



Matthew 15

I am intrigued by the writing in Matthew. I would have to do a rather large in-depth study to answer this properly. Matthew tends to write things in threes. What is claimed in the sermon on the mount is displayed somewhere else in his book. Usually there is an incident or two to prove the teaching on the mount. In Matthew 7:6 Jesus says *“Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.”* Here in Matthew 15 we get another example to that statement.

Matthew 15:26 *“He replied, “It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs.”*

Later on, Jesus says in Matthew 19:14 *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* I could go on and on. There are parables of seeds and hidden gems. This whole book is based on a hidden message that Jesus is revealing. Matthew is also telling us that Gods word is being denied to the people by the religious. Who is handling the word of God?

Then we find a woman who is from Canaan. It's the place that Jews don't go. The woman from the well is also from this place. She needs Jesus to heal her Daughter. How far did she travel to find him? This exchange seems cold. Jesus appears to ignore her. Yet, I think that his final response to her tells the story. Jesus said her faith is great. Yes, the faith to find Jesus. The faith to persist. The faith that bothered the disciples so bad that they beg Jesus to make it

stop. Yet, it is a curious conversation. She is asking God to say yes. Through Jesus, God does not give in until she is persistent.

There is a parable in Luke 11 that tells the story of the persistent neighbor. That parable describes our woman in Matthew 15 to a tee. It begins with Jesus ignoring her calls. Is he being rude? We could say that. Yet, it's the disciples that complain. Several times in the gospels the disciples are so quick to cast aside. Why is Jesus taking to the woman at the well? Why do these children need to see Jesus? I just believe there is a connection to Jesus waiting. Is he exposing her faith and the disciples lack of it?

God has been accused of being silent when we pray. Where is God in our time of need? Jesus is silent and waits. This lady then persists. Jesus replies that he has come for the lost sheep in Israel. Then a witty exchange ensues. *"The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. 26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."* To me, Jesus is pressing her faith. The dogs comment seems so cruel. Yet, she is adamant for an answer.

She comes at Jesus again *"Yes, it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." 28 Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.* Just like the parable in Luke 11, Jesus demands persistence. Is it because God is cruel or indifferent? I think it's more about us being indifferent. We pray for wishes don't we. We expect God to jump.

This is a lesson for the disciples. They reject the woman. Jesus then appears to reject her too. Yet, she is really earnest and faithful to God. Israel has rejected her kind outside the borders. She crosses borders to receive the blessings of God. I just think this whole exchange hinges on

Jesus admission of her faith. Several times in the gospels he marvels at faith. Yes, Jesus did come to find lost sheep in Israel. To spark Gods children. Yet, Peter and Paul eventually go to the gentiles because they are rejected by Israel. This story of the woman is similar. The disciples reject her and Jesus answers her request. Maybe God will say yes if we come with earnest hearts rather than needy ones.