

GOD'S GRACE EXTENDED (Mk. 7:24-30)

Mk. 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. **25** For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: **26** The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. **27** But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. **28** And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. **29** And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. **30** And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

This is one of my favourite stories in the ministry of Jesus. Let's also read it from Matthew's account, **Mt. 15:21** Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. **22** And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. **23** But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. **24** But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. **25** Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. **26** But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. **27** And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. **28** Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Each of the Gospels are written with a specific readership in mind, - Matthew was written mainly for the Jews, Luke was written primarily to a more Greek/Gentile readership, John had the widest of recipients, and Mark was written more with the Roman Christians in mind. For example, as we noticed Mark did not record the same details of Jesus' temptations as did Matthew and Luke. Instead he wrote, **Mk. 1:12** And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. **13** And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him. ... The mention of the wild beasts would have been an encouragement to the Christians waiting to face the lions in the Roman arena.

Here is another example of encouragement to the Gentile Christians. Mark was identifying Jesus as the Saviour of not only the Jew, but also of the *goyim*, Gentiles throughout the nations, as was prophesied in the Old Testament, **Is. 42:6** I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles. ... The One Who would come from God to be the Saviour of the Jews would also be the Saviour of the Gentiles, as Paul wrote, **Eph. 2:14** he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us ... **18** For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. ... Through

grace, Paul explained to the Romans, we, - as ‘the wild olive tree’, - have been ‘grafted in’ to [the root and fatness of the olive tree](#), who is Israel (Rom. 11:17).

So in God’s overall and eternal plan, salvation was extended to the Jew first and then to the Gentile.

Not all Jews saw it that way though. ... Who is the prophet most easily to be annoyed with in the Old Testament? Surely it’s Jonah. The Lord called him to go to Nineveh, one of *the* greatest Gentile cities of the day ... And after all the time and effort he wasted, Jonah eventually arrived in the city, preached the message God had sent him to preach and the Lord worked a mighty movement of His grace resulting in more than 100,000 being saved (Jonah 4:11) ... but Jonah went away and *sulked* underneath the gourd. ... Why? ... Because he didn’t believe salvation should be granted to anyone other than the Jews ... And that was the problem in the day of Jesus also.

As far as the Jewish leaders and the people were concerned, the Messiah would only be the Saviour of the Jews ... but no, for John made it abundantly clear, [Jn. 3:16](#) For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son ... And all those people who came to Jesus at the behest of the woman of Samaria, *they* declared, [4:42](#) ... we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. ... And it is also what the apostle wrote in his epistle, [1 Jn. 4:14](#) we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Now, I know the ramifications of saying that Jesus was the Saviour of the world and how it seems to contradict the Biblical doctrine of the *particular atonement* which teaches very plainly Christ died for His Church, the redeemed, the born-again and none of His blood was wasted and shed in vain. It does not contradict the doctrine though, in fact, it enhances and explains it for the Church for whom the Lord Jesus Christ died extends to every part of this *world* ... and throughout every period of its history, because the apostle John records how he saw in the vision of Heaven the saved singing the new song, [Rev. 5:9](#) Thou ... hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. ... He is the only Saviour this world has ever had ... and will ever have! Rev. 5:10 continues, [10](#) And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. ... That is a future event relating to the time described in Rev. 20:1-5 ... And then we are told in Rev. 21:1, this present earth upon which one day the saints of God will reign with the Saviour

... this present earth will pass away and be replaced with the new heaven and the new earth. ... God intended at the beginning for this earth He created to be ruled in accordance with His glory ... and He *will* make sure it *does* happen ... and it *will*!

So, right from the beginning, the Gentiles were included in God's plan of salvation, as well as the Jews ... **Mt. 28:19** Go ye therefore, and teach *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ... Teach them what? ... Teach them salvation in order for them to be saved! Here is the picture, Ps. 87 ... **2** The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. **3** Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Israel, the nation, beloved of the Lord (Dt. 33:12) ... And then, - in terms of endearment, - He also looks into the future, **4** I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me [*i.e. I will make mention of those who know/love Me*]: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there. **5** And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. **6** The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. ... How reminiscent it is of Mal. 3:17, **17** And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels! There will be the beloved of the Lord from every corner of His creation, throughout every century ... for He will be pre-eminent in all things (Col. 1:18)! ... But, as we shall see, even the disciples of Jesus had a problem when it came to the salvation of anyone other than the Jews!

... Yes, but why did Jesus say to the woman of Samaria, **Jn. 4:22** ... salvation is of the Jews? Why, - when He was sending out His disciples on mission, - ... why did He expressly tell them ... **Mt. 10:5** ... Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: **6** But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? ... The answer is simple ... He came to bring salvation to Israel *first* (Rom. 1:16; 2:10) so that Israel would become the means by which salvation would be brought to the Gentiles. ... Ah but, the Jews did not receive Him, **Jn. 1:11** He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ... Don't stop there though ... read the next verse, **12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. ... In other words, there *were* sufficient number of Jews who *did* receive Him as Saviour and Lord to carry out His work in the proclamation of the Gospel.

