

This is one of my favorite gospel readings, for in it I find a Hero who is worthy of being called such...

a hero who dares to cry out:

LORD HELP ME

In the Gospel this morning we see a TRANSFORMATION of God Grace's from being to the Jews only;

to the Gentiles,

as Jesus reveals to us a glimpse into the future.

We all can relate to this wonderful woman who was a Canaanite.

All of us have felt as outcasts as we live in a world that is not of us, but of sin and hatred.

The gentiles were considered to be unworthy of God, as Outcasts who do not belong,

and MOST OF US can relate to this feeling as often it feels as if the world is against us.

And this gentile being a woman would seem the lowest of the lowest to the Jews.

In this story Jesus withdraws himself to Gentile territory.

And here we have a woman from Canaan – she calls Jesus Lord – showing reverence,

and the Son of David, honoring him as the promised Messiah.

This woman is sad and down trodden with a heavy heart.

We all can relate to feelings of helplessness / as we have sought help for things that seem to be beyond our control:

with problems of family / marriages / friendships / employment / health / money ... the reasons vary and can be many.

So in the Gospel we can relate with this poor Women: how many of us have cried out for help (?), and not heard a response,

How many of us have felt as if we are “pushed away” by those with whom we seek help,

and have heard harsh words coming our way as we become discouraged and withdrawn.

This can be a brutal world, in which we live,

and any of these things are sufficient to open the door for Satan to enter into our hearts –

to harden our heart, soul, and mind.

Most of us here this morning have been in similar situations before, and have gone into a self-defense mode; creating anger and rage as depression settles in with a feeling of helplessness.

Darkness can surround us and become heavy and thick as loneliness and gloom surrounds and envelopes us.

Emotions can darken the Light of Christ, and emotions can cause us to withdraw into ourselves.

It is at these times that we often blame others, maybe even God himself.

Often we strike out at others as we isolate ourselves: and dangerously turn to things that bring temporary relief or some sort of happiness.

It is so sad that many in this world, tragically, have these feelings.

But with all this gloom and doom mentioned, the woman of Canaan faced the toughest of all situations,

a very sick, and possibly dying, daughter.

Even during this Lenten period of reflection, which often lends itself to thoughts of pain and suffering,

this woman's position is difficult to bear.

And yet this woman from Canaan, whom we know not her name, in the midst of her pain and gloom,

gives us **a wonderful gift** this morning.

Let us walk a few steps with her:

She an outcast of the Jews, was grieved and down trodden as her daughter was "grievously vexed with a devil" –

obviously very ill,

and as she cried out in her pain - she was basically rejected by Jesus

as she received no response whatsoever, and she was even pushed away by the disciples of Jesus.

(The Church should take note of this...we are to welcome and not push away.)

You talk about rejection; listen to these discouraging words as Christ tells her that He had come for:

“the lost house of Israel”

implying He did not come for “her”, as His mission was confined to the Jews.

What seemingly harsh, cutting, and penetrating words from Jesus, but this she endured...and I emphasize the word endure.

For this marvelous woman is now just warming up, and she is ready for the second round as she utters the words

“Lord, help me.”

These simple words are so difficult for many of us, especially those who have heeded the lies of this world

and listen to all of its distortions and distractions.

Just what do these words “Lord, help me” imply?

First that we lower ourselves, as we acknowledge that some things are above us, of whom, demands our obedience.

Contrary to this world of promoting self,

we have to acknowledge something greater than self.

If the woman from Canaan had a prideful and darkened heart, her further pleas would have been withheld.

Not even asked, as pridefulness is a sin which separates us from God.

But now the Gospel hits another new low as Jesus says the words (I would dare to say - cruel words)

as reference is now made to a dog (just image the hurt)

as He says

“it is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to the dogs.”

Here Jesus is equating non-Jews with Dogs!!!!

And instead of arguing with the Lord (as we would) she simply reply’s
“Truth Lord”

(acknowledging her unworthiness and his Lordship over her)

**“YET THE DOGS EAT OF THE CRUMBS WHICH FALL FROM THEIR
MASTER’S TABLE.”**

She does all this not for herself, but for the love of her daughter.

This hero still believed, she still had faith,

even after all of this, she continues to call him Lord.

Shall we join with the “Super Woman” from Canaan (you talk about a “Super Hero”,)

let us ask God to **Have mercy upon us**

as we seek to be “**made whole from this very hour.**”

(Just as this woman’s daughter from Canaan...)

As we come to the altar this morning;

after the giving of our oblations (our offerings)

and confessing our sins and the receiving of absolution (forgiveness of sin from God),

and lowering and humbling ourselves before our Lord –

let us receive His Body and Blood through the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, as given to us by our Lord.

Let our understanding, devotion, and patience be as the woman from Canaan.

Let not ANYTHING keep us away from our Lord and His Holy Sacraments

as we strive towards the holiness that He desires for us.

God wants each one of you to give your life to him and to walk His Passion with Him

and to arise with Him this Easter.

Let us fight Satan's desire for us to seek the pleasures of sin and violence within this corrupt world

and let us grasp hold of Jesus, never letting go.

Christ Church is here every day for you. It is your responsibility to use what He has given. No one can do it for you...

Let this Lenten period be one of spiritual growth and affirmation of your faith.

May "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." *Phil. 1.2*

Now, go forth in His Name...