

Matthew 15:21–28 | Kevin Stiles

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[0:00] All right, I think I'm powered up. Good to be with you this morning. It's been a while since I've shared. Well, let's see, I must have been Teddy and Kent speaking lately. I'm not as tall as I thought it was.

There we go, much better. So, a year and a half ago, I said, you know what, take me off the schedule for a while, maybe two years ago. And I did a couple messages. I did one at the beginning of January on missions for several weeks.

I did Easter a year ago, and I just felt like I just had so much going on. This summer, Jill and I were, half the time we were at camps in various places.

So, we slept more times in a camp bed than at home, and shared about 40 messages. But then I saw my name back on the schedule. Thanks, Teddy. I looked at the passage. I said, oh, yeah, that's a good one to get back into here in Matthew.

And so, I'm looking forward to that this morning. Sharing with you from the book of Matthew. If you've got your Bibles, if you turn to Matthew 15, we're going to be looking at verses 21 to 28.

[1:25] We've had quite a time going through the book of Matthew together. Before we get started, though, I want to, you know, a man of God, someone that I spoke probably eight to ten weeks the last ten years with at kids' camp up in Minnesota, Phil Kleinman.

I don't know if anybody else has met him here. I know Brad knows his son very well. But he passed away. So, we were supposed to speak together in August or July, and about a month before, I get a message. Phil will not be with us. He's asked to have heart surgery. He's having a problem.

Could you pull up that first one? Yeah, there is my good friend Phil and myself at camp, the picture taken of him. And I thought, you know what? Yes, he's always talked about a bad heart.

That was one of his object lessons, a bad heart. And he was born with a heart defect. And they said, oh, probably while you're young, you can handle it. When you're older, though, you're going to have to do something about it.

Well, he had surgery. And I'm thinking next year we'll get to speak together again. It's always, it is a joy speaking with Phil and with his wife as she comes and supports him.

[2:49] But Phil didn't get better. And he passed away about a month ago. We were at his burial. They had a funeral service up in Fargo, North Dakota.

And we didn't get to go to that. But then they had his burial service down in Omaha, Nebraska. We, Joe and I got to take the day off and go up there a couple of Mondays ago. And just unbelievable. The place was packed in Fargo. The place was packed down at the funeral. You couldn't hardly get into the funeral home.

The burial site, you know, everybody has to stand and there's several hundred people there at the funeral. It was just a really blessed service that his brother gave.

His brother had come to Christ. Up at the funeral up in Fargo, his oldest brother, he got saved first. He came to Christ and he did the message there.

And so Brother Phil just had a gift in telling stories. The artwork, unbelievable museum type work that he would do.

[3:59] And yet the Lord said, it's time to go home. And so I brought some books that were written of him and his wife, Tammy, called Fishers of Men.

I've got about eight copies here. They're \$10. If you want to pay for it, you can. If you don't, you don't have to. If you want to take it and read it, you feel free to do that. If you want to take it and read it and give it to somebody else, that's the best.

Fishers of Men tells the story of how Phil and Tammy came to know the Lord and then how their life was dedicated to telling others about Jesus Christ.

And the reason I really bring this book up is if you know somebody that says, you know what, I don't want to have anything to do with God because if you had the life I had growing up, you wouldn't want anything to do with the Lord.

I got the book for you. You start reading this about Tammy and what her life was like and Phil's, you'd say, I had it good.

[5:01] I had it good. Wow. What the Lord saved them from and used them for his work. So I'm going to miss them. It was great to work with. Like I said, feel free.

They're up here. You can do with it whatever you'd like. So first eight that come or first seven, you're welcome to it. So we're in Matthew 15. We're going to look at verses 21 to 28.

Let's first ask the Lord's blessing. Father, we come to you this morning. We thank you for this day.

Thanks for the rain last night. Lord, we see what when you provide the water in such a short time, you can make dry things come to life.

And we spend so much money on sprinklers and and other things to water our ground. And but you overnight can bring things back to life.

