

AWARENESS.SKILLS.KNOWLEDGE.

Intergenerational Women's Ministry

St. Matthew AME Church

Reverend Melvin E. Wilson, Pastor|Teacher

22 April 2023

This month provides an overview of how her

Spiritual Gifts

Personality (Presence/Perspective)

Experiences (Positions/Protection)

Cares/Passions

Interest

Abilities

Life Talents

contributes to her special God-given purpose; equipping her to **minister to all God's children.**

Page | 1



*“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly,
but rarely admit the changes it has gone
through to achieve that beauty.”*

Maya Angelou

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All Women of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer

Syro-Phoenician Woman, The Woman Who Begged As A Dog

Pages 224-226; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

Page | 2

AWARENESS

Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour. Matthew 15:25 (NIV)

Name Meaning

- She is an unnamed "woman of Canaan" (Matthew), "a Greek" (Mark).
- She is presented as a mother suffering unspeakable grief because of the incurable demoniac affliction of her daughter (also not named).
- She is a woman of resolute determination seeking relief of her child from the great Israelite Healer of whose fame she had heard about.

Her Region

- She was a "native or inhabitant of Phoenicia when it was part of the Roman province of Syria", in the region of Tyre and Sidon. They were worshippers of Baal.
- There was no love between Jews and the Phoenicians.
- Jesus was there to seek rest and fellowship with His disciples.

Her Request

- Petition: "Have mercy upon me." She, like us, was dependent upon the unfailing mercy of Him who is full of compassion.
- Recognition: "O Lord, Thou Son of God." She recognized the authority and deity of Him whose name was great in Israel and among the Gentiles.
- Statement: "My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil (unclean spirit)." Words were not wasted! When we have a need to present to Him just say it. He already knows all about them before they are stated.

Her Repulse

- The pitying Savior, who refused no call for mercy, was silent. "He answered her not a word." Why? This was out of character. Usually, He would respond immediately.

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- By not responding immediately His silence allowed the disciples, who were bigoted, deeply nationalistic Jews who despised all Gentiles, to (1) share in the silence in Mark and (2) in Matthew use it as an opportunity to urge Him to send her away.
- Jesus ignored her cry for help but because of what we know about His love and compassion, we cannot believe that He meant to completely ignore her. Was He trying to test her, a non-Jew, a Gentile, faith? What would you have done in this situation? Walked away? Gave up?

Page | 3

Her Resoluteness

- Driven by a pressing need, this woman of Canaan was determined not to take NO for an answer. She knew Christ was able to cure her daughter.
- Jesus expressing His mission saying, “I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” could have discouraged her heart.
- She was not crushed even when He pushed her persistence further by saying “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” You do know that the gentle and loving Jesus never meant to characterize the woman as a dog, right?
- She begged grace and in the passion of her sorrow and resolve she would not let Him go until He blessed her. What word/s come to mind when you think of this?

Her Reward

- “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” She did not ask for the whole loaf of bread or even a slice (not taking anything away from Israel), only the crumbs falling to the floor.
- Jesus saw the earnestness and faith of this determined woman who dared to persist, and His coolness made the final favor sweeter, “Woman you have great faith! Your request is granted.”
- Her conquering faith exhibited the three ascending degrees of all true faith¹ – opinion (may feel one way in the beginning but change later), belief (based upon emotion or experience), conviction (action that inspire us to push through obstacles). Christ intended for her to go through this process for a beneficial, loving purpose.

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-levels-beliefs-michael-johnston/>

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- The trial resulted in triumph for the woman had turned a seeming rebuff/rebuke into an argument in her favor, she broke through apparent hindrances even from Jesus Himself.
- Her faith had prevailed, and the disciples of Christ began to learn that divine pity or compassion was larger than racial boundaries and that their Master's salvation was a fountain for all.
- Of note is that the miracle took place remotely, by remote control. Distance makes no difference to Omnipotence. He spoke and it was done.

Page | 4

Take Aways

- She was on a mission!
- She placed her trust in Christ.
- She was not discouraged or distracted.
- She did not give up, turn around or turn away.
- We must continue to seek God and take our burdens to Him.
- We must have strong faith in Jesus.

BLESSINGS OVERFLOW!!!

