

*Pastor David Anglada' Message Outline
Grace Lutheran Church and School
Malverne, New York*

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WWTCWD?/WWYD? Matthew 15:

“What Would the Canaanite Woman Do?”

“What Would you do?”

11th Sunday after Pentecost

August 16, 2020

[10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." 12 Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" 13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." 15 But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." 16 Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. 19 For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile." 21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting 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 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food 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, woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Let us pray: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer, Calm us now, O Lord, into a quietness that heals and listens. Open wounded hearts to the balm of your Word. Speak to us in clear tones so that we might feel our spirits leap for joy and skip with hope as your resurrection witnesses. Amen.

My good sisters and brothers, I am glad you are here today, in the house of the Lord especially since, **Lucia Joy Capowski**, who will be baptized today, making her a member of the universal Church of Christ.

My good sisters and brothers, what would you do if you are your daughter or son are ill, and no medical doctor wants to help you and address you with an unpleasant name, for example; calls you a dog.

What would you do if you observe a person being mistreated emotionally or physically?

How would you do if you see a person being discriminated against because of the color of their skin? Or what if the person is being discriminated against because of their gender or their sexual orientation?

What would you do if you notice a person not receiving adequate service in local business because of their accent or nationality?

In our gospel text, an unnamed desperate woman, who is a gentile, meaning non-Jewish she was Canaanite, the gospel of Mark chapter 7 calls her a Syrophenician or Greek woman.

Most likely, she was raised in the region of Lebanon, who has a daughter who is ill, and she is willing to do anything to find a cure for her daughter.

The woman's daughter had an unclean spirit, an evil spirit invaded and possessed this young girl. The gospel text does not inform us what happens to her due to her diabolical possession, **but we do know** that her mother is troubled and concerned for her well-being. That is why she goes to Jesus, searching for help. Unfortunately, this young girl is a victim of demonic possession.

Most likely, the mother of this young girl suffered emotionally, witnessing the condition of her daughter, and at times she broke down crying because her beloved daughter is suffering by an evil spirit that takes control of her life.

This Gentile, the woman, finds a way to connect with Jesus'. She came and knelt before Jesus as well as shouting "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; a demon torments my daughter.

But Jesus did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." The disciples became the gatekeepers. I wonder if Jesus was surprised when he encounters her. Perhaps he said do I know you, why are you seeking me?

This woman is full of hope, most likely **she heard** of Jesus multiplying bread and fish and the feeding of and other miracles that Jesus performed. Jesus addressed her with directness and discourtesy: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Wow, this is entirely out of character from the compassionate healing Jesus from the Gospels.

Most likely, she said to herself, this visit with Jesus the healer is heading in the wrong direction also why is Jesus not helping me?

At times I wonder how she felt?

The conversation continued with Jesus; she addressed our blessed Lord with directness and with determination.

She responded by saying, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. She accepts Jesus' verbal abuse.

However, she is relentless, pleaded her case to Jesus the healer. Her response was not fainthearted. The Canaanite woman could have been most discouraged by Jesus' treatment.

Let us take a moment and experience the pain of humiliation. But at the same time let us experience the courage of her conviction.

She was determined to shift Jesus's cultural and religious biases. She helped shift Jesus' cultural and religious paradigms. Jesus accepted her persuasion and complimented her. ***Her daughter is healed from invading evil spirits.***

I just love the courage of this woman who went face to face with Jesus, the man not the divine Jesus and helped shaped his global cultural acceptance of all.

This Syrophoenician woman understood that she was living in a broken world; she knew that system was broken, furthermore, that she lived in a world of discrimination as well as cultural biases.

I posed the following inquiry, have you ever asked yourself why Jesus was so rude or Impolite:

1. Some have suggested that Jesus was tired or exhausted and did not want to be bothered.
2. Others have said that he was just testing her faith
3. Our temptation is to prettify Jesus by saying he was testing the woman's faith.

I prefer to read our gospel text with honesty and integrity. Along with suggesting that in this passage, we glimpse the fully human Jesus, limited by his own culture, with its own religious, traditional biases against women that caused injustice against a woman and her daughter.

Could it be that Jesus was stuck within own his cultural captivity? Jesus, in his human maleness, got it wrong. **Just like some men do** even though we are committed to justice but, at times, we can be unjust to women.

However, this feisty tenacious, persistent woman who dared to argue with Jesus, shifted his cultural and understanding of God's global acceptance of all. That God has eradicated the racial divided.

What is so amazing about this gospel text is, how a marginalized woman's voice can speak truth to power unapologetically, she was able to teach something new to Jesus coupled with Jesus embracing her multicultural teachings with an open heart. Moreover, to listen and learn.

Having said this, Matthew the gospel writer is also reminding the Early Church and us ***to be persistent with our petitions before God. Not to be discouraged or to stop asking God for our petitions. A word of caution it is not what I want but, I what we need.***

At times I wonder "***What Would The Canaanite Woman Do***" if she were to look at our broken world we live in today: the coronavirus, people who are who food-insecure, people with inadequate health care, income inequality, racism, discrimination, gender discrimination, ageism, bigotry against people who are different from us, bullying, cultural basis, racial profiling, as well as denying medical attention to a child?

She would lift her voices and refuse to accept the status quo. She would shout to our good Lord and say, please bring healing to us? She would also lift her voice and pray that baby Lucia would live in a world without deadly viruses, racism, discrimination, gender discrimination, bullying, cultural basis, racial profiling, as well as misogyny.

WWYD

what would you do?

What would you say?

At times we are silent when we observe wrongdoing in our society; our silence makes us complicit with the victimizers. May God help us lift our voices for justice and equality.

Let us take a moment for personal reflection:

Let us pray:

Even in the midst of apparent tragedy, God's love gathers up the fragments of our lives.
Even in the midst of apparent rejection, God's faithfulness rescues us from despair.
Even when we feel abandoned and alone, God calls us to find strength for the journey.
Even in the midst of strife, God calls us to look beyond our differences and live together in unity.