

12. Who are the “outsiders” in our own churches and communities—the people whom we might instinctively consider beyond the boundaries of God’s concern?
13. Are there times when Christians can become more concerned about protecting the boundaries of the church than extending God’s mercy?
14. Does Jesus change his mind in this encounter? If so, what would that mean for how we understand Jesus? If not, what do you think is happening in the conversation?
15. Could Jesus’ initial resistance be understood as a test of the woman’s faith, a reflection of his particular mission to Israel, a rhetorical exchange, or something else?
16. How does this story challenge a simple picture of Jesus as someone who always immediately says “yes” to everyone who asks?
17. What might it mean for us to approach Jesus with her combination of boldness, humility, and confidence?
18. If this passage is ultimately a story about God’s mercy crossing boundaries, what boundary might God be asking us to cross?

Family Bible Study

8/16/2026



Matthew 15:21-28 *Jesus heals the Canaanite's Daughter*

²² Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 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.” 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.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “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.

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- Who came to Jesus asking for help?
- What was wrong with the woman's daughter?
- What did the woman call Jesus?
- Did Jesus answer her right away? What did the disciples want Jesus to do?
- What did Jesus say about the children's food and the dogs? I wonder what that means...
- How did the woman answer Jesus?
- What did Jesus say about her faith?
- What happened to her daughter?
- Why do you think the woman kept asking Jesus for help even when he did not answer her right away? What does that teach us about not giving up when we pray?
- How do you think the woman felt when Jesus was silent? Have you ever felt that way when you prayed?
- Why do you think Jesus said that the woman had "great faith"?
- What do you think it means to have faith in Jesus?
- The disciples wanted Jesus to send the woman away. How do you think Jesus wants us to treat people who are different from us?
- Can you think of someone who might feel like an outsider at school or on a playground? What could you do to make that person feel welcome?
- Is there someone you have trouble being kind to? What could you do differently this week?
- What do you think Jesus wants us to learn from the woman who would not give up?

Questions for Adults

19. What strikes you most about this encounter between Jesus and the Canaanite woman?
20. What do you find surprising, uncomfortable, or difficult about Jesus' words and actions in this passage?
21. Why do you think Matthew identifies the woman specifically as a Canaanite? What might that detail have meant to Matthew's original audience? Who are the Canaanites?
22. The woman begins by calling Jesus "Lord" and "Son of David." What does her address of Jesus tell us about her faith?
23. Jesus initially "did not answer her at all," but told his followers, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." How does this statement fit with what we know about Jesus' ministry and with the Great Commission at the end of Matthew?
24. What do you make of Jesus' statement, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs"?
25. The woman does not argue with Jesus' characterization but responds, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." What is she doing with Jesus' own metaphor?
26. What does her response reveal about her persistence, humility, intelligence, or faith?
27. Jesus concludes, "Woman, great is your faith!" What exactly constitutes her "great faith"? How is it different from—or similar to—the faith of Jesus' Jewish disciples elsewhere in Matthew?
28. Is faith in this passage primarily about believing the right things, trusting Jesus, refusing to give up, or something else?
29. The woman is a Gentile (non-Jews) and therefore outside the immediate boundaries of Jesus' mission to Israel. Why might Matthew choose to place this story here?