And you do that also with us, Lord. You can take a person whose heart is dead. You can take a person who's headed for the lake of fire and you can bring life because you are the life.

[6:11] You are the way, the truth and the life. And as we look at this passage this morning, help us to see something new. May we be encouraged by a woman here, a Gentile woman.

And what you had to say about her. Amen. Amen. Amen. So if you're if you're with me. I've titled this Jesus tells us what great faith looks like.

Jesus tells us what great faith looks like. And before I read the passage, I got a look, got some A or B quiz for you.

And you don't even have to say it out loud. I've got 10 situations and I want you to say great faith or small faith. Great faith or small faith.

So let's get right to it. Number one, David when going up against Goliath. Little David going up against big Goliath.

[7:15] Great faith or small faith? OK. Yeah. Yeah. I think so, too. I don't see. Let's see. Where's little Jakey?

Is he here? Or Benji. Can you imagine going up against Teddy? Mr. Teddy in a battle? Oh, you'd have to have some great faith. Number two, Jesus's mother at the wedding.

She says she's told we're out of wine. How are we going to enjoy this wedding? And she calls Jesus and he says, woman, my hour's not yet come.

And what'd she say? Do what he says. Great faith or little faith? Yeah, not quite as many of you said it that time.

I say great faith. How about number three? Maybe this is you or me. Lord, I will give you more if I see that it doesn't hurt my stock portfolio.

[8:11] Lord, I'm going to give you more money if it doesn't hurt my stock portfolio. Great faith or little faith? Great faith. All right.

I'll take that then. Number four. How about Daniel when faced with the situation of whether to pray to God or to the king?

If he prays to God, he's thrown to the lions. Great faith. How about the next one? Number five. His friends. The three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, would their face with bowing to God or bowing to Nebuchadnezzar's statue?

And if not bowing to the statue, fiery furnace. Great faith or little faith? Great faith. Yeah. Yeah.

They said, even if he doesn't save us, we will not bow down to your statue. Number six. Again, maybe this is you. Someone who says, if I win a million dollars, I would donate half to God.

[9:22] Great faith or little faith? Little faith. I'll take the other half, though. Number seven. Again, you or me. I will give to God after I

have enough for what I need to pay all my bills.

Great faith or little faith? Okay. Just a couple more. How about number eight? That woman in the New Testament who gave those two copper pennies.

The woman who gave it all. Great faith or little faith? Great faith. Great faith, yeah. Two left.

Thomas. After Jesus was risen, they said, Thomas, he's alive.

And what's Thomas say? Unless I see him and I can put my fingers into the nail prints, I will not believe. Great faith or little faith? Lack of faith.

Unbelief. Unbelief. Number ten. Maybe this is you or me. I will jump out of a plane with no parachute and God will save me.

[10:32] Great faith, little faith, or stupid faith? Yes. So we're looking at a story here this morning of faith.

What Jesus tells us what great faith looks like. And so let's read the passage here. Starting with verse 21. It says, And Jesus went away from there, withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman came out from that region and began to cry out, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. But he did not answer her a word.

And his disciples came to him and kept asking him, saying, Send her away, for she is shouting out after us. But he answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But she came and began to bow down before him, saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. But she said, Yes, Lord.

[11:34] But even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said to her, Oh, woman, your faith is great.

Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once. Wow. Great faith or little faith. If we could bring up that other picture here, if we go start with verse 1, it said, Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Here I have a picture of, Oh, my pointer is not with me. It's in my Bible case. But if you, where we're at is if you go near the top, that's the Sea of Galilee, the bigger of the, yeah, thanks, the bigger one of the lakes up there, Sea of Galilee.

And on the left side, we see that Jesus came over to Gennesaret. And he was there last week when Kent was sharing about the, hey, thanks.

You are so good to me. How do we work? Okay. So he came over and, you must have been playing with this.

[12:49] The battery's so good. Oh, there we go. I can even see this now. So he's over in Gennesaret. And he's been doing a work over there.

