

Reminiscere Sunday
St. Matthew 15:21-28
March 1st, 2026
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

O Lord, Thou Son of David

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, ‘Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Almighty and Everlasting God, the Consolation of the sorrowful and the Strength of the weak, may the prayers of them that in any tribulation or distress cry unto Thee graciously come before Thee, so that in all their necessities they may mark and receive Thy manifold help and comfort; through + Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dearly beloved, in the Lenten season our focus upon our sins and our breaking of the Ten Commandments should drive us toward three things: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. We heard about fasting last Sunday, when we heard about our Lord + Jesus being tempted in the wilderness after fasting for forty days and forty nights, even as Moses had done on Mount Sinai when receiving the Law. Almsgiving is a fruit of fasting. When one does not need to spend money on food, because he is not eating any, there is typically money left over. The broken and contrite heart willingly gives these funds to those who need them more than we do. Prayer is also connected to fasting. One cannot separate prayer from fasting. One does not fast without also praying. One cannot endure the fast without praying. Even though we are not told, our Lord + Jesus would have been praying to His heavenly Father while He was in the wilderness.

Moses on the Mount of Sinai spoke to the Lord God as two friends would speak. Prayer is a conversation with the Lord God, so Moses also prayed constantly with the Lord God while he was fasting for forty days and forty nights on the mountain. This is why one cannot separate prayer from fasting. They are intimately connected. Almsgiving is also connected to the act of fasting; it is an outward expression of the humility that is in one’s heart. This is the purpose of fasting, to produce humility and contrition. Fasting suppresses pride and haughtiness, because it teaches us to be dependent solely upon our heavenly Father. And when we realize that we are dependent upon our Lord God for all good, then we fall on our knees in prayer. We request Him for all that we need to support this body and life.

Prayer and fasting are intimately connected to one another. This is why the first two Sunday in Lent deal with these two Christian exercises back-to-back. Last week we heard about our Lord’s fasting. Today, we hear about a Canaanitish woman, who pleads with our Lord + Jesus for her daughter who is grievously vexed with a demon. St. Matthew, the Apostle and Evangelist tells us that our Lord + Jesus

withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. These were Phoenician cities. This is why the Canaanitish woman is sometimes referred to as a Syro-Phoenician woman. These were Canaanite cities in the land of the Tribe of Asher. They were never fully suppressed like the Lord God had commanded. And as a result, they continually oppressed Israel, especially with their false idolatry. Under King David its glory began to fade. Then King Solomon entered into a marital relationship with the daughter of the King of Sidon, and this led to their false idolatry becoming prevalent in the land of Judah.

In other words, the Syro-Phoenicians were not the allies of the Jews. They brought with them false worship and led the people of Israel into sin. This is always the case when people who worship a false god, or gods, are commingled with the true worshippers of the Lord God. The false religion, ideas, philosophies, and theologies of the false worshippers influence Christians and never in a good way. This is even prevalent in our society today, where the Church endures infiltration by outward false influences from false religions.

Therefore, it is not really a surprise the way the Lord + Jesus treats this Syro-Phoenician—this Canaanitish—woman. Her ancestors did great theological damage to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They drew the people of Israel away from the worship of the One, True, Lord God. But our Lord + Jesus also knows what is in her heart. He sees the faith that is there. And it is a strong faith. This is also why He does not just send her away, or heal her daughter to stop her pleading. Our Lord wants all those in the crowd to see this woman's great faith. Indeed, all generations following, including our own, bear witness to the great faith of this woman, an outsider and a foreigner.

We have here a person descended from those who worship false gods, who had forsaken her false gods for the One, True Lord and Savior. She confesses this faith in the Lord + Jesus from her very first words: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David." "Son of David" is Messianic language. It is a declaration that she sees this Man as the Messiah, the promised Christ, the Anointed One of the heavenly Father. It also shows that she was well catechized in the Jewish religion, for a true outsider would not recognize the Messiah, nor even really know that there was such a thing. But she is well catechized, and because of that she also has acquired not just book knowledge, but heart knowledge. She has come to believe in and trust upon the Lord + Jesus as the One and True Messiah; the One Who has come to Redeem and save mankind from their sins.

