

## **She Gets It. Do You?**

Mark 7:24-30

Lent 1, February 25, 2015

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

The woman from the region of Tyre gets it. She understands who she is when she stands in front of Jesus. Do you?

The woman understands that she is a Greek when she stands in front of Jesus. She understands that she is a Syrophenician woman. She understands that she is not a Jew. She is not of the nation of Israel. She is not a blood heir of Abraham.

It was not to one of her ancestors to whom the Creator of the world appeared and said, "I will bless you. I will make your name great. I will give you descendents as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore." She understands that it was not to one of her ancestors that God said, "Through you all nations of the earth will be blessed." She understands that it is not through her nation that the other nations of the world will be blessed. She understands that she is not there to be a blessing to others. She knows that her ancestors did not worship the one true God of Israel. She knows that they did not have the covenant with God. She knows that they did not have a history with the Lord of creation. She knows her place in life. She gets it.

She also knows her need. Her daughter is sick. In fact her daughter is possessed by an unclean spirit. She knows that she has no power over the unclean spirit. She knows that she cannot cast it out herself. She also knows that her vocation is to be mother to her daughter. She simply cannot allow her daughter to remain afflicted with an unclean spirit. But what alternative does she have? What choices are available to her? If one is going to cast out an unclean spirit one is going to need a higher power to do it. If her nation is not the nation through which this higher power operates then there is no hope of finding help for her daughter from her own nation. She is going to have to go where the higher power can be found. She is going to have to go to another nation. She is going to have to go to Israel.

And surprise of all surprises, Israel comes to her! Jesus went out into the regions of Tyre. He is coming to her. The answer to all of her problems is headed her way. She gets it. She knows who she is.

Furthermore she knows who Jesus is.

She knows that He is the higher power who casts unclean spirits out of people. Perhaps she has heard the reports of Jesus casting unclean spirits out of other people. She would have to have heard something. The Gospel does not record any special revelation made to her. She heard the reports. She heard about Jesus. Here is the higher power that casts out unclean spirits. If I have any chance of saving my daughter, it is going to be with this man. There is no other choice. There is no other alternative. The blessing of Abraham that the Creator promised to give to all nations through him has either come or he hasn't. She will either be a blessed Syrophenician Greek woman or she will not, but Jesus is the only place to find out.

And He rebuffs her. He puts her down. He says that the children will be satisfied with the bread first because it is not good to take the bread from the children and throw it to the dogs.

You understand what He is saying right? He is calling her a dog. The children He is talking about are the children of Israel. He is talking about the Jews. He is talking about the blood descendents of Abraham.

When He talks about the bread He is talking about Himself. He is the blessing that God promised would come through the descendents of Abraham. But God promised that God would bless Abraham

and God promised that first, so Jesus comes to Israel. He heals Israel's sick and raises Israel's dead and preaches to Israel. And now this Syrophenician Greek woman is coming up to Him and making a request? Doesn't she know her place? Doesn't she know that unclean spirits are to be expected for one living so far away from the temple, the presence of God Himself? Doesn't she know that God blessed Abraham and not her ancestor? She is as good as a dog. And folks understand when our Lord is talking about dogs, he is not talking about the kind that you feed and wag their tail at you and are so glad that you came home. Our Lord is talking about the kind of dog that our youth encounter in their international mission trips, the kind with diseases who roam the streets of back villages eating whatever they can find in the street whether it be dung or something dead. The dog is unclean and that is what this woman is. She is unclean. She is a Syrophenician woman. She is a Greek. What stake does she have in the blessing of Abraham? Doesn't she know that she is a dog?

And the answer is yes. She knows that she is a dog. She knows that she is an unclean Gentile. She knows that she does not have God in the world. She knows that the blessing to the nations does not come through her. She knows it. She knows that Jesus has every right to speak to her this way. Her ancestors did not worship God. She may not have worshipped God her whole life. She understands that unclean spirits are natural to her kind of people living so far away from God's presence in Jerusalem. She knows who she is, but she also knows who Jesus is. She calls Him, "Lord."

She calls Him, "Lord"!

God's presence in the temple has come to her and she knows it! What an opportunity! What a chance. The blessing to the nations has come to her and it has come through the descendents of Abraham, just like the God of Abraham said that it would!

"Yes, Lord, and even the dogs under the table eat from the crumbs of the children." After all what choice did she have? Could she let go of Jesus and let her daughter continue to suffer with demon possession? Could she quit being a mother? Could she get the blessing of the God of Abraham from some other place? Could she deny that she was a dog? No. She can't do any of this. Here is her opportunity. She cannot let it go. This is the only way to help her daughter and she is going to stick with it until there is a result.

If any one of you objects to being called a dog, then you do not know who you are. If any one of you objects to the way that Jesus treats this woman then you do not understand who Jesus is and you do not understand who you are and you do not understand the situation that you face.

America does not have a special covenant with God. There is no such thing as manifest destiny for America. Manifest destiny was invented by Protestants to justify stealing the land from the native peoples. Protestants in this country continue to falsely teach that we Americans have a special relationship with God because we have a special covenant with Him. Some Protestants take the promises made to Israel and apply it to the United States or at the very least they make the United States the handmaid and helper of Israel and promise their political commitment to Israel. America has no special relationship with God.

When it comes to being an American there is no difference between us and the Africans or the Native peoples of this hemisphere. There is no difference between us and the Europeans or the Asians. There is no difference between us and the Syrophenician woman who spoke Greek to our Lord. We have the same ancestors. We are all descended from Japheth. We are dogs. We are unclean. We are subject to possession by unclean spirits.

If you want to be released from your unclean spirits, your only alternative is Jesus. Your only alternative is to seek out the one who brought the blessing of Abraham to the Gentiles.

God promised Abraham that his descendents would be a blessing to the other nations of the world. From among Abraham's descendents God would bring forth a blessing to all the Gentiles. That promise to Abraham is completely fulfilled when Jesus arrives. Prior to our Lord in the Old Testament the descendents were a blessing to other nations like Naaman, the Syrian, but it was limited in scope. It was confined to Israel's neighbors and those who surrounded Israel. But when Jesus comes along the blessing goes out to all of the nations. Jesus installs His apostles to disciple all of the nations by baptizing them and instructing them. And this instruction and this baptism has come to the nations and blessed them. It has also come to you and blessed you even though you are dogs, even though you are Americans.

In spite of the fact that you and your kind do not worship the one true God, in spite of the fact that you have misunderstood your relationship with God, in spite of the fact that you are possessed by all kinds of unclean spirits the blessing of Jesus has come to you.

Folks, that is your situation in front of Jesus. He is Lord. You are a dog. You can ignore that situation if you like, but that is kind of like ignoring the fact that fire burns or that touching a hot stove burns or that stepping off of a cliff entails your fall. See if you obtain the blessing of Abraham if you ignore that you are a dog and not a member by blood of Israel. See if you obtain the blessing of Abraham if you ignore the fact that Jesus is the Lord who brings forth the blessing of Abraham. See if you can expel you own unclean spirits.

The Syrophoenician woman acknowledged her place in life. And when she went home, she found her daughter on the bed and the demon had gone out of her.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.