And then he didn't have some kind things to say last week. Now it says here in the first verse that he withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. So that's, he's going northwest into the area of Phoenicia and Tyre.

And if I would have had the whole map and you pull it, there it is. There's Sidon above it. That region's about 35 miles away from where Jesus was at in Gennesaret. Jesus travels 35 miles to meet a Gentile woman's need.

Great need. He comes to that region. Just for her, I believe. He goes into territory beyond Israel. Wow, that's our Lord. He'll go to places that may not be friendly. He'll go to places where people haven't heard of him. In this fact, we're going to see they have heard of him.

[14:02] So Tyre and Sidon, they're cities in Lebanon. They're close to the Israeli border. They're prosperous cities. Wealthy. And yet, we would see that they have a great spiritual hunger in that region.

Because they've heard of what Jesus has done. Let's see what I mean by that. If you want to turn to Luke 6, verses 17 to 18, it says here, And Jesus descended with them and stood on a level place.

And there was a great multitude of his disciples and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him.

So they heard him. They heard what Jesus had to say. They couldn't believe it. Who talks like this? This man.

And to be healed of their diseases and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. They were being cured.

[15:08] So they had a spiritual hunger. They wanted to come and hear about this man. And this woman probably has heard about these stories.

And so she's thinking, I need help. Where do I go? I'm going to see Jesus. He's coming into town. He's here. I need him. I am going to see him. And my daughter is hurting. So this woman is a, let's note some things about her.

She is a Canaanite woman. What's that mean? That means she's not Jewish. She's not Jewish.

And therefore, she's probably not liked by the Jews very much.

Because she's a woman. She's a Canaanite. And if you were to look in Mark, she's what's called a Syrophenician woman. So that's this region here.

[16:09] Phoenicia. Right there. And it was probably a place where Israel was given. It's by the Lord, but they never went up and conquered it. And so that's where this lady is from.

And look what it says in verse 32. She came out from that region and began to cry out. What's it? She's crying out.

She's not coming up. Where's Jesus? Anybody see Jesus? No. Jesus! She's crying out. She, this woman is hurting.

I don't know if anybody here this morning is hurting. You know, my sister's having trouble in the hospital. It's rough right now. I'm talking to my brother-in-law, Scott, last night.

He was like he was ready to cry on the phone. He can't bear to see what pain she's in right now.

And that's what this woman was.

[17:09] She was in pain, not physical pain. But look what she says. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.

Have mercy on me. She doesn't come and say, Lord, do this for me. Lord, I deserve this. Lord, I've been a good mother.

And I want this done. She said, have mercy. I need your help. Her daughter, look at how it's noted. Cruelly demon-possessed.

I don't know if I've ever been around a demon-possessed person, but this one says cruelly demon-possessed. I imagine the one that we read about where it said they would continually, they would put chains on him, but they could not hold that man in.

And he lived out in the wild and he would break whatever they put on him. That's what I kind of picture is cruelly demon-possessed. And that's what she says of her daughter. And what mother doesn't love her daughter?

[18:19] No matter what condition. You know, I've shared this story here. Last night, I texted Tammy and I said, we're praying for you. Joe and I are praying for you.

And we're praying for your daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth wasn't at the wedding, at the funeral. How's a daughter going to go to the funeral of her father? But she's in, she is so far away from the Lord.

And she said, Kevin, pray for her. She needs help. She needs God's mercy. And here's, she has a love for her daughter.

And that's how this woman was here. She had a love for her daughter who was cruelly demon-possessed. So what's it say here?

She must have recognized who this Jesus is. Because what's she say? Oh Lord, Son of David.

Wow, that's, that's the Messiah.

[19:27] Jesus coming from the line of David. this woman recognizes who he is. Isn't that amazing?

In all, in Jerusalem, there's so many of Jesus' fellow countrymen that have no idea who he is. And yet this woman from the north, not even a Jew, recognizes who he is.

Son of David, have mercy on me. If you remember a little earlier this year, we were in Matthew 9 and there were two blind men.

