

GREAT FAITH

Matt 15:21-28: "Woman you have great faith! Your request is granted."

Jesus, during his ministry on the earth did many miracles, leaving a lasting impression of the unique ways the Lord deals with the needy. When the Canaanite woman approached Jesus with her request, she already had many hurdles stacked up against her: race, gender, Satan's hold on her daughter, the disciples' attitude, and the seemingly indifferent attitude of Jesus. To add insult to the injury, it looked as if he was putting distance between Himself and the woman. It is interesting to note her approach to the Master and His response to her plea. She comes to him, addressing him as the "Son of David", and then with much perseverance persuades him to help her out. Jesus in turn had a very out of the norm response to her cry. He responds in three different ways: He refused to answer; he came to help others; and he said the children's food was not to be given to dogs. After the seemingly rude response by Jesus, the average individual would have walked away from him. But we read that she did not, and Jesus knew that she would not, for he was just testing her faith, not to discourage her but to develop her faith. He was providing her an opportunity to grow in her faith. Often times we would misinterpret delays for denials, and miss the blessings God has in store for our lives.

Jesus did not answer a word...

The silence of God: We need to learn to understand the silence of God. All those years Joseph was in Egypt, God never let Jacob know about his whereabouts, even when the latter was mourning his son's tragic death. But in the background, God's master plan was unfolding which would sustain Jacobs's family during the upcoming famine. One of the features of the book of Job is God's silence towards him, though he was not silent toward Satan. God does not enter into a dialogue with him until the 38th chapter, and even then does not explain why he led him through the valley of humiliation. The silence of God should not be misinterpreted as the inactivity of God. God is actively involved in the lives of his children, orchestrating events which will fulfill the purpose of God. During those phase of our lives, we need to trust in him, lest we lose our way. The life of faith will end if

God were to explain all his moves to us. The natural man lives by reason. Therefore, he needs and demands an explanation for everything. But the spiritual man lives by faith, and he reserves God's right to be silent, because he has implicit faith in God's integrity and honesty.

If we fail to understand the dealings of God, we will get discouraged and depressed. But the Cananinite woman did not give up; rather, pushing her to the brink caused her to exercise more faith; the kind of faith that God honors and honors God. "A faith that hasn't been tested cannot be trusted (Adrian Rogers)". At times when we pray things seem to grow worse instead of better; all hell seems to break loose against us. That is because Jesus wants to strain selfishness out of our prayer. He wants our faith to be battle-ready and tested, and the only way he can accomplish that is when he seems out of reach momentarily. This is the reason troubles pile up when you feel very godly. The combination of the piled up trouble and the seemingly absent savior tend to discourage us. But just like the Cananinite woman, if we persevere and persist in our request for divine intervention, we will surely prevail. Finally, we will hear the sweet voice of the Master saying "Your faith is great, your request is granted".