



SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH  
**WOMEN OF THE BIBLE**  
March 21, 2017

*The Syrophenician Woman*

**BOLDLY APPROACHING GOD**

The Syrophenician woman was a pagan women of great faith in Jesus. Her daughter was demonized and she screamed at Jesus to help her....to help her daughter. But she was deterred, even after Jesus replied that his first priority was to help the "lost sheep" of Israel - and that for him to assist a Gentile (a non-Jewish pagan) would be taking children's food and tossing it to the dogs. Yet she had the "faith of a mother". That might explain how she was able to maintain her humble doggedness before Jesus. In the end she get's what she came for...her daughter was healed.

Read Matthew 15:21-28 & Mark 7:26.

**Small Group Opener:**

When it comes to faith where would you rate yours from 1 to 10 (beginning or strong)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIN BIBLE STUDY:**

Please read the verses and answer the following questions.

1. Look up the location, of "Tyre and Sidon." (Use the map in the back of your Bible or Google it.) This land, Matthew wants us to know, is "paganland." As such, would you agree that the "Canaanite" woman mentioned in v. 21 is most likely not a "God fearing" woman? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Note how the woman addresses Jesus in verse 22. Does it surprise you that this "non-Jewish" woman would address Him as "Lord, Son of David"? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How does Jesus respond to this screaming woman in verse 23? \_\_\_\_\_  
Surprised again, or not? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Looking again at verse 22, what was her request? \_\_\_\_\_
5. As you re-read verse 23, I think you will see that the disciples felt very uncomfortable. What was their response to the woman's request? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do you think Jesus means by his response to the woman in verse 24? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. This woman's faith is profound, especially for a pagan. What outward expression of her faith is revealed in verse 25? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How do you understand the "back and forth" of the conversation contained in vs. 26-27?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Now re-read verse 28. What is the result of this woman's strong faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Is this what you expect Jesus to say, or not? \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Look up Matthew 17:14-21. What parallels do you see in the two encounters with Jesus?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Going Further – Additional Study

Faith that pleases God is not judged by its measure but by its focus. The nature of faith is a faith dynamic that most of us struggle to understand. We receive Christ by faith and we are encouraged to walk by faith, yet faith is a gift of God, not our own effort. (Ephesians 2:8).

In Luke 17:3-6, Jesus gives His disciples, and us, a needed insight into the nature of faith. After hearing His teaching on forgiveness, the disciples requested, "Increase our faith!" Jesus' answer seems to indicate that it is not the quantity of their faith that is important.

*He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."* (Luke 17:6).

Note that Jesus does not say "If you have *enough* faith..." but simply, "If you have faith...."

It is true (Biblically) that faith is not a matter of personal strength, not an issue of quantity, not a question of how much certainty we can muster to meet our needs. Biblical faith, rather, is dependence upon the Person in whom we declare we believe. The essential element of faith lies in focusing our attention on God instead of on the results to our prayers.

**Authentic faith focuses not upon one's ability to believe, but upon the grace and faithfulness of God.**

As we consider our lives and the world around us, we can choose to respond according to circumstance, or according to conviction. Those who evaluate the goodness of God on the basis of circumstance will vacillate in their understanding of His nature. Limited in knowledge and insight, some cry, "Why, God? If you love me, and if You're good, why did this happen to me?"

However, those who evaluate God's nature in light of the Biblical revelation of His character and nature will develop a strong conviction of His faithfulness that cannot be swayed by the winds of circumstance. In difficulty and hardship, such faithful ones will say,

"Lord, I know You Love me. I know You're good. I don't understand, but I choose to trust You."

Faith is also about focusing on the unseen. Read Hebrews 11 about the faithful saints who lived by an "unseen faith." A detailed review of this chapter reveals not so much the impressive nobility of these heroes of the faith, but rather the transcendent and holy character and nature of God, in whom they placed their trust. Like them, we need to hold on to the promises of God whether we can see the road ahead of us clearly or not.

This great chapter of Scripture begins with a statement that counters our results-oriented culture. "Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see." (*Hebrews 11:1*) While we must wait in hopeful security for our ultimate union with God, we are nevertheless certain of His reality and goodness. As Paul states in 2 Corinthians 4:18:

*"So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever."*

The ancients were commended for such faith - not for the strength or quantity, but for the focus and object of their faith: **Jesus** (*Hebrews 12:2*). And we, following their lead, can learn to focus upon the greatness of God, upon His immutable character, and so learn to trust Him in the difficulties of daily life - for He is the Lord of all!