And what did they say in verse 27 of chapter 9? As Jesus passed on from there, two men followed him crying out and saying, have mercy on us, Son of David.

Have mercy. They knew who could heal them. This woman here knows who can heal her daughter. She knows that nobody around can heal her. They're at the end of the rope as it might be said.

[20:36] And even as calling him the son of David, recognize she has no claims to Christ. She's not Jewish. She has no claims to him.

And so she cries out and look how Jesus responds. Verse 23, he did not answer her a word. What? Jesus? My Jesus? Your Jesus? It says he did not answer even a word. That doesn't seem like Jesus to me. Nicodemus came.

He had questions. Jesus didn't ignore him. He told him the way of salvation. Jesus' mother at the wedding, she had a problem. Jesus listened.

Time after time. And yet here, it says, he didn't answer her even a word. He didn't say, I'll get back to you in a moment. Hey, go wait in the waiting room.

[21:37] I've got patience here. It says he didn't even answer a single word. Listen to how Spurgeon put it. He said, the word, capital W, Jesus, spoke not a word.

The word spoke not a word. And that was so unlike him. He who was always so ready with responses to the cry of grief had no response for her.

Did Jesus even love her? Was he not interested in this woman? Was he only interested in certain people? Of course he was.

And Jesus knew exactly what was happening. He knew what was in the heart of the woman. He knew he was going to heal her. And yet, he's letting, in front of his disciples, in front of the people, he is bringing out an incredible thing about faith.

Because what does God love? Faith. Faith. That's what he wants from you. Let me ask you, have you, even right now, have you ever felt like God's not listening?

[22:46] God's not even hearing me. I've been pouring out my soul to him. And I feel like God's not listening. I think if we're all honest, we'd all say, yeah, I've had that.

And that's where this woman could have been. And look at it in that same verse about the disciples. Look what they say. After he didn't answer them, they came to him and they kept asking Jesus. They didn't ask him one time. It says they kept asking him, send her away for she's shouting out after us. These guys don't like it. Jesus' disciples said, we do not like this woman yelling after us. They were saying, send her away. And what they meant by this is, give her what she wants. She's going to keep coming. Give her what she wants. Heal her daughter and send her away. We don't have time for this. In fact, she's annoying us with her shouting. We don't like it. We don't like it. You know what?

[23:54] This is the last we hear about the disciples in this story here. They don't like her doing what she's doing. They want her to be sent away.

They don't think God. God, have you ever been, have you been a time like that in your life when somebody needs to hear about the Lord and you're like, no, no.

I've got more important things than that. You don't need to hear him. That's what the disciples are saying. I want to read a little excerpt from a, so I've talked about these here.

These are heroes of the faith, missionaries. And this one here is called Count Zinzendorf from the 1700s. And he was a believer. He was also a wealthy.

He was like over a township, a region. And yet he didn't want that. He was interested in the gospel. And there's one day he's talking to a slave from St. Thomas Island.

[25:02] His name is Anthony. And he wanted to know, Anthony, how did you come to faith in Christ? And so let me just read a couple paragraphs.

We're at dinner. Anthony's a slave, or was a slave. Anthony looked surprised that one of the dinner guests would ask him questions of a personal nature. But then his eyes lit up as he answered the question.

I first heard of Christ when I was on the ship coming to Europe. And Count Zinzendorf, what do you mean first heard of, Ludwig asked? St. Thomas has been ruled by European countries for many years.

Surely you must have heard of Jesus Christ before then. Anthony shook his head. You don't understand. You don't understand. And then looking worried, he added, I didn't mean to insult you. You did not, Ludwig assured him. We are two brothers in Christ having a conversation. Feel free to share your observations. Tell me, how is it that you could live on a Christian island and not know

about Jesus Christ?

[26:02] Perhaps a story will help you understand, sir. When I was a child, a slave who was a coach driver drove his master to church. While the service was going on inside, the slave was expected to wait with the carriage.

