

8/14/11

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY** Almighty and everlasting Father, You give Your children many blessings even though we are undeserving. Help us to know that you love all people in Jesus and help us to share your love with others, those far and near; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON** Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

*(The Lord will gather people from other lands to His people.)*

1 This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. 2 Blessed is the man who does this, the man who holds it fast, who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil."

6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant--7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." 8 The Sovereign LORD declares-- he who gathers the exiles of Israel: "I will gather still others to them besides those already gathered."

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** Matthew 15:21-28 *(A Canaanite woman's prayer is answered.)*

21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession." 23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us." 24 He answered, "**I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.**"

25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. 26 He replied, "**It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.**" 27 "**Yes, Lord,**" she said, "**but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.**"

28 Then Jesus answered, "**Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.**" And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

21 Kai. evxelqw.n evkei/qen o` Vlhsou/j avnecw,rhsen eivj ta. me,rh Tu,rou kai. Sidw/nojÅ

And having gone out from there, Jesus departed into the region of Tyre and Sidon.

22 kai. ivdou. gunh. Cananai,a avpo. tw/n o`ri,wn evkei,nwn evxelqou/sa e;krazen le,gousa\ evle,hso,n me( ku,rie ui` o.j Dau,i,d\ h` quga,thr mou kakw/j daimoni,zetaiÅ

And behold a Canaanite woman from that district, having come she cried saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, son of David. My daughter is badly possessed by demons.”

23 o` de. ouvq avpekri,qh auvth/| lo,gonÅ kai. proselqo,ntej oi` maqhtai. auvtou/hvrw,toun auvto.n le,gontej\ avpo,luson auvth,n( o[ti kra,zei o;pisqen h`mw/nÅ

And he did not answer her a word, and His disciples came asking him saying, “Release / send away way her, because she cries after us.

24 o` de. avpokriqei.j ei=pen\ ouvq avpesta,lhn eiv mh. eivj ta. pro,bata ta. avpolwlo,ta oi;kou Vlsrah,IÅ

And having answered he said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 h` de. evlqou/sa proseku,nei auvtw/| le,gousa\ ku,rie( boh,qei moiÅ

And having come she fell at his feet / worshiped him saying, “Lord, help me.”

26 o` de. avpokriqei.j ei=pen\ ouvq e;stin kalo.n lalei/n to.n a;rton tw/n te,knwn kai. balei/n toi/j kunari,oijÅ

And he answered and said, “It is not good to take the bread from the children and cast to the dogs.”

27 h` de. ei=pen\ nai. ku,rie( kai. ga.r ta. kuna,ria evsqi,ei avpo. tw/n yici,wn tw/n pipto,ntwn avpo. th/j trape,zhj tw/n kuri,wn auvtw/nÅ

yici,wn crumbs

And she said, “Yes, Lord, for also the little dogs eat from the crumbs which fall from the tables of their master / lords.

28 to,te avpokriqei.j o` Vlhsou/j ei=pen auvth/|\ w= gu,nai( mega,lh sou h` pi,stij\ genhqh,tw soi w`j qe,leijÅ kai. iva,qh h` quga,thr auvth/j avpo. th/j w[raj evkei,nhjÅ

Then Jesus answered and said to her, “Woman, great is your faith. Let it be to you as you wish. And here daughter was healed from that hour.

**“Surprising Mercy for All People”**

**Matthew 15**

INTRO - In 1947 Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. But, he faced opposition, even on his own team. In Spring Training southern members of his team drew up a petition that said if Jackie played, they would strike. Other teams drew up similar petitions. Imagine how Jackie Robinson felt. The country was segregated. Opportunities were denied people because of their race throughout the country. He had already faced that by delayed entry into Officer Training School. There had been no black ball players since 1880, and now as it might happen members of his own team were opposed to him playing, simply because of his race. He had to feel rejected, even if wrongly so.

I. Have you ever felt unwanted or rejected? Maybe as a child you weren't chosen for a team, or were the last one chosen. Maybe you applied for a job and did not get it. Maybe you wanted to be part of a club or group but weren't chosen or weren't allowed. It is a lonely hurtful feeling to be rejected when you want the company or the friendship and possibly love of others.

