



Matthew 15:21-28  
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## Desperate for Jesus

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NCCC

### ❖ The Greater Context (21-22)

- Getaways (*withdrawing*) were common for Jesus
  - Withdrew to Galilee when John the Baptist was arrested (Mat 4:12).
  - Pharisees begin to plot to kill him (Mat 12:15).
  - When John the Baptist was beheaded (Mat 14:13).
  - Here in Mat 15:21 the term *withdrew* is used identically to these other instances.
  - He may want some time alone with the Father from the crowds.
- He heads to the region of Tyre and Sidon (now southern Lebanon about 60 miles away. Remember his travels to Jerusalem were 120 miles) (see a map).
- We are “off the map.” We don’t know what Jesus will do in Gentile Lebanon?
- The woman is called a “Canaanite.” We think of the tension the original Israelites had with the pagan Canaanites. Mark says, she was Greek, a Syria Phoenicia.

### ❖ The Presenting Issue and the Dilemma (22-24)

- We feel the woman’s deep need, *came to him crying out, Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me...*
  - This is striking because she is using the same language as the Jews.
  - She calls him Lord, son of David.
  - *Have mercy . . .* becomes a common ancient liturgy in the church expressing our poverty of spirit and dependency on God.
- The disciples’ comment.
  - It’s quite annoying. The language implies repetition.
  - Maybe similar to Paul (Acts 16:17) where he casts out a demon because he was *so annoyed...*
  - She is not why they are there, they are on retreat and she’s not their mission, meaning she’s not Jewish.
- But notice, Jesus is silent, *Jesus did not answer a word*
  - I think he’s thinking and praying.
  - He’s noticing her and asking the Father what’s to be done.
- Jesus has been here with this situation before but not here...
  - The Gentile Centurion in Capernaum (Mat 8). But there, it’s possible that his servant was Jewish and it was within Jewish territory.
  - John 10:16 he says, *I have other sheep*, referring to his eventual reach to Gentiles.
  - And he sends his disciples into all the world eventually (Mat 28).
  - But for now there’s this tension.

- The Apostle Peter will eventually face the same challenge in Cornelius' house

### ❖ **Desperation and Faith (25-27)**

- She persists in desperation—a mother's heart.
  - OT stories of desperation (Hannah praying, David's psalm 51, Jacob wrestling the angel).
  - Numerous times, in Jesus' ministry desperate people would cry out.
  - Mary at the tomb displays her desperation.
- Desperation is a measure of our poverty of spirit—Blessed are the poor in spirit. When we are weak we are strong.
  - In moments of desperation, we move beyond our own resources.
  - If we could solve the problem, we wouldn't be desperate.
- Our longing (our will or wanting) is a measure of both what we want and how much we want it. The question is, How badly do we want and need Jesus?

### ❖ **The Resolution (28)**

- *Woman you have great faith...*
  - Exhibited by who she calls Jesus and
  - Her desperation for him alone.
- *Your request is granted.* Jesus heals her daughter.
- There are three messages in one here:
  1. This is a message about brokenness, desperation and faith.
  2. This is message about Jesus' ministry being more than just for the Jews.
  3. This is a message about Jesus' big heart for you.
- The take-home is Jesus' has a big heart for those who's hearts want him. When you seek me with all your heart, you will find me (Jer 29:12-13).

### ❖ **Taking It Home**

- Have you ever wanted to retreat and God wanted you to minister to others?
- Is there a group of people or a person you could never see yourself serving?
- What do you need from Jesus?
- On a scale of 1-10 how desperate are you for Jesus?
- Is it time to cry out to him in desperation?