

SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

SUBJECT: WHAT GETS GOD EXCITED

SCRIPTURE: MARK 7:24-30

SERMON NO. 16

Introduction

What really excites you? Different things excite different people. Auto racing, baseball, basketball, football, golf, fishing, traveling, camping, music. We all have something that gets us excited.

But have you ever stopped to think, what gets God excited? The Canaanite woman who lived near the city of Tyre, can teach us a great deal about how to get God excited. She shows that we must approach Him in faith, faith that comes from real need, faith that is active, faith that is humble, and faith that has hope. If we have faith like that, then we will begin to experience the mighty work of God's grace in our lives.

In a nut shell, God gets excited about how we demonstrate our faith as we face daily trials, circumstances, hardships and the plain ordinary "stuff" of life.

I. THE WOMAN HAD AN ACTIVE FAITH. (25-30).

We know nothing about her life history, yet her faith excited the Lord, Jesus. What it is about her faith that is so exciting to God.

The Woman's Faith Comes From A Real Need. Jesus had just come to the area near the coastal city of Tyre. several miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee. This was a Gentile area of Palestine, and the people there were descendants of the Canaanites.

The people of this area were looked down upon by the religious Jews. These Jews were very concerned about ceremonial uncleanness. But they were hypocrites, because at the same time, they rejected portions of God's Law that they didn't like and made new laws to over ride the old ones. To these religious Jews, the people of this Gentile region were considered unclean and were referred to as dogs. *Yet, despite the prevailing opinion of Gentiles, by the Jews...*

1. This Gentile Woman's Faith Came From a Real Need. (25a). *Her young daughter had an unclean spirit.* Her daughter was demon possessed, and she wanted Jesus to heal her daughter. She had faith that He could cast the demon out.

Because of the condition of her daughter, she risked rejection and humiliation in order to come to Jesus whom she believed to be her only hope.

Folks, that's a good place to be, to be in circumstances where your only hope is Jesus. God uses those times of real need to draw us close to Himself.

It's normally true that when things are going well in our lives, when there is no apparent need, we tend to become rather self-sufficient. It's as if we have all things under control and don't need any help from anyone. But that's not true. The fact is, this self sufficient spirit can actually hinder our relationship with God. Sometimes it takes a real need to come on the scene in order to turn our attention back to the Lord. And I think that's one of the reasons the Lord sends some difficulties our way..., to draw us back to Him. *Real faith comes from real need... Secondly...*

2. The Woman's Faith Results in Action. (25b). *After she heard that Jesus was in the area, she came and fell at his feet.* She acted on her faith in Jesus. She came and fell down at His feet and asked Him to intervene on behalf of her daughter and cast the demon out.

The word "besought" in verse 26 refers to a continuous action. In other words, she didn't ask just once. She kept on asking the Lord to heal her daughter. She was passionate about

her request. She didn't let up. The only kind of faith that is real is faith that results in action. *James tells us...*

James 2:26 *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.*

Real faith always demonstrates coupled with action.

II. THE WOMAN'S FAITH WAS THAT OF HUMILITY. (25B). *She heard of Jesus and came and fell at his feet.* She did not come to Jesus in arrogance. She knew exactly who she was and what the Jews thought of her. She was humble.

Humility isn't in the volume of your voice or the persistence of your request. It's in the attitude of your heart. Let me show you a couple of things that show this woman's humility...

1. She Took the Position of a Worshipper. She prayed for her daughter when she continually begged Jesus for her healing. She fell at the feet of Jesus in an act of humility. We see this in the way she answered Jesus when he talked to her....

Mark 7:27-28 *27 "Let the children first be filled" he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." 28 She answered, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."*

Jesus isn't putting this woman down by calling her a dog. In the Greek language, there are two terms for dogs. One term means the mangy, scavenger dogs that roamed the streets and deserts of Palestine. Nobody liked these dogs. They were a nuisance and a danger. When Jews spoke of Gentiles, this would be the word for "dog" that they would use. And Gentiles understood this.

