

I was startled and jumped to my feet immediately.

I could feel the anger welling up in me towards her and my senses to defend my master start to well up in me as well – as I look at this deranged and dirty woman.

John and James, who had been sitting near the door leapt up to their feet at the same time I did - and they were already reaching out to grab the woman and stop her from coming any closer to the table and our Master.

With all of the barking, crying and commotion in that room she again cries out "Lord, Son of David" – James and John had grabbed her by now and were trying to move her toward the door and she says again, "Have mercy on me! My daughter is sick. She is suffering terribly from demon possession..."

I have to assume that the Master heard what she was saying over the noise of the two dogs and the child, and the turmoil of the scuffle in that room but he never said a word.

He didn't even look up from his plate.

Now by this time not only John and James had her, myself and three others had surrounded the woman and we began to hustle her out the door.

She was interrupting not only our meal, but the time that our Master had specially set aside for teaching us about the Kingdom he was going to establish and the events of the day. We had no intention of letting her get in the way of that.

The woman struggled a bit, but she didn't have a chance. Hauling nets in from the water loaded with fish gives a person a lot of strength, and she was seriously outnumbered with all of these fishermen.

We got her out of that room quicker than a bouncer gets a drunk out of a tavern. Some of you are sitting there saying - Now how would Fr. Sam know that – well that is another story at another time.

Well it didn't end there because; let me tell you, once outside, she caused just as much trouble as some drunks do.

She was louder and more insistent than ever.

She tried to get by us and to get back inside.

She kept on saying to us that she had to see the miracle worker that her daughter was in terrible shape, that she needed help.

She must have clutched at and grabbed each and every one of us as she pleaded. Agonizing pain was in her cries, tears were flowing down her cheeks, she was not slowing her efforts to see the Master at all.

I tell you, she was a real pain I the lower anatomy.

James tried to reason with her.

"Look", he said, "You have no right to be here. You have got no right to bother the teacher. You are a Gentile, you don't believe in anything we believe in, your people are foreigners, heathens, and your current behavior confirms this. There is no way the master is going to help you, so please go away."

She grabs James's robe and with tears in her eyes she says to James, "I've got to see him, I know he can help me. He has done so much for others."

"That may be", James said, "but he's not going to do anything for you. You are not only a woman, you are a Canaanite, you don't go to the synagogue, you don't obey the Law of Moses, you are unclean and filthy, you eat forbidden food. You are an enemy of our people - To make matters worse... you have absolutely no respect and you are rude. The Master is trying to eat and visit with friends.

He is a guest in another man's home, and this is supposed to be a special time for us all, and you just barge in and start demanding help!

Listen! Please! Go away! You are not going to get help here."

You know what she did? That wretched woman just shook her head and said:

"I know he will help me, he's got to help me!"

John butted in, "Look", he said, "Go away. We've told you that you're not welcome here. We've told you that Jesus isn't going to have anything to do with your type. So why don't you just get lost."

I tell you she was a crazy woman. She didn't know her place, that's for sure. The more we tried to calm her, the louder and more persistent she was. She cried, she begged, she screamed. There was no reasoning with her.

After a few minutes of this I got the idea of asking Jesus to tell her to go away. I figured that if he said something to her she'd get the picture and stop her infernal racket.

I mentioned the idea to a couple of the others and they agreed that it was the only thing to do if we were going to have any peace.

As soon as I opened the door to go in the dogs began barking again. Someone hissed at them to be quiet as I went over to Jesus. He was sitting at the table with the child who had been crying earlier sitting on His lap and eating bread and Jesus was talking with our host.

Our host looked a little embarrassed. He was trying to pretend that nothing was going on - but the woman was standing just outside the open door where my mates were waiting for the word from Jesus to send her on her way. The noise level was starting to subside.

"Excuse me", I said to the Master, "would you please tell that woman to go away. She is really persistent in her pleas with us and all of her crying and carrying on, master please help us."