But this slave became curious. The church doors were closed, so he crept up to them, put his ear to the door to hear what was being said inside. Someone saw him and reported him to his master. Do you know what happened to him next? The slave owner took out a knife, cut off his ears right there on the church steps.

He didn't want him to hear. Oh, he was in service, he was hearing all about the Lord, but he didn't want his own slave. They were fearful. Oh, if they would hear too much, they would rebel. And here we have the disciples here, send her away. don't deal with her, or deal with her, and be done. Worry about us.

[27:07] We're the ones. Oh, how sad that is. And so they asked him to do this. They kept asking him to do this. Start 24.

What's Jesus' second response? His ministry. He said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He says, this isn't my ministry.

What do you mean do this to her? I was sent to the lost sheep of Israel. John 1, 12, it says, the Lord came to his own, verse 11, and the people received him not.

He came to his own. He came to the Jews, and the Jews didn't recognize him. And in that glorious day, when he's on the cross, the veil is rent in half, and it says, it's open to all.

There's no difference between Jew and Greek. Isn't that interesting, though? He says, that's not my ministry, guys. I came to tell Jews.

[28:14] Remember, when he's on the cross, what's the sign say above him? Jesus, King of the Jews. Didn't say, Jesus, King of the Canaanite woman.

Jesus, King of the Jews. Hey, this isn't what I came from. Now it seems like, Lord, do you have any interest in this woman? Are you going to help her out?

Now it's, do you have any compassion on this woman? Look at the hurt she's at. A couple weeks ago, Frank had the feeding of the 5,000 in chapter 14.

And look at it, it says in verse 14, when Jesus went ashore, he saw the great multitude, and he felt compassion for them. We just saw he had such compassion on people who are hungry.

And now it seems like he has no compassion on a woman that is in absolute deep agony. And it's her daughter who is cruelly demon possessed.

[29:13] That doesn't seem very compassionate. This woman's desperate. She's crying out. She believes Jesus can heal her daughter. And yet Jesus is silent, apparently.

And then he says he has a ministry to others. Wow. That doesn't seem like my Jesus. That doesn't seem like the one we preach about to the world.

But Jesus knows exactly what's in the heart of the woman. He knows what he's going to do. And he's bringing it out. I think he's going to show his disciples.

No, I've got compassion. Do you? You don't even want to deal with her. You don't want to listen to her anymore. You don't like it. And so here's this woman.

Look at her move now. Her next move in verse 25. She came and began to bow down before him. She comes to worship at his feet.

[30:13] A Canaanite woman, Gentile, son of David, son of David, help me.

She bows down saying, Lord, help me. Who's a person that would come to you, fall down and say, I need help, only to hear Jesus' next response.

response. This is his third response. Notice though what the woman says. And Spurgeon says this, I urge you who seek the conversion of others to follow this woman's example.

What did she pray? Notice what she prayed. She didn't say, Lord, help my daughter, but Lord, help me. a woman that is so distressed because of what her daughter's going through.

She feels the agony, the hurting. And here's Jesus' response. He says, it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dog.

[31:30] This woman's taken one, two, three, just coming at her. She's no good. She doesn't deserve it. Now he calls me a dog?

Jesus calls me a dog? You know, the term dog for the Jews was the most derogatory term they could use towards a foreigner. In the Hebrew, I found out there's no curse words. But you call him a dog, that's like cursing. You Gentile dog, meaning you don't even deserve to be in my presence.

But this one here, there's another word. It means like family pet, puppy dog, puppy dog. And the Lord says, you know what? It's not proper to take the food that belongs to the kids and give it to the puppies. That's for them. That's for them.

[32:33] And so the woman, I think, what could she have done right now? She could have left and said, I forget what people have said about Jesus. He had no interest in me. He didn't listen to me.

He berates me. He calls me a dog. In human, in my thinking, you're thinking maybe, she might have been right to say, don't dare call me a dog.

I may be Gentile. I may be hated by the Jews. I may be a woman, but I'm not a dog. What's her response? This woman right now has three strikes against her.

And so they said, she's a Gentile. She's a woman. And the third thing is, Jesus' companions, their apostles, they don't like her. She's struck out.