But there was another word that was used for dog that meant "the family pet". These were the dogs that children played with and that would be part of a family. And that's the word

Jesus uses here in verses 27 and 28. When Jesus gave His explanation, the woman wasn't offended.

2. And in her reply to Jesus we see a second instance of humility. (28). She answered him, "Yes Lord." In other words, she accepted Jesus' characterization of her without bitterness or hatred.

You see, Jesus' message was clear, Israel had to come first, and the Gentiles after that. And she wasn't put off by this. That's humility! Whatever place Jesus would assign to her, under the table or at the table, that would be her place and she would accept it. She didn't try to push Him to do her will, she accepted His.

Let me ask you, do you show the same kind of humility in your prayers? When you ask for something and God says, "No", or "Wait", or "I have something better." Do you get all bent out of shape and say things like, "God isn't answering my prayers." Or "God isn't listening to me", or "Why God, is this happening to me?" ...as if you have a right to arrogantly question the King and Creator of the Universe. Humility says, "Yes, God, I accept your estimation of my situation and I accept your answer." It's that attitude of faith that pleases God.

III. THE WOMAN'S FAITH HAD HOPE. (28). Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

In her humility, the woman accepted Jesus estimation of her; she was a puppy under the table, not one of the children of God sitting at the table.

1. The woman took the reality of her situation and saw hope.

In other words, she recognized that the food had to go to the children first. But she also recognized that even the children tossed a few crumbs to their favorite pet under the table.

This woman wasn't asking for much, just a small touch from Jesus to heal her daughter. So she came and made her case..., humbly, but effectively. She turned her reality into an opportunity. She refused to be defeated by what appeared to be a closed door. Because it really wasn't a closed door at all. It was a door of opportunity that had to be opened, and that she could walk through. It was a door of hope.

2. Jesus is the One who gave her this hope when He said that the children must be fed first. What He was implying was that after them, others would be fed. After all, where there's a first, there is a second. And by faith, she saw an opening of hope, and by faith she grabbed hold of that hope. And this is what caught Jesus' attention. In Matthew's account of this story, we see Jesus' excitement when this woman showed this extraordinary faith...

Matthew 15:28a 28a **Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith!**

There is an exclamation point at the end of his statement. It's like Jesus is saying, "Wow!!! What great faith!!! How exciting!

3. Faith is the Door by Which God's Grace Enters. When that woman showed her great faith in Jesus, it freed Jesus up to give his grace to her. Even though we don't deserve it, God can answer our needs through His grace. And make our situations better than before. *Look at the last two verses...*

Mark 7:29-30 29 **And he said unto her, for this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when she had come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.**

Can you imagine the excitement in that home? Can you imagine the new, fulfilling and exciting relationship that mother and her daughter had from this point on? Their lives would be fuller, more special, more abundant.

That's a by-product of God's grace, He makes things better than they were before.

4. When you live by faith, God's grace works in the circumstances of your life. That means that no matter what you experience, God's grace will be there to draw you closer to Him, and let you experience His love for you more. If you submit to His purpose and cooperate with His leading, that relationship will be extraordinary! Because God's grace isn't just to get you into heaven at the end of your life, but to give you abundance in living while you remain on the earth.

Conclusion

Faith that comes from a real need, ...faith that is acted upon, ...faith that is humble, ...and faith that has hope.

Friends, if we have faith like that, then we will begin to experience the mighty work of God's grace in our lives. Because God gets excited about our faith. And out of His excitement He demonstrates grace. And God's grace is sufficient for all your and my needs.

Faith excites God. There is no greater faith than the faith you place in God for your eternal destiny. Since you are a sinner, and the wages of sin is death, then how do you save yourself from that eternal death-Hell? God provided a way-He gave a sacrifice...His Son, Jesus, who took the punishment for our sins on Himself, when He died on the cross. Three days later, He rose from the dead and showed that death had no hold on Him. He proved He was God. Therefore he is able to cause a transaction to take place. He will exchange His righteousness for your sinfulness. And you accept that transaction by asking Him to be the forgiver of your sins, and commit to follow Him as the leader of your life.