

## **“Crumbs” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 12**

### **August 16, 2026**

- I. **Matthew 15:21-28** – Previously read
- II. **Jesus is out of bounds today**...maybe in more ways than one...
  - a. Our story begins with Jesus traveling from His home area around the Sea of Galilee about 50 or 60 miles north and west to the area around Tyre and Sidon...
    - i. Tyre and Sidon are cities that sit right on the Mediterranean coast, and they are not part of the Jewish life and culture.
    - ii. In the Old Testament, these cities are mentioned many times, but were home to people from the Canaanite background, who worshiped Baal (in fact, Jezebel was a princess from Sidon).
      - 1. In our culture today, it's normal to go on trips to explore different cultures and areas, but for Jews in the time of Jesus, it was not normal to go to these places unless it was for business or an important purpose.
      - 2. Jews didn't interact much with people outside the Jewish faith, because Gentile foods, homes, or religious practices could potentially make a Jewish person ceremonially unclean.
    - iii. It's interesting that right before this reading, Jesus has been debating with Pharisees, who traveled from Jerusalem, 60-70 miles or so, all the way to the Sea of Galilee to tell Jesus He is wrong to eat without washing first.
      - 1. He calls them “blind guides” who will lead people into a pit. (Matthew 15:14)
      - 2. These especially harsh words from Jesus might have gotten Him in trouble before it was time, as He had more work to carry out before His death on the cross, so it says He withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.
      - 3. He probably knew the Pharisees and scribes wouldn't follow Him out there, but also... as God would have it, He had to connect to and help a Gentile woman.
  - b. Anyone who lived in this area might be considered the least likely to receive help from a Jewish person... or be saved by God for that matter.
    - i. They were descendants of the Canaanites, the people God specifically warned Israel not to marry (Genesis 24:3), and were also the cause of many of God's children to run after other gods.
    - ii. Yet Jesus makes a special trip to this place...
  - c. I don't know about you, but I find this story kind of strange and unlike Jesus as I understand Him.
    - i. He starts out by ignoring her cries for help... when in many other places it says that He has compassion on people who are hurting.

- ii. Then, He compares her to a dog... a move that has most of us scratching our heads.
- d. Yet, the point is that she didn't take Jesus' words as an insult but pointed out that even leftovers... even crumbs were more than enough for her.
- III. **The sad truth is some people are outside the kingdom and grace of God.**
  - a. Even though God gave His Son to save the whole world, many people reject that gift and place themselves outside.
  - b. See, the whole world is saved and blessed by the promises of God as He acted through the children of Israel.
    - i. The story of God's people and His promise to them goes all the way back to Genesis 12 when He called Abram to leave his home country and He would make a great nation out his family.
    - ii. From that point forward, God rescued and walked with His people, even though they rejected Him time and time again.
    - iii. Paul explains this in our Epistle lesson today, saying that the Jews rejected God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ.
    - iv. Yet, from the Jews came who? Jesus, the Son of David, the one who would save the whole world.
  - c. Jesus came for the lost sheep of Israel first, because they are the children of the promise and God's chosen people.
    - i. Even Paul says at the beginning of Romans, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the [Gentile]. (Romans 1:16)
    - ii. We should not be put off by the fact that the promises of God are fulfilled through the Jewish people, because that is how God chose to carry out His plan of salvation.
  - d. This Canaanite woman was not put off by that fact either.
    - i. She approaches the disciples and Jesus and won't let up... she begs and begs for Jesus to help her.
    - ii. Even when Jesus doesn't help, it seems the disciples say, "Jesus, just help this lady and send her on her way!! She's driving us crazy!"
    - iii. And He responds to them, most likely within her range of hearing – I was sent to gather up the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mt 15:24)
  - e. Somehow, somewhere, this Canaanite woman heard of Jesus and His power, because she called Him by the right names, "Lord," and "Son of David" – which means Jesus is the promised Savior and Messiah.
    - i. And when He rebuffs her by telling His disciples He didn't come for her, she doesn't get huffy and walk away, she knows the only place for help and healing is right in front of her... so she says, "Lord, help me..."
  - f. Then Jesus doubles down!
    - i. It's not right to take the bread meant for Israel and give it to the dogs.

- ii. Ouch... that cannot be the loving Savior we all know, as He compares people outside the Jewish faith...to dogs?
- iii. She is not deterred one bit as she says, sure God's plan of salvation comes through the Jews, but even the crumbs that fall off the table are more enough for me!
- iv. You see, I would not get so caught up in the animal as to what is happening with the food....even the crumbs offer life.
- v. The abundance of God's grace means that it overflows from the table

IV. **This account of Jesus might make you uncomfortable.**

- a. We have always heard that Jesus loves us and came into the world to save us, but here it seems to say that we are getting God's leftovers.
- b. But there's more to the story than that – sure He's clearly pointing to the Jews as God's plan of salvation – yet, He is also pushing for a statement of faith.
  - i. He may not have pressed so hard on another person – but in this case, Jesus is bringing out a true confession of faith.
  - ii. It's like the rich young ruler, as Jesus tells Him to give up everything and follow Him... the young man leaves in sadness – Jesus saw the man's heart and knew he had to give up his wealth to trust in God.
  - iii. This woman confessed Jesus as the Son of David... was she just saying that to get His help?
    - 1. Jesus pressed her a bit, and she did not stop... she cried out in faith...
    - 2. Help me!
  - iv. Can you relate? Ever been so upset and troubled that you cried out to God, "Help me!!"?
    - 1. That's faith.

V. **God has gone to the region** of Tyre and Sidon in your heart... to rescue you.

- a. We were enemy territory and enemies of God, and He certainly could have left us to our own devices, but the Good Shepherd even goes out to the sheep of other flocks... to people like you and me.
- b. God's chosen people rejected Him, but the abundance of God is so big, it pours out over all people in the form of saving grace.
- c. As hard as it is to hear, we have nothing good to offer and we are only beggars – in fact, these are some of Martin Luther's last words, "We are beggars, this is true."
- d. But you know what? I'm okay with being a beggar and receiving God's grace because that is enough for me.
- e. I would argue that we are doubly blessed because God not only chose to overlook our heritage (we are not Jewish) but He went the extra mile to search us out and bring us into His kingdom by grace...
  - i. Not only did He accept us, He searched us out and found us...

- f. Praise be to God that He has helped each of us with forgiveness, life, and salvation – as He has not only gathered the outcasts of Israel, He has gathered yet others (Isa. 56:8) like you and me. Amen.