

The Prayer of a Dog

© Tim Dubberly, August 16, 2000

Text: Matthew 15:21-29

Introduction:

Many times we come to Jesus and we feel so unworthy. However, we should always remember that God is greater than our heart. He wants to answer our prayers, but He also wants us to consider how much we want that prayer answered, and who He really is.

Here Jesus passed through the region of Tyre and Sidon, and a woman, who was not a Jew, came and cried out for a healing for her daughter, who was vexed with demons. By not being a Jew she was considered a dog. And though Jesus was somewhat bound by the will of the Father to minister only to the house of Israel, her faith reached the Father's heart through Christ and the woman's daughter was healed.

Here is a beautiful story of a woman who held on till she heard from God. Notice her "reactions" to the statements of Jesus.

g Paul gave this admonition in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

A scientist once conducted an interesting experiment in his laboratory. From the ceiling he suspended an iron ball weighing a ton, attaching it to a cable strong enough to sustain its weight. Beside the huge iron ball, he hung a small sphere made of cork attached to a thread fastened to the ceiling. An electrical mechanism kept the little cork ball swinging slowly, pendulum-like, against the iron weight.

At length, after days of unceasing swinging back and forth on the part of the cork, the iron ball weighing a ton began to swing very gently to and fro in harmony with the little cork ball. Gradually, its motion increased until it was prescribing a wide arc, all because a tiny cork ball had kept persistently knocking against its massive side, day in and day out.

Our effort to influence people to love God, accept Christ as Savior, and live under the direction of the Holy Spirit should be as gentle as the tapping of the cork ball, but also we should be persistent and faithful. May we be so.

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- I. When He doesn't answer dig in and hold on.
 - A. She came crying to Jesus but He spoke not a word. There are times when you pray and pray and not a word is spoken back to you. What do you do when you feel helpless? Hold on and keep praying. She realized that Jesus was her only chance for help and she wasn't about to let go.
 - B. She realized who Jesus was and called Him Lord. She kept crying to Jesus for a word. The word of God is so important to us because when God is blessing and everything is going right we don't need anyone to tell us how to act. But when we can't touch him we need someone to tell us what to do when He doesn't answer.
 - C. When you are in the shape that this woman was in, you do not mess around with fancy prayers. You get down to business and cry out to God for help. You keep crying out and no matter where you are He will find you.
- II. When He doesn't answer begin to worship.
 - A. Even after Jesus revealed that he could only minister to the house of Israel, which was His Father's will. She just fell down and began to worship Him.
 - B. We don't know what she said, but it is evident that she was doing some worshipping, not begging, worshipping. I can almost here her as she begins to praise Him and brag on Him. She probably told Him how wonderful, powerful, and merciful that He was.

^g Collins, the freethinker or deist, met a plain countryman going to church. He asked him where he was going. "To church, sir." "What to do there?" "To worship God." "Tell me, is your God a great or a little God?" "He is both, sir." "How can he be both?" "He is so great, sir, that the heavens cannot contain him; and so little that he can dwell in my heart." Collins declared, that this

simple answer from the countryman had more effect upon his mind than all the volumes, which learned doctors, had written against him.

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C. Worship gets God's attention. When you begin to worship and brag on God, He begins to flex his muscles and swell up and then you know He is getting ready to show you how great He is.

III. When He doesn't answer hang on to your humility.

A. Don't let frustration turn you into doubt and fear. God loves the humble and resists the proud. Jesus called her a little dog. This woman didn't have any pride because she said that's true Lord I am a dog but even the dog's eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

B. Notice she didn't get offended by being called a dog and she went beyond admitting her condition, she called Him master and showed her need for just a little of what He had to offer. Sometimes a crumb is all you need.

C. Although God commissioned Jesus to the house of Israel, those whom He encountered throughout His ministry, who were not Jews, who showed great faith, they all received their miracle. Like the Centurion whose servant was sick, he came to Jesus and asked Him to come to his house, then he said, you don't need to come to my house, just speak the word and my servant shall be healed.

Conclusion:

We all have needs and some of them are paramount. They are bigger than we are and unconquerable within our ourselves. However, we can take them to God in prayer and leave them there. Then we need to take the word of the Lord and wait upon the Lord. While we are waiting we need to continue to cry out to the Lord. To continually cry out, ask, seek, and knock, until God sends an answer. We need to remember that God has said it and

He will answer.

g A schoolteacher gave to three of his pupils a difficult problem. "You will find it very hard to solve," he said, "but there is a way." After repeated attempts, one of them gave up in despair.

"There is no way!" he declared. The second pupil had not succeeded, yet he was smiling and unconcerned.

"I know it can be explained, because I have seen it done."

The third worked on, long after the rest had given up. His head ached and his brain was in a whirl. Yet, as he went over it again and again, he said without faltering, "I know there is a way, because the master has said it."

Here is faith--that confidence that rests not upon what it has seen, but upon the promises of God.

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Don't give up; God has spoken to your situation. Even though you can't always hear Him, keep crying out to Him until He sends that answer for you. If you will be persistent, and worship Him whether things are good or bad, and if you will humble yourself before the Lord, He said, "In due time He will lift you up."

You may not feel worthy enough to receive from God. You may feel like a dog, without much value. But you are valuable to God and He want to hear from you today.

References

May, Steve (1999) 1001 Contemporary Illustrations. Raleigh, North Carolina: Heaven Word Inc.