And indeed, we could continue ... At present the nation of Israel remains in spiritual darkness but there is coming a day when Jesus will return and they

will receive Him as their Messiah and they *will* be saved, as Isaiah and Micah prophesied that [out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem \(Is. 2:3; Micah 4:2\)](#).

While the nation rejected Him at His first coming, the twelve disciples believed in Him and brought the Gospel to many parts of the world ... and there was also the 500 who saw Jesus in Galilee after His resurrection ... and there were the thousands on the Day of Pentecost who were saved and brought the Gospel home to their towns and cities in their various foreign countries. ... There was the three thousand saved (Acts 2:41), followed by the five thousand (Acts 4:4) ... and the five thousand could easily be doubled, maybe trebled, and maybe even quadrupled for you will notice the five thousand referred to the men only! *They all* took the Gospel home with them, and the Church today has spread, - and continues to spread, - as the consequence of the obedience of the early Christians to bring the Gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth.

And so, since Israel was never intended by God to be the sole recipients of His grace Jesus was justified in going to the home of this Canaanite, Gentile, idol-worshipping woman. All the gods she had been brought up to believe in could not save or heal her daughter. They were powerless because there are no gods, apart from the one true God Who has declared, [Is. 45:5 I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me](#).

Tyre was in the country known as Phoenicia ... and its other famous sister-city was Sidon, - both were on the Mediterranean coast ... Gentile country. It would have taken Jesus a few days getting there on foot, a few days coming back ... and He also would have remained in the region of Phoenicia for a while. There is no record of anything else He did there, except for His encounter with this woman. ... He would have been there primarily to use the opportunity to teach His disciples for He [would have no man know it: but he could not be hid \(Mk. 7:24\)](#).

... How did the people of that outlying region know Him, and how did they know *about* Him? Well, they knew about Him because Mark explains how when He was at the Sea of Galilee, [Mk. 3:7 a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, 8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him](#). So, this woman would have at least heard about Jesus, and what He did and could do. ... And also, Jesus going to meet this woman was in fulfilment of something He had previously alluded to in

Galilee, **Mt. 11:21** Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ... Repentance, therefore, would come to this woman in Tyre!

And it was, in the life of this woman, **Mk. 7:25** For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet. She wasn't only a Gentile, but also being a Canaanite meant she belonged to a people cursed by God. ... And not only was she Greek, - a Gentile, - but she was also a Syrophenician ... Phoenicia was the name of the country she came from, but under the Greek general Ptolemy he had annexed Phoenicia and joined it up with Syria, thus creating Syria-Phoenicia. So, she wasn't a Jew, she was a Syro-Phoenician ('a bit of this and that'), she was a woman, she was a Canaanite, she belonged to idol-worshippers ... there is no mention of a husband, - was she a widow, or was the child illegitimate? ... Basically, she had *nothing* going for her!

And yet this was a woman God's providence and grace brought into the path of Jesus. Her daughter was demon-possessed, and she pleaded with Him to free her daughter from out of the demonic bondage ... just as she would have heard He had done with others. She is obviously heart-broken and 'at the end of her tether'. She also *obviously* sees her opportunity in the Saviour.

What about her own idols? What about getting some help from her own pagan religion? Well, in the plan of God Jesus came to her area ... and this woman made a conscious decision to no longer trust in her idols, but to turn from them to the living God ... And when she could not get across to Galilee to find Jesus, so Jesus came to find her. Matthew tells us, **15:22** And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. At first, **23** he answered her not a word. ... He didn't reply. *Very strange!* That sounds awful cold, and most unlike Jesus ... but that is what He did, He did not reply. ... And yet the woman is pleading with Him, **Mt. 15:22** Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David ... **25** Lord, help me.. ... I don't deserve anything from You. You don't owe me ... but I'm craving for Your mercy, to touch and to set my daughter free. ... She is calling Him, 'Lord', and she also acknowledges Him as the Messiah because she gives Him the title, the **Son of David**. ... She is persistent for she knows Jesus is her only hope ... She has come to know and to realise Who He is!

Did He care? Of course, He cared for He had previously said, **Mt. 11:28** *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ...* and this woman was ‘heavy-laden’ and she ‘needed rest’. She was a prime candidate for God’s grace ... What was happening though? Remember the reason He was up in that area was to continue His ongoing teaching of the disciples ... and He was showing them how salvation works. However, they ‘fell at the first hurdle’ because **Mt. 15:23** ... *his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. ...* Get rid of her! She is not ‘the type for saving’. She is not a Jewess, but a worthless sinful Gentile woman! ... Well, this ‘worthless sinful Gentile woman’ had it ‘in her’ to go searching for Jesus until she found Him, **Mt. 15:22** *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him.* This ‘worthless sinful Gentile woman’ pleaded for mercy she did not deserve, and she showed a reverence for the Saviour and she recognised Him as the Lord and the Messiah (Mt. 15:22) ... believing Jesus was the only answer to her predicament.