A. Imagine how the woman felt in today's story.

1. Jesus was along the sea shore in Sidon because he was trying to get a break for a while, but people knew of Him, his teaching and healing, even here. This was not part of Israel, but part of a foreign country.
2. The lady had a daughter who was ill so the lady followed after Jesus calling loudly for help. Jesus did not answer and she kept calling.
3. Jesus disciples urged him to send her away, and so Jesus himself told the lady of his first purpose here. **"I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."**
4. Jesus' following words are even more puzzling, when she fell down at his feet and asked His help. **"It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."**

B. The woman had to feel rejected.

1. Rumors were Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. But, she knew she was a Gentile and not a Jew.
2. She knew that as a woman she had little standing.
3. And, she had to deal with the daily trials of a daughter she loved who was horribly sick.
4. Life was hard, and she seemed to have no hope or help.

C. The lady persisted, however. **27 "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."** She called Jesus Lord. She knew He was special, probably the Messiah. She knew He had healed. She trusted His compassion who had healed the unclean lepers, who had healed women and accepted the rejected sinners. So she continued, trusting Jesus was here first as the Messiah to the Jews, yes, but also for others. She continued trusting that Jesus would want to help her poor, affected daughter.

1. What are we told of Jesus? **28 Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.**
2. The lady had to deal with the barriers of the day, but God's love shone through in Jesus who responded to the lady's need and her faith.
3. In love, Jesus healed the young girl of the foreign woman with the loud behavior.

II. There are times we feel rejected unjustly, but there are times we know we deserve the rejection we receive, or at least the rejection we expect.

A. If you mistreat someone, you are not surprised when there are consequences.

1. Children, when you disrespect your parents, you know that you deserve to be called to account. You might be punished.

2. Adults, if you miss work without an excuse, or do your job poorly. You know you may end up in trouble at work, if not having lost your job.
- B. There is another kind of rejection we can and do expect. People can expect if not rejection, at least punishment from God.
1. When we believe that God created the world, and created us, and when we believe that God is holy, and calls us to holy living, we know our sin separates us from God.
  2. If there is one thing about which we are certain, it is that we do not always love God above everything and everyone else.
  3. Another fact we know about our behavior is that we have not always done to others what we want them to do to us.
  4. We have experienced sin. We know it exists. So, we have guilt, which is a kind of expectation of rejection.
- C. But, instead of us being rejected, God our heavenly Father sent his own son.
1. Isaiah says of Jesus, **3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.** Jesus, the promised suffering servant, was rejected for us, so that we could be healed.
  2. God sent Jesus from heaven to earth, to the cross. On the cross as he was suffering for the sins of the whole world, including us, Jesus cried out, **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** Jesus faced rejection, so we could be loved.

III. Remember, Jesus told the woman, **28 . . . "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.** When she was feeling rejected because of her daughter's illness, because of her nationality and her gender, Jesus still reached out and loved her, miraculously.

- A. When life mistreats you and you wonder if God still loves you, remember this woman.
- B. When you feel rejected because of your own actions, remember the love and forgiveness of Jesus who responded to the faith of this woman.
- C. Through life's greatest trials, God is there with his love, His help, his forgiveness, with Jesus. Don't accept rejection as a fact. Reach out to God who has already sent Jesus for you.

CONCLUSION - When the players on the Dodgers drew up the petition the team shortstop and captain, a man from Kentucky, Pee Wee Reese replied, "I'm not signing that, No way."

Then, in May of 1947 the fans in Cincinnati bombarded the second baseman with jeers and racist taunts from every corner of the stadium. In that moment when Jackie Robinson probably never felt more alone, he was embraced by the arm of Brooklyn's shortstop—Pee Wee Reese. Reese walked over to Robinson and put his hand on the black man's shoulder. "Pee Wee kind of sensed the sort of hopeless, dead feeling in me and came over and stood beside me for a while," "He didn't say a word but he looked over at the chaps who were yelling at me through him and just stared. He was standing by me, I could tell you that." The hecklers ceased their attack. "I will never forget it," Robinson said.

When you feel lonely, forsaken, rejected, remember there is someone standing beside you. In fact, He is standing in your place before God, because He took our place on the cross. When you feel overwhelmed by life's pain, or your failure, Jesus is standing with His arm around you with the same compassion that helped the woman. Trust His love. Go to Him for help!

Today there is someone who doesn't even know life's pain yet, or her sin, or loneliness. Unfortunately my grand daughter will know these things sometime in her life. But Jesus reaches down with the same love that he gave to the woman, he says, you are not alone, you are my child whom I love. God does not forsake us. We can surely go to Him trusting His love!