

SUNDAY HANDOUT FOR DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION - Aug. 30

Remarkable Faith (Matthew 15:21-31)

Jesus' disciples carried all kinds of misconceptions about her that needed to be broken apart. She carried what felt like the weight of the world as she watched her daughter suffer under demonic oppression. How does Jesus disrupt the bias in his disciples while, at the same time, draw out remarkable faith in the very woman they want to write off? That is what Matthew 15:21–31 answers.

Here's a story of faith that won't let go and mercy that can't be contained - reminding us that Jesus is still disrupting misconceptions, drawing out faith and answering the cries of the most unlikely people facing the most broken situations imaginable.

1. A faith that won't let go (Matthew 15:21-28)

Jesus disrupts misconceptions and draws out remarkable faith.

2. A mercy that can't be contained (Matthew 15:29-31)

Jesus answers the cries of the most unlikely people facing the most broken situations.

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Matthew 15:21-31. Why does Matthew emphasize that she was a Canaanite from the region of Tyre and Sidon? What makes her an unlikely person to approach Jesus, and who might we be tempted to see as “unlikely” or beyond God’s reach?
2. What does the woman’s cry, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David,” reveal about what she believes about Jesus? What can her persistence teach us when Jesus seems silent?
3. Why does she keep pursuing Jesus after his apparent rejection? Where do you need to come to Jesus with the same simple prayer, “Lord, help me,” and keep trusting him?
4. How does the woman respond to Jesus’ words about the children and the dogs? What does her response reveal about her faith and her understanding of God’s mercy? What can cause us to stop trusting Jesus when his answer isn’t what we expected?
5. What makes this woman’s faith “great,” and what is the object of her faith? How does her confidence in Jesus challenge the way we respond when our circumstances seem hopeless?
6. Why is it significant that Jesus heals this woman’s daughter and then continues healing people in this Gentile region? What does Matthew want us to see about the reach of Jesus’ mercy, and where might Jesus be disrupting a misconception or bias in us?
7. How do the healings in verses 29–31 connect with Isaiah 35:5–6? What do they reveal about who Jesus is, and how does his compassion for broken people point us toward the greater salvation he accomplished through the cross?
9. What is one thing this passage teaches you about holding onto Jesus in desperation and trusting his mercy? How does the cross assure us that Jesus’ mercy reaches people who feel unlikely, unworthy, or far from God?

Spend time in prayer. Bring to Jesus the places where you feel desperate, powerless, or uncertain, and simply pray, “Lord, help me.” Ask him to give you a faith that won’t let go, especially when he seems silent or your circumstances feel hopeless. Ask him to reveal any misconceptions or biases he wants to disrupt in you, and to help you trust the mercy that was demonstrated so fully at the cross.