

3. REFLECTION – FAITH

“Women, great is your faith.....”

Everything was against the Canaanite woman, she was gentile citizen of Tyre or Sidon, probably worshipped Herod, a Canaanite. BUT, she is a mother of a troubled child, “Have mercy on me...” she cried out. She got on her knees before Jesus “Lord help me” and did not give up. Jesus didn’t answer her pleas for some time.



What do you think Jesus eventually recognised the most in the Canaanite mother?

NORTHERN BEACHES UNITING CHURCH

Sunday 16 August 2020

GREAT IS YOUR FAITH



Matthew 15: 10-28

Things That Defile

¹⁰ Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, “Listen and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.” ¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?” ¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.^[a] And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.” ¹⁶ Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

The Canaanite Woman’s Faith

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² 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.” ²³ 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.” ²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” ²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” ²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

1. REFLECTION - BOUNDARIES

Today, in this reading, Jesus takes us to ‘unclean’ territory. This reading brings us to a Canaanite woman who violates boundaries,

boundaries set up because of ethnicity, heritage, religion, gender, and even what is considered demon possession.



What boundaries might we identify that Jesus would CROSS today (the ‘no go’ areas) of even our faith or religion?

2. REFLECTION – GOD’S DINNER TABLE

In first-century Jewish religious thinking, what was touched or eaten dominated the culture. Whilst the religious community were preoccupied with what would defile and hurt the body, Jesus was more concerned about what comes out of our bodies that can defile and hurt the world.

Purity or religious tradition is not about worshipping tradition uncritically: “It is not what does into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth that defiles”



This is a prophetic statement by Jesus who refused to allow “tradition” to be used as a “holy reason” for claiming that God’s grace is reserved for a particular few.

Today, who in our world might feel like this women – excluded, or not welcome, even from our religion?