

21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

1. GREAT DISCOURAGEMENT

1.1 A desperate problem (v22)

Question 1: Looking back, did ever some of the problems we have faced in life seem overwhelming?

1.2 A perfect appeal (v22)

Question 2: How might this woman's wisely framed appeal show us how to pray about our problems to God?

...and heaven is silent [1]! (v23)

1.3 A lack of compassion (v24)

Question 3: The response of the disciples seems hugely heartless. Is that how people or institutions can respond to our problems?

...and heaven is silent [2]! (v24)

1.4 A unique, intimate and desperate appeal to God (v25)

Question 4: Have you ever given up asking for something from God?

...and heaven is silent [3]! (v26)

2. GREAT FAITH

2.1 She keeps going when heaven is silent.

Question 5: Is heaven ever truly silent?

2.2 She values the crumbs of Christ more than the feasts of the world.

Question 6: What are the crumbs of Christ and the feasts of the world in practical terms?

2.3 She says in effect: "Even if you do not give me the blessing I seek, I will take the blessing you give"

Question 7: Have you ever sought a blessing and received something different?

2.4 And she receives the commendation of God: (v28) "Oh woman, great is your faith!"

Question 8: Think forward to that moment when you will see Jesus face to face. How does it move you and inspire you?

A PRAYER

Loving Lord, thank you for warning me in this passage that my discipleship path may involve great discouragement, and for recognising that discouragement in scripture. Help me to keep going when heaven is silent and value the “crumbs of Christ” more than the feasts of this world. Even if I do not receive the blessing I seek, help me continue to walk with great faith and receive from you the blessing you give. Above all, help me respond to you in repentance and faithful discipleship and receive from you in eternity those words of priceless commendation: “Great is your faith”. For the sake of your Son, my Saviour Jesus Christ, **Amen.**