Jesus look at his host, then at me, and said -- "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." --

Well there it is – Jesus has spoken clearly.

Now I tell you, Jesus can be really frustrating at times but this time He supported us.

He never seemed to give a straight answer to a simple question. But even so, this time he was backing us up all the way – or - so it seemed.

It was like he had heard everything we had said to the woman, so I turned to tell the wretched woman that the Master had said he was not here for her so she was to go away.

Just as I was turning around, she squeezed by the guys at the door and ran over to a position right beside the master, and fell down on her knees at his side.

"Lord, help me", she cried.

I didn't do a thing. I was stunned and frozen in place as was James and John.

I figured after what he had said Jesus would handle it just fine.

And he did.

Jesus looked at her and she bowed her head and looked down. Then he looked around the room for a moment.

The child in his lap was busy eating a piece of bread as if nothing unusual had going on. The dogs were nuzzling around under the table. Our host was frozen in place just staring at our Master, no doubt wondering what Jesus was going to do to get rid of this crazy woman.

John and James and the others were all inside by this point. We all were standing, frozen in place, waiting for Jesus to tell us to get rid of her.

Amazingly from all of the previous kayos and noise it became very quiet in the room as the master looked around, the only sounds were those of the dogs under the table, the buzz of the flies and the munching sounds of the child on his lap eating bread.

Then Jesus looked down at the woman and said to her in his very strong and gentle voice:

"It is not right to take the children's bread and to toss it to the dogs"

A couple of us looked at each other and smiled.

It was such a well turned phrase.

The kind that only Jesus would be able to come up with and it made the point well. As far as I was concerned, it certainly disposed of her and all of her kind. Our Master had put her I her place.

I caught James looking at me and began to nod my head at him. As I did so the woman looked up at Jesus and stared him in the eyes.

"Yes Lord", she said to him in this incredibly calm and clear voice, and I swear to you she had this little smile on her face,

"Yes Lord", she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

I was stunned. The woman really was too much.

Lippy, rude, obnoxious, unclean, disrespectful, I could go on! Anyway - do you know what Jesus did? He smiled at her, as if it was all some great contest of wits and he says to her;

"Woman, you have great faith, For your reply, your request is granted. Go home, your daughter is healed."

There it was, Jesus gave into what she wanted and in so doing He opened the doors to heaven to all those who sought Him. Jesus unveiled the mysteries and love that had been reserved for one nation was now available for all nations.

We later heard that her daughter was healed the same hour that Jesus told her that she had great faith.

I just could not understand it.

I mean why in the world did Jesus do that?

She did not belong there.

She was not one of us. She was nothing! She was a Canaanite!

Jesus knew it, I knew it, and the rest of us knew it.

And then He shares the love and healing mysteries of our God with the rest of the world.

I just don't understand Jesus sometimes.

I just don't understand....

Well that is the story in my mind's eye.

Last week Fr Don talk about this small word “faith”. We hear again this word “faith” in our story this morning – My question to you - where did she get this faith – how did she get it – she knew nothing of our God and His teachings. But wait a moment – she call Jesus the son of David – How did she know this?

Was she just playing the odds – since she had heard about the healings he had preformed around the country side?

Where did such faith come from? She responded to our Master as Solomon would have with great wisdom and insight.

Where did she come up with such knowledge?

Now - After weeks of hearing about this thing called “faith” - faith the size of a mustard seed or the tiniest bit of yeast and the wonderful things our Lord can do with them – do you still have your doubts our Master?

More importantly – how was that seed planted in this Canaanite woman? Could it have been something you said that she overheard? Was it something that she observed in your actions to others in the name of Jesus who is a son of David?

Again that is not what is important – what is important is she heard it – and a seed was planted – and she came to Christ.

Again we see the amassing and awesome power of our Master at work with the people on this earth.

What are you doing to assist our wonderful and generous Master in this work?

Amen