

**MEGA-FAITH**  
Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:26-29  
By Raymond White

Any faith is good, whether it's a little or a lot or something in between. Here's a woman that had a lot of faith, and from her story, we learn something of the nature of great faith and the nature of God. It's a surprise to learn that God is not the cuddly teddy bear we imagine him to be.

**[1] FAITH CAN COME FROM ANYONE**

*Matthew 15:21* Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.  
*:22* And, behold, a woman of Canaan...

*Mark 7:26* The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation ...

Anyone can come to Jesus in faith. This woman was a Phoenician, she was not a Jew, *Mark 7:26*. Jesus and his disciples had stepped out of Judea into modern Lebanon for a respite, to get away from the crowds. *Mark 7:24* ...and would have no man know it, but he could not be hid. He was a celebrity and, like other celebrities, sometimes he just wanted to escape the din. But he could not escape his reputation, it followed him to Lebanon, and that is where this Phoenician woman caught up with him.

The opening point here is that she didn't have to be a Jew to get Jesus' attention or his help, but, as we'll see, she did have to work for it. Still, his grace is available to anyone.

**[2] FAITH MUST BE RIGHTLY DIRECTED**

*Matthew 15:22* And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts and cried unto him.

*Mark 7:25* For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: *:26* The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

The Phoenicians worshiped Astarte. Why did this lady come to Jesus rather than to the priests of Astarte? Simple. Because she knew that Jesus was the only one who could help. Faith, to be of any use at all, has to be directed towards the right object. It is not faith that saves, but faith in the right person, Jesus Christ. A person might have faith in and pray to a rock, but it won't accomplish much, and this lady knew that.

**[3] FAITH MUST BE REPENTANT**

*Matthew 15:22* ...saying, Have mercy on me...

When she came to Jesus, she did not say “you owe this to me.” She came, not with a demand, but with a plea for an unearned favor. A plea for mercy always comes from a sense of unworthiness, “I don’t deserve it, but I’m asking anyway.”

#### [4] FAITH MUST BE REVERENT

*Matthew 15:22 ...O Lord, thou son of David...*

She addressed him properly, “O Lord” acknowledging his deity, and “son of David” acknowledging his royalty. When you approach God, don’t try to present yourself as an equal. You are not God’s equal. You are far better off to submit to his status. She certainly had a different opinion of Jesus than did the Pharisees who called him a drunkard, a sinner, and demon possessed. She called him Lord.

#### [5] FAITH MUST BE PERSISTENT

*Matthew 15:22 ...my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. :23 But he answered her not a word.*

Remember, Jesus had come there to get away from the crowd, so he was trying to ignore them and her. And his disciples were on the same page.

*Matthew 15:23 And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. :24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

In other words, “Go away lady, you bother me.” And he meant it.

This statement is not some divine limit on the scope of people Jesus is allowed to serve as the story is about to demonstrate. He is simply trying to escape the press of his status. He came to earth to serve Jews, but he had stepped out of that realm for a few days. Basically, he was on vacation, so why should he have to take this call now? He should have left his cell at home. That is what’s happening here. He’s trying to beg off and he uses a technicality, “you’re not a Jew,” to see if that will dissuade her. It doesn’t.

Now, lest you get all huffy and think unkind things towards Jesus like, “How dare he snub this poor woman,” she had no such thoughts. She had the exact opposite opinion and would have been horrified to hear someone defend her in such a way. Here’s the point she makes: God has the right to snub you. How you react to that snub, determines how he finally deals with you.

This woman could have left in a huff, “Well, in that case, I’ll go find a god who cares.” That would have been a tragic mistake. This is a critical point that you must understand. You do not judge God, God judges you. She understood that, and if you’re tempted to be incensed on her behalf, understand that she was not incensed on her own behalf. Instead, she comes back for more.

*Matthew 15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

That's how she reacted to his snub (and a snub it was): with more worship and more pleading. This lady knew one thing: the only way to get the help she needed was to get God to pay attention to her. And she would do anything to achieve that, including beg.

**Matthew 15:26** *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

**Mark 7:27** *But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.*

Ouch! Double snub. Even an insult. Now she's a dog? Are you brisling yet for her sake? Had that been you there debating with Jesus, would you give up now and go home in the face of such abuse? People do, you know. "I reject God because he's too mean." Too mean? The only being in the entire universe that can give you life and rescue you from a certain doom, he's too mean? Let's continue.

**Matthew 15:27** *And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.*

**Mark 7:28** *And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.*

Wow! Bulls-eye. Right between the eyes. This lady is the only person that ever got the best of Jesus, and he knew it. He had been had. Not by her cleverness or wit, but by her total humility. Basically, she said to him, "yes, you're right, I am a dog. Please leave me some crumbs." What could he say to her now? There was only one thing left to say. He surrendered.

**Matthew 15:28** *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great [mega] is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

**Mark 7:29** *And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.*

I think Jesus smiled right then. Don't you think so? He was impressed by her, and I think he enjoyed being battled to a standstill, forced to surrender to this woman's need and her humility. But the main lesson is this: she got what she wanted because she wouldn't give up.

Do you get angry with God? Do you accuse of God of letting people suffer or die? Do you think he treats you unfairly when he makes you wait your turn? In angry impatience, do you turn from him to some other source for help? How much better it is to be like this Phoenician woman who acknowledged that there *is* no other help and so set aside her pride and stayed to continue pleading with the resisting Lord. That Jesus surrendered to her, gives us great hope.