May 27, 2023

Lot's Wife

Pages 175-176; Genesis 19:15-26; Luke 17:29-33

June 24, 2023

Rebekah, Rebecca, The Woman Whose Favoritism Brought Sorrow

Pages 134-140; Genesis 22:23; 24; 25:20-28; 26:6-35; 27; 28:5; 29:12; 35:8; 49:31; Romans 9:6-16

July- August Summer Break

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SKILL

Step Twenty-Six: Ask With Confidence

LESSONS FROM THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN

Page | 5

Confidence In General

Confidence is the feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something: firm trust. In general confidence means having a positive self-image and healthy sense of self-worth. In practice, this can mean feeling at ease in social situations, being unafraid of public speaking (like when called to pray), or having positive thoughts about one's life and personality. To be confident means to thoroughly know and embrace who you are and to be comfortable with your strengths and weaknesses alike.

To gain confidence consider the following from the Masterclass: be kind to yourself; step outside your comfort zone; make a list of your positive qualities (consider also listing your negative, "maybe I can improve upon" qualities); practice self-assured body language; realize you are not alone; set goals for yourself; take it one day at a time; and talk to yourself.²

Confidence Biblically

What is confidence in the Bible? An example of this kind of confidence in the Bible is 1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."

The Bible tells us that our confidence comes from God. When we trust in Him, we can overcome our fears and doubts. We can be confident that He will never leave us or forsake us. Sometimes mistakes lead to a loss of confidence in ourselves. But according to the Bible, everyone makes mistakes. However, what we know about the Syrophenician woman was that her confidence came through in her humility, persistence, emotional intellect and trust in someone who she had not seen but heard about.

² <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-be-more-confident>

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Consider this:

- Jesus looks for authenticity (she did not grow up knowing about God but went on what she heard about Jesus; not a fake Christian)
- Humility and healing go hand in hand (she knelt before Jesus, an enemy of her people).
- God expects perseverance (her faith was fueled by her burden to save her daughter; she was not distracted by what others were saying about her, how they were looking at her).
- God heals through the faith of others (she started out the conversation calling Him “Son of David” and at the end of the conversation He was “Lord”).

Page | 6

Confidence With Awareness

One way to grow our confidence in faith and in God is to know where we place our confidence.³ Is our faith in the temporary or the eternal?

- Control/Circumstances (Proverbs 28:26) – We think if our circumstances change, then we'll be confident (health, finances, dating, marriage, job).
- Money (1 Timothy 6:17) – We think more money will bring confidence.
- Achievement (Proverbs 11:7) We think accomplishing goals in work or life will bring confidence.
- People (Proverbs 29:25, Proverbs 25:19) – We think people liking us or respecting us will bring confidence.
- Pleasure (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11) – We think feeling pleasure will give us confidence.

One writer said the woman “pushed” Jesus into realizing that His teaching, and His saving love, was for all people, not just the Jews. She “called” Jesus to an expanded ministry, with people who were once strangers, even enemies.

³ <https://deepspirituality.com/confidence-in-god/>

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Confidence Moving Forward

What can we learn from Mark 7:24-30? The fact that Jesus reached out to this Gentile woman fundamentally shows that Jesus comes for the broken, the sick, the outsider, and the sinner. He wants us to increase our faith in His saving help. This also shows that God's love and mercy knows no bounds. Sometimes God keeps us waiting to deepen our.

Page | 7

The application to draw from the confidence of the Syrophenician woman about persistence is that we must not lose heart when answers are delayed but pray without ceasing, (1 Thessalonians 5:17) because it's persistence that releases the answers.⁴ In other words, "a delay does not mean a denial".

Lastly, when we are close to God, we have the confidence to share our lives, give generously, and sacrifice to help others.

When we believe God has our back, and we allow His word to guide us, there is nothing that can stop us from loving to the fullness.

So, when you get tired, remember – never give up! Consider whose lives around you would be positively impacted if you intently decided to do whatever it takes to develop confidence, strengthen confidence in God and pursued it.

“Ask (with confidence), and it will be given to you;
Seek (with confidence), and you will find; knock (with confidence),
and the door will be opened to you.”

Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

⁴ <https://www.virtualpreacher.org/sermon-notes/syrophenician-woman/>

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KNOWLEDGE

Dear (insert your name) _____;

Today I engaged in a conversation about a woman with an enormous need. She looked beyond her faults, sins, distractions of bigotry, with humility and spiritual maturity, and went in faith to the only One who could fulfill that need. I want her confidence Father so You can use me and my relationship with Jesus to be an Ambassador of Christ. I must be aware of tools Satan will use to keep me from fully serving Him in mind, spirit and heart. Because of what I heard, shared, learned, witnessed, thought about, I want to remember most,



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Blessings Overflow,

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