



OPEN

In most bibles, the title given to our text for this week is 'Jesus Honours a Syrophoenician Woman's Faith.' That is what this story teaches us: what Jesus honours is FAITH. But what kind of faith? This life-changing story of Jesus takes effort on our part to get to the heart of because embedded in Jesus' words is a potentially disturbing response given in parable, an allusion to Jesus' call first to Jews, and an affirmation that a demonic spirit had possessed a child. But underneath all of these challenging things, what the gospel writer Mark wants us to see most is that what Jesus honours and responds to is simply **faith**. We don't find the word 'faith' in the passage, but that is what we see in the actions and words of the woman as she pursues, engages, and trusts Jesus with the need she brings him. How about you? Are you exercising faith in Jesus for your need right now?

REFLECT

- In verse 24, it says Jesus goes to Tyre (outside Jewish territory) to 'get away.' What could Jesus *not* do in this verse? What is the timing of the woman's pursuit of Jesus?
- In verse 26, as a Greek from outside Israel, what likely had the woman heard about Jesus? How much about Jesus do you think she likely knew? A lot? A little? Explain.
- What do you think is behind Jesus' first reply to the woman?
- The woman is not deterred by Jesus' first reply. She answers Jesus back 'in parable.' What is she really saying?
- In verses 29-30, what is her next 'faith step'?

DISCUSS

- There are some things about this story that could trip us up if we aren't open: a disturbing reply of Jesus, a priority given to Jews, and the demonization of a child. Which one is most challenging for you? Why? How do you think we need to understand these things? Share.
- The reply to the woman is 'Classic Jesus,' in that Jesus responds to her with a parable. Children, bread, dogs? What does it all mean do you think?
- Why do you think Jesus uses a parable to reply to the woman? To be offensive? To perhaps provoke the woman to greater faith? What are your thoughts?
- What are some of the characteristics of this woman's faith? For example, how complete is her understanding of Jesus? How much of her faith is demonstrated by actions?
- What does Jesus' initial reply to the woman tell us about how Jesus may respond to us in looking to him for our needs in our relationship with Him?
- Lastly, for you, what are the key takeaways from this story?

APPLY

- Like the woman in this story, all of us have a need in our life that we need God's help for. What is one of your current needs you need to believe Jesus for?
- Are there reasons in the past why you have not gone to God with your need or gave up seeking? What are they? If so, confess them with one another to go farther in faith.
- Incomplete faith is better than 'no faith.' What action could you take this week to exercise faith? What is your next step?

PRAY

- Take time in group prayer praising Jesus for who he is and for having the power to change our lives.
- In prayer, name your need and ask the Holy Spirit for help and guidance to keep trusting for Jesus' answer.
- Ask for greater faith, simple trust, and bold belief.