It's hopeless. It's hopeless. I want to ask you today, does it ever feel hopeless to you? Does it ever feel like, God, where are you right now? I need you.

[33:39] Have mercy on me. Help me. What's she do instead of running? She says, yes, Lord. Or another word is, it's true, Lord.

I am a woman. I am a Gentile. I don't deserve the bread for the children. But look what she says. Even the little dogs, or the little puppies, feed on the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Wow. Lord, I'm not asking for the bread. I'm just asking for a little crumb, just a little piece. I'm just asking, I'm hurting that much.

And look what Jesus, who knew all from the beginning, and he's pulled all this out, and I can imagine the disciple, oh my goodness, look what's happened. She's not even running from him. She's not berating him. She agrees with him. And look what Jesus says, oh woman, your faith is great. Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed at once.

[34:47] Wow. This is Jesus' final response. He showed his interest in her. He showed that he was listening. He shows that he acknowledges what has been happening and where she's at.

He shows his love and his compassion in such a great way. And he grants her her petition. Let me share a couple things on her faith.

He says, great is your faith. he never said that to anybody else. He never said that to anybody else directly.

You might be thinking, well the centurion whose slave was almost to die and then he came up and said, Jesus, don't even come to my house. What did Jesus said to the crowd?

It says, he said to the others, I'm not seeing such great faith in all of Israel. But here's the woman Jesus speaks to her. Woman, your faith is great.

[35:52] Woman, it is great. And everybody here has seen it right here. You have stuck with it to the very end and you're getting help from me.

Her faith was great. Even compared to her virtues. Notice, Jesus did not say, you're humble, woman. You've been persistent.

You're nice. You care so much about your daughter. The only thing he says is, your faith is great. Your faith is great. Her faith is great because it was unlikely.

No one would expect that kind of faith from a Gentile to trust Jesus that much. It was great because she worshipped Jesus before she even got the answer from him.

her faith was great because it was tested so severely. What I mean by that, it's hard to think of a greater test than a demon-possessed child.

[36:57] But her faith was also tried by the seeming indifference or coldness of Jesus. And yet, her faith was great because it would not give up.

I'll ask the musicians to come up here and I want to contrast her here in this last minute. Let's contrast her faith with others.

In Matthew 13, Jesus goes to revisit Nazareth. And what's he say? They were scolding him. They didn't believe him. And he says, your lack of faith, which is unbelief.

And they said he didn't do more miracles there. How about his disciples after his resurrection in Mark 16? Jesus says to him, where's your faith?

It's unbelief. His own disciples, the Jewish people, Matthew 6, he said, oh, you of little faith. This woman, your faith is great.

[38:04] Peter on the water, hey, wow, there's Jesus, I'm walking to, wow, oh, no. He sees the storm and he starts, and Jesus said, Peter, oh, you of little faith.

And yet this Canaanite woman, you have great faith. I want to end with this. I got a question for you. How would you, Jesus, describe your faith right now?

Would you describe it as a lack of faith or unbelief? or little faith? Or would Jesus say, you have great faith? Let me ask you, are you, right now, are you hurting?

I'm sure even in a small congregation such as this, there's got to be hurts right now. Are you dealing with tough problems? Do you need help? Do what the woman did.

Cry out, Lord, have mercy. I need help. I need help. And last, I would say, if you're here today and you don't know Jesus as your Savior, you can come to him.

[39:14] Jesus, I need you. Jesus, I'm a sinner. Think about those two men that the Lord talks about. And the first one says, look at me, I do this, I tithe, I do this, I do that, I do that.

Big deal. And then the next man always says, have mercy for I am a sinner. I said he went home justified.

Jesus is looking for faith. Faith in what he has done on the cross to save us. He paid the price that you and I couldn't.

Today, if you need him, cry out. Father, thanks for this lesson. It was great for me to study it. And I need you.

Help me, Lord. Have mercy on me. Lord, thanks for saving me for going to the cross. Amen.