With this knowledge, it is no wonder that she has such great faith. This faith also means that she is not seeking the Lord + Jesus as a last resort. He is not her final stop in her quest to heal her daughter who is grievously vexed with a demon. No, my friends, she realizes that the Lord + Jesus is her *only* help. For this is how it is when we truly have a true God. We seek help and comfort from no one else; from nothing else. We turn to our Lord God for all of our needs both physical and spiritual. We realize, like this Canaanitish woman, that there is no help or comfort in anyone or anything else in this life and world. We can only get help from our Lord God—from our heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

This is why she does not stop praying, even when it seems the Lord + Jesus is rebuffing her. In this she serves as our example. If we truly believe, as this woman does, that there is no other help but from the Lord + Jesus, then we will not stop praying and seeking help from Him, even when His ears seem to ignore our pleas. This woman will not leave the Lord + Jesus—she will not stop praying—until she receives what it is she is begging Him for. This is how great her faith is. May our faith be as strong when we need our Lord God to act on our behalf.

It should be pointed out that this woman is also not asking for something frivolous. She is not asking for money or earthly possessions; things that pass away with time or death. She is begging for something of a spiritual nature; a thing that has eternal consequences. As we learn in our catechism, there is a difference between asking for things of a physical and earthly nature, and things of a spiritual

nature. When we ask for things of an earthly nature, we add the appellation, “if it by Thy will.” But with things of a spiritual nature, we need not ask if our Lord’s will be done, because He has already promised that He will give us all spiritual gifts. Therefore, we should not fear to pray boldly and willingly for all spiritual blessings: for forgiveness of sins, and salvation from the devil and temptation.

This is why in this Lenten season—a season of prayer and fasting—as we focus upon our breaking of the Ten Commandments, we can humbly and in contrition pray to our Lord + Jesus to not look upon our sins, nor on their account deny our prayer. But we humbly pray that He would hear our prayer and grant us the forgiveness that we seek. For we daily sin much, and deserve nothing but punishment. But our Lord + Jesus took that punishment upon Himself on the tree of the holy cross for us poor, miserable sinners, so that by His death our sins have been fully paid. He has atoned for our sins. And through faith in Him we have the gifts of His sacrifice for our own. Even though, on account of our sins, we are foreigners and outcasts—even though we come from a people of false idolatry and theology—our Lord + Jesus does not forsake us.

This is why we can pray just like this Canaanitish woman with great faith. For just as she believed solely upon the Lord + Jesus, the Son of David, that He would heal her grievously vexed by a demon daughter, we too, can trust that our Lord + Jesus will grant us remission of our sins and deliverance from the oppression of the devil when we implore Him. And just as this woman did not cease to implore the Lord + Jesus to grant her petition, we too, can follow her example and not be indolent and lazy in our prayers, but continue to beg and plead our Lord + Jesus, and our heavenly Father, to grant us all our petitions.

Therefore, my dear friends, as we continue this season of prayer and fasting, let us not forsake our conversations with our heavenly Father in prayer. And let us remember that prayer involves two parts, what our Lord says to us, and what we respond back to our Lord. This is why study of God’s Word is also a part of prayer. This is why study of God’s Word and prayer are a part of fasting. For our Lord God speaks His will to us through the holy Scriptures, and we respond back with the knowledge with which we have been catechized. Just like the Canaanitish woman was well-versed in the prophecies of the Messiah. Then when we know our Lord, we can trust in Him and believe on Him, and like this Syro-Phoenician woman, we can cling onto our Lord God in all of our tribulations and trials, and beg Him to grant our petitions without ceasing, until He gives us a clear answer, and we find in Him comfort and healing. May our Lord God grant this unto us all! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!