

Wednesday with the Word @Wheat Street Baptist Church

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Bible Study Series: God is Still in the Miracle Working Business

Tonight: Matthew 15:21-31

Who do we really want in the church?

Who deserves to be served by Jesus?

When we look persons who are the most vulnerable in the city what do we see?

When God looks at persons who the most vulnerable in the city what does God see?

Why is what we see and what God sees is so different?

In this opening passage, let's ask what Jesus sees and what the disciples see?

Matthew 15:21-23

21 Jesus left and went to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

22 Suddenly a Canaanite woman from there came out shouting, "Lord and Son of David, have pity on me! My daughter is full of demons." **23** Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away.

This woman is persistent. She is not going to be dismissed. She has heard about Jesus and his miracle working power and she is going to get what she came for. She is not going to be denied. Jesus is ignoring her but she doesn't care, she persist. Why do you think Jesus is responding this way? Could it be Jesus was trying to tell us something about the persistence of faith? Could it be that Jesus was trying to tell us to never give up on our request we put before God because when it look likes Jesus isn't listening, Jesus actually is listening? Why do you think Jesus responds this way?

Where is the woman from?

Why is her being a “Canaanite” woman important or is it?

Why does she ask Jesus to have mercy on her when it is her daughter who is full of demons?

How do mother’s feel about their children?

How do we feel about the children in this community?

Do we see the children in the community as our children?

Do we see what demonic attack(s) they are under?

Are we running to Jesus begging Jesus to have mercy on us on behalf of our children in our community?

Do we know them?

Do we love them?

Will we go to serve them?

Note: I am not suggesting that everybody has to be a part of the Children, Youth Ministry or the School Partnership but I am suggesting that we all should love our children and be concerned about their future. Our children fit in the category of one of the most vulnerable groups in our city. Children are stuck in conditions they didn’t choose and the church has to be a central player in them being able to fulfill their God given potential.

The Disciple’s Reaction: Matthew 15:23

23 Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away.

These are not the Pharisees, we would’ve expected this from them. This is the Disciples. We have seen this type of behavior from them before.

Why would they want to send the woman away?

How did they see the woman?

Did they see her as Jesus saw her?

What did Jesus hear and see?

What did the Disciples hear and see?

What do we hear and see?

How do we see the most vulnerable when they are in our midst?

Do we even see them? Do we want to send them away?

Matthew 15:24-28

24 Jesus said, “I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep.” (Jesus announces his mission. I didn’t come for your people, Sista.)

25 The woman came closer. Then she knelt down and begged, “Please help me, Lord!” (The woman says I don’t care who you were sent to I need a miracle)

26 Jesus replied, “It isn’t right to take food away from children and feed it to dogs.” (Jesus challenges her, how can you ask me for what isn’t yours?)

27 “Lord, that’s true,” the woman said, “but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner’s table.” (The woman doesn’t get offended. She says I don’t want to get you off track, I don’t want it all, I just need one blessing. Just give me a crumb.)

28 Jesus answered, “Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want.” At that moment her daughter was healed. (This is a woman of faith. Jesus responds to her faith. There is something about our faith in God that connects us to God.)

Why do you think this woman did not give up on her request?

What do you think it was at the core of her faith?

What was she believing God for and why do you think she believed that Jesus could do what she had asked him to do?

What are you believing God for?

Will your faith keep you while you wait on God to bless you?

What evidence do you have that God can do for you what you are asking God for?

How do we sustain our faith while we wait on our miracle?

There is something about faith and God's response to our faith. I don't want to over simplify this and reduce it to a formula. I not going to suggest that God is obligated to respond to our faith. I am not going to say that if we don't have faith God will not bless us because that is just not true. What I will say is that there is a mysterious relationship between our faith and God's acts. There is a correlation between the amount of faith we have and the way God sees us and respond to us. There is also an unexplained correlation between our faith and how we see God and God's ability to do great things. I want to also suggest that it is when we have a strong faith, that can keep us, it is that same faith that will give us the boldness to ask God for crazy stuff. When we serve God by faith, operate in our gifts by faith, give by faith, stand up and fight the devil by faith, we grow our faith in God and then we can walk by faith and not by sight.

Ephesians 3:7-13: An Example of What I am Talking About

7 Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power.

(Paul is saying, I am doing what I am called to by God's power and this grows my faith.)

8 Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ,

(I know I am nobody but look at God using me. This is about God and God's will and not me and my will.)

9 and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; **10** so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. **11** This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, **12** in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. **13** I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

It is our faith in Christ that gives us the boldness to believe and ask things of Christ. Matter of fact the closer you get to God, the stronger your faith is, the

more you will ask of God, walk and talk with boldness because you will be able to get a foretaste of faith, by faith as you see as God sees. You begin to see what people of little faith can't see, they can't believe, but because of your faith, you do believe, you ask and God does what God does.

When you serve God and go through suffering, which is part of it, this grows your faith. Not just suffering but also victories. The key is as we serve God by faith it increases our faith. We have to choose how we see what God is doing. We have choose to see by faith and let the things we see encourage our faith. It is not "positive thinking" it is choosing to see the blessings of God as a testament to God's faithfulness and our faith filled lives.

What are you praying for?

Do you see any signs of God responding to your request (no matter how little or big, what do you see)?

What do you need from God?

How are you serving God?

How are you giving back to God?

Does your trust level, align with your faith level, and your ask level?

How much do you trust God? (firm belief in the reliability of, strength of - can God do it, is God capable "Yes God can!")

How much faith do you have in God? (faith = complete trust or confidence in - will God do it "Yes God will!")

People of faith react to God's faithfulness by bringing more to be healed and touched by God. People of faith open the door to God so that others can get what they got. People of faith walk with God to where people are, they go to the people and make what they have available to them. This act of public faith moves others to act on faith. God shows folk what God will do not for those who God initially blesses but God does this so that others might be blessed. When others see what God is capable of it feeds their faith and starves their doubts.

Matthew 15:29-23

29 From there, Jesus went along Lake Galilee. Then he climbed a hill and sat down. **30** Large crowds came and brought many people who were crippled or

blind or lame or unable to talk. They placed them, and many others, in front of Jesus, and he healed them all. **31 *Everyone was amazed at what they saw and heard.*** People who had never spoken could now speak. The lame were healed, the crippled could walk, and the blind were able to see. ***Everyone was praising the God of Israel.***

Our response to God's faithfulness is to bring others. To let God do for them what God has done for us. We have to tell the story. That is why you see us always telling what God has done at Wheat Street. That is why we are on all the social media platforms. We want the world to know what God is doing. We want them to know what God is doing for God will do for them. It is not about us, but it is about a God who is faithful and still in the miracle working business.