Is that not faith?! Is that not saving faith?! Is that not a fulfilment of grace? ... **Jn. 6:37** *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. ...* And here He was teaching His disciples that even a woman ‘as low down the social ladder’ as this woman can be saved. ... They were for sending her away, **24** *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ...* Does that mean Jesus did not want her? Does that mean she was not the kind He came to save? ... Here is what it means and here is how this woman *was* saved for she *was* obedient to the instructions set out in the Word of God, **Is. 55:6** *Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

This woman was pleading. Her heart was breaking. She fell down and knelt before the Saviour, worshipping. She was fully convinced of her own need, and the Saviour’s power ... and she wept, **Mt. 15:25** *Lord, help me. ...* And then Mark records, **Mk. 7:27** *But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. ...* It doesn’t sound very nice ... What is He saying? ... Is Jesus not willing to save me? I’ve heard what He has done for others, why can’t He do it for me too?!

But, you see, the Saviour was working in accordance with His Father's will for it was His Father's will to save His people, - the Jews, - from their sin *first* (Mt. 1:21). In other words, it had been prophesied concerning Him that He should be a light unto the Gentiles ... but not just yet because that was for the future. ... He was still dealing with Israel. And what Jesus was saying was that His priority at that moment was to His 'children' ... and by that He meant the people of Israel, for example, **Hosea 11:1** When Israel was a child, then I loved him ... **4** I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love. *That* was His priority, and that was the reason He was on earth at that time ... to 'feed His children', - the Jews ... and as yet the salvation of the Gentiles, - the 'dogs' was the term the Jews used to describe them, - was still future.

It sounds offensive, but the woman wasn't offended, - she was too far gone in her need, - and she responded from the heart, - she was quick, - **28** And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table [*... Lord, that's me ...*] eat of the children's crumbs. ... Jesus, I'm holding on and I won't let go because I know you can do a miracle for me, in the freeing of my daughter from the bondage of these demons. ... And something else she was also saying, "Yes, Lord, I know I am as a 'dog'. I know I have no right to ask you for anything, much less *grace*, and I know what kind of person I am and where I have come from ... and yet, Lord, I need You."

What a mighty prayer from a sinful woman! How did she pray it? She prayed it by faith ... and faith is what we receive from the hand of God in order to believe in His Son ... and this woman *believed!* She had nothing going for her *except* she was in the presence of the Master. She *proved* she needed Him. This wasn't some simple prayer with no feeling behind it ... *she needed Jesus ... and she knew it ... and she believed in Him!*

Lord, I know I'm not worthy, and I know I'm a foreigner to grace and I'm a hopeless and lost Gentile pagan ... but Lord, even the dogs need the scraps ... so Lord, in undeserved mercy and grace, feed me and my daughter with Your salvation. And He turned and answered her, **Mt. 15:28** O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. ... She confessed with her mouth the Lord Jesus, and she believed in her heart that He could raise her daughter from out of bondage of the evil one ... and Jesus *did!* ...

Faith does not hold it against you where you come from. Faith fights through all religious barriers and it brings the humble penitent sinner all the way through the dark valley to Jesus. The woman cried, Help me, Lord ... and the Lord reached down into her life and helped her. ... **Ps. 40:2** He brought [*her*] up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set [*her*] feet upon a rock, and established [*her*] goings. ³ And he hath put a new song in [*her*] mouth, even praise unto our God.

Aren't you glad you are saved? Do you thank God every day that His Son took your place on Calvary, - the sinner's place? He bore your sin on the cross that you would go free. He took all the hatred and scorn thrown at Him by the devil and all of Hell ... but that was not the worst He endured on the cross for the greatest punishment He received was at the hands of His Father, on your behalf. His Father placed upon Him the exact price to redeem every lost soul for whom our Saviour was punished ... "Gone is all my debt of sin ... Yet the debt I did not pay. ... Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow."

Do you notice ... we are not told the woman's name? It was a foreign name. It probably incorporated something of the name of an idol, so it was not necessary for the Holy Spirit to record her name. There is another hymn which says, "There's a new name written down in glory, And it's mine, O yes, it's mine! ... She has a new name now.

Have *you* a new name? Is the Lord Jesus *your* Saviour? Another verse of the hymn says, "In the Book 'tis written, "Saved by Grace," O the joy that came to my soul! Now I am forgiven, and I know By the blood I am made whole." ... And that is what happened to this young girl, **Mt. 15:28** And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

That is God's truly, amazing, sovereign grace ... that He would come and find us, and then say to you and me, **Is. 43:1** ... I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. That is His gift He provided through His Son, our Saviour. May God encourage each of us as we have studied together His precious Word, and may He use it to His glory! Amen.