sees fit. How can I put my faith in God in the coming week for the little and the monumental things?

_____

_____

_____

Sunday

Read John 13:35.

In this lesson we learned how prejudice can affect us in many negative ways. It can eat us alive until we don't try to see people for who they truly are, but we see a veil of all our biases and prejudices made into one ugly image. Jesus looked past this woman's flaws and noticed her faith in Him. Below, list a few ways in which we can demonstrate Christ's unconditional love and look past others' flaws:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Monday

Read Psalm 145:18, 19.

Take your Bible and search it to find as many verses as you can on the topics of prejudice and faith. Try to find different stories or Bible quotes that involve those topics and then tie them together. There are many stories in the New Testament about faith. Compare each one to the other, pointing out similarities and differences between the main characters.

Tuesday

Read 1 John 4:20.

The *Flashlight* quote revealed how we can be blind to the needs of people around us because of our prejudices.

Try to identify areas in your life in which you might hold some prejudice against others. Often prejudices can be subconscious. Ask God to help you identify areas of prejudice in your life so you can eliminate them, ask Him to reveal to you the needs of those people against whom you've been biased as well.

Wednesday

Read Luke 11:9, 10.

Faith can be a difficult thing. It means going against the odds and putting your trust in something that you don't fully understand. But faith should not be blind. This Phoenician woman knew that Jesus was a healer. She knew that He had the power to heal her daughter, even when others didn't. Even when it looked as if she wouldn't get her wish she still kept pleading with Jesus. The reading for today says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find" (NIV).

What areas of your life—whether physical, emotional, or spiritual—need the healing power of Jesus?

_____

_____

_____

Thursday

Read Colossians 3:11 and Acts 10:34.

These verses tell us that we are all equal in God's eyes. If we are equal in His eyes, then why should we see others as beneath or above us? We should treat all with the same equality that Jesus demonstrated. He showed us that it didn't matter who you are or where you are from; all people are entitled to His gift of hope and eternal life. Write down a few examples in a journal or notebook of what can help you break down the barriers of prejudice and show God's love to all people.

Friday

Read Hebrews 10:23.

We must hold tightly to the confession of our hope. Hope leads to trust, and trust leads to faith. We must never let go of the promise that God has given us. Write down three examples of how God has worked in your life when you had faith in Him.

1. _____
   _____
2. _____
   _____
3. _____
   _____

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 43.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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