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MATTHEW

Chapter 15:21-28
HUMBLE CRUMBS

*The drummer got kicked out of the band because his timing was awful.
He was so upset he went to the train station and threw himself behind a train.*

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. In our study of **Matthew 15** - the Scribes and Pharisees have just chastised Jesus and His disciples for not washing their hands before they ate.
1. They accused Him of breaking “the traditions of the elders”.
 2. But Jesus, in turn accused them of breaking the 5th commandment of honoring their father and mother, because of a dumb tradition they had “invented” that allowed them to bypass this commandment from the Lord.
 - a) You may remember that they would simply say that their money was dedicated to the Lord and the poor parents were on their own.
 3. Jesus intentionally missed a man-made hoop that they had set up – yet they missed/alterd a God-given commandment.
 - a) The irony is that the Scribes and Pharisees felt they were more righteous than Jesus because He didn’t wash His hands!
 - (1) Jesus proceeds to explain that it is not what goes into a man’s mouth that make him righteous or unrighteous – it is what come out of a man’s mouth that defiles him – because it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks!
- B. What comes next in our teaching marks a significant change in Jesus’ ministry.
1. Up to this point – He has ministered to His fellow brethren the Jews, but in the next few verses we will see Him minister to a Gentile woman.
 - a) If we do not listen closely – we will miss what He is trying to say to her.
 - b) If we hear only the words – we will also miss what He is trying to communicate to the disciples.
 - (1) Let’s take a look.

II. MATTHEW 15:21–22 (NKJV) — 21 THEN JESUS WENT OUT FROM THERE AND DEPARTED TO THE REGION OF TYRE AND SIDON. 22 AND BEHOLD, A WOMAN OF CANAAN CAME FROM THAT REGION AND CRIED OUT TO HIM, SAYING, “HAVE MERCY ON ME, O LORD, SON OF DAVID! MY DAUGHTER IS SEVERELY DEMON-POSSESSED.”

- A. Again, the Bible is its own best commentary and **Mark** gives us a little more information:
1. **Mark 7:24–26 (NKJV) — 24 From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it*, but He could not be hidden. 25 For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him**

to cast the demon out of her daughter.

- a) Popularity has its drawbacks. Jesus can no longer just go somewhere and be left alone. Everyone wants a “piece” of Him.
 - (1) In ancient times, this whole area was simply called Canaan. The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites. That country was taken by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was therefore a Gentile, living under the Greek government, and probably speaking the Greek language. She was by birth a Syrophenician, and therefore, a descendant from the ancient Canaanites. Israel’s former enemies!
 - (a) This will help us understand why Jesus says what He does in the next few verses.

III. MATTHEW 15:23 (NKJV) — 23 BUT HE ANSWERED HER NOT A WORD. AND HIS DISCIPLES CAME AND URGED HIM, SAYING, “SEND HER AWAY, FOR SHE CRIES OUT AFTER US.”

- A. It is always a good thing to have leadership that can see “the bigger picture”!
 - 1. This woman’s insistent begging was “bugging” the disciples. Peter came up with the solution - **“Send her away!”**
 - a) But I think we have a beautiful example here, that with Jesus, silence doesn’t necessarily mean “NO!”

IV. MATTHEW 15:24 (NKJV) — 24 BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, “I WAS NOT SENT EXCEPT TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL.”

- A. “The lost sheep of the house of Israel” of course are the Jews!
 - 1. That is why this event is so significant. It marks a turning point of the Gospel being presented to the Gentiles, because of the rejection by the Jews! Jesus himself had even told the disciples, **Matthew 10:5 (NKJV) — 5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.**
 - a) Jesus knows what is in her heart **and** what is in the hearts of the disciples, and I believe He wants her to exhibit her trust and faith **TO** the disciples as a witness.

V. MATTHEW 15:25–26 (NKJV) — 25 THEN SHE CAME AND WORSHIPED HIM, SAYING, “LORD, HELP ME!” 26 BUT HE ANSWERED AND SAID, “IT IS NOT GOOD TO TAKE THE CHILDREN’S BREAD AND THROW IT TO THE LITTLE DOGS.”

- A. By this time – most of us would have given up, insulted and angry.
 - 1. First, He ignores her begging for the life of her daughter. It is not a selfish request. She asks nothing for herself – only for her daughter.
 - a) And Jesus who is so attentive to the hurts and pains of the multitudes and so willing to heal them – is silent towards her.
 - (1) It is important to note here that the woman addresses Him first as “Son of David” – a Jewish title – of which she has no right since she

is a Gentile.

- (2) But her second plea is as “Lord” and that gets a reply.
 - b) Then, he refers to her as a “dog”. Would you have stuck around?
 - c) Do you know that in some Muslim cultures today that Christians are referred to, by them as “dogs?”
 - (1) Because of this woman’s “heritage” – she grew up hearing these words and she had accepted that she was spiritually inferior to the Jews!
 - (2) So, when Jesus says, **"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."** – there is not one ounce of pride that stands in the way of her faith.
2. Again, the Gospel of Mark lets us know that it wasn’t a “no” **Mark 7:27 (NKJV) — 27 But Jesus said to her, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”**
- a) Isaiah had already prophesied that the Gospel would come to the Gentiles, but the Jews had to be given a chance first.
 - (1) This poor, needy and desperate lady could “heard between the lines”

VI. MATTHEW 15:27 (NKJV) — 27 AND SHE SAID, “YES, LORD, YET EVEN THE LITTLE DOGS EAT THE CRUMBS WHICH FALL FROM THEIR MASTERS’ TABLE.”

- A. Again **Mark 7:28 (NKJV) — 28 And she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.”**
- 1. This is not a contradiction, just greater development of the story!
 - a) The idea here is that even the dogs get to eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s children that sit at the Master’s table! You see, this woman is able to look past it all and point back to the Master!
 - (1) And she is more than willing to accept the leftovers or crumbs – if they are from Jesus!
 - (2) Not only is the Lord blessed by this woman’s faith – but He also wants the disciples to see it!

VII. MATTHEW 15:28 (NKJV) — 28 THEN JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO HER, “O WOMAN, GREAT IS YOUR FAITH! LET IT BE TO YOU AS YOU DESIRE.” AND HER DAUGHTER WAS HEALED FROM THAT VERY HOUR.

- A. She didn’t argue with Jesus. She didn’t try to justify her position. She agreed that it was true.
- 1. She was willing to accept being a “dog” if that meant she could have whatever leftovers” the Jews didn’t want!
 - a) What a testimony this should be to us!
 - (1) We strive for acceptance, to be noticed, to be popular.
 - (2) And no matter how much notoriety we receive it is never enough.
 - (3) No matter how much money we have – it is never enough.
 - (4) Even if we have the latest fashions – they are never enough.
 - (a) But if we could but get one “scrap” from the Master’s table – we would be satisfied!

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. Why is it so difficult to look past the “fluff” and see what’s most important?
1. In closing – I just want to compare the Scribes and the Pharisees with this Syrophenician woman:
 - a) They were so pompous – they felt they had the right to correct Jesus!
 - b) They were so bound up in “the traditions of the elders” that they weren’t even being obedient to the Lord.
 - c) And here is this poor, helpless lady that simply needs a miracle for her daughter.
 - d) There are no “hoops” for her, and she has none for Jesus. She just wants Him to touch her daughter and because of her simple and consistent faith – HE DOES.
 - (1) I pray that there is a lesson for us here in keeping our faith pure and simple and remember, “Silence” doesn’t always mean “No”.
 - (a) Sometimes it is just a “Wait”.
 - (2) AND even scraps from the Master’s table can bring healing!