

A Canaanite Woman



You and Your Household (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

In my previous talks this week I've explained that the salvation which God offers to humanity is a Household Salvation. The key text, Acts 16:31:

> "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

The scriptural key to this salvation of the household is the father. To the father is committed the privilege of leading his whole family into the salvation of God. But with that privilege goes the responsibility of disciplining and instructing them, of setting them an example and of praying for them.

We've looked at the examples of five fathers who brought their families into this household salvation: the Philippian jailer, Noah, Joshua, Abraham and Job. We've also looked at the example of a woman without a husband, Rahab of Jericho, whose faith brought salvation to her entire household: father, mother, brothers, sisters and "all who belonged to her."

Taken together these examples teach two important lessons. First, in the normal scriptural order for the family, established by God, the responsibility for bringing the family into salvation rests upon the father. Second, however, the story of Rahab shows us that, even where a family is not in divine order, God has set no limits to faith which works by love. I think I would like to repeat that last phrase, God has set no limits to faith which works by love.

Some of you that listen to me may be desperate. You may feel, "We haven't met the conditions. My husband (or whoever it may be) isn't fulfilling his responsibility." Well,let me just give you that extra little blessing, even when things are not the way they should be, God has set no limits to faith which works by love.

Today we're going to look at the example of another remarkable woman, in the New Testament this time, a woman whose faith prevailed for the needs of her family. She's never actually named in the New Testament, she's merely called a Canaanite woman. Her story and her encounter with Jesus is related in Matthew 15:21-28. It begins this way:

> "Leaving that place, [and I want to point out, that place was somewhere in the area of the Sea of Galilee] Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. [Which of course is on the sea coast in the northwest corner in the land of Israel.] 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.' 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.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.' The woman came and knelt before him. 'Lord, help me!' she said. He replied, 'It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.' 'Yes, Lord,' she said, 'but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' Then Jesus answered, 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour."

Where this translation says, "your request is granted," it doesn't really do complete justice. Jesus said, "whatever you wish is yours." How would you like to hear that from the lips of the Lord? "Whatever you wish is yours." Where was her husband? We don't know. Maybe she didn't have a husband. What did she have. She had that kind of faith that just would not give up and would not take "no" for an answer.

I think I need to explain the attitude of Jesus to this woman, because it appears that He was rather harsh and ungracious, which isn't really the truth. You see, Israel, the Jewish people, were separated out from all other nations by their covenant with the Lord, the covenant that the Lord had made with them in their days with Moses. And in fulfillment of His covenant commitment to Israel, the Lord did two things for them. First of all He sent them their promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He sent Jesus to them first before all other nations. Second, also in fulfillment of the covenant, which is stated in Exodus 15:26, Jesus healed all their sick. He never turned away a single Jewish person who was sick and came to Him for healing, because He was fulfilling God's covenant commitment to Israel made through Moses.

But God did not have any such covenant relationship with the other nations. Therefore, they had no claim on God, because it was the covenant of God that gave Israel the right to approach God the way they did. Without a covenant relationship with God, all nations are "unclean." They are not holy. They don't belong. And the type of the unclean animal that did not belong was the dog. And so that's why Jesus said, "Healing is the children's bread. It belongs to the Israelites because of my Father's covenant with them. I'm obligated to fulfill the covenant, but other nations are dogs and you don't take the bread of the children and give it to the dogs."

So what he was saying was very clear. It was right in line with the principles of God. However, she was so, I would have to say she was so smart. She gave Him one of the best answers he ever got from anybody. "Lord," she said, "I agree with everything you say. I'm just a dog. I'm unclean. I know that. But I have this problem, Lord, and you're the only one that can solve my problem and after all, I don't need a slice of bread. All I need is just one little crumb. One little crumb is sufficient to get the demon out of my daughter." No wonder Jesus said to her, "Woman, great is your faith. Have it the way you want."

What a beautiful story. You see, once again it's the same beautiful principle as it was with Rahab. God has set no limits to faith which works by love.

Now I want to look a little more closely at certain elements in the faith of this Canaanite woman. She is such a challenge to me personally. I see in her faith and the way she related to Jesus three elements which are so important. First of all, desperation. She was desperate. Desperate people will do things that other people won't. I've been many years in this ministry of deliverance, bringing deliverance to people from evil spirits, and I've coined this phrase: "Deliverance is for the desperate." Some people come to me and I see that they aren't really desperate. And I have little confidence that they can be helped. Sometimes I say to them, "You're not desperate. Come back when you are." You see, there's a kind of divine desperation which is very important.

The second element in this woman's faith that attracts me is her humility. Jesus said, "You're just a dog." And if you think that's insulting in the Western World, you need to be in the Middle East and see how they think about dogs. It's far more insulting in the Middle East. She could have got offended and said, "Well, I'm just as good as anybody else." But she didn't. She said, "Lord, it's true. I am just a dog. But all I'm wanting is a crumb." That's humility. And do you know what I have noticed in the New Testament? Great faith is always united with great humility.

And then the third thing that appeals to me about this woman is her insight into the nature of Jesus. Outwardly Jesus was stern. He didn't respond. He seemed to keep her at a distance. But I believe she had a kind of divine intuition that looked through the disguise of His apparent indifference. And she saw His real heart attitude. And I would like to leave this thought with you, God is pleased when we penetrate the

disguise of His apparent indifference. Sometimes God puts on an indifferent countenence. He doesn't seem to be interested, He doesn't seem to be hearing our prayers. But He's pleased when we do like that Canaanite woman and penetrate the disguise of His apparent indifference.

And then one final comment on this story because it is very vivid to me. I pointed out that Jesus started from the Sea of Galilee. He walked all the way across Palestine to the northwest corner, ministered to that one woman, there's no record that He ministered to any other person in that situation, and He went back again. So He took what was probably at least a four day journey, to and fro, to minister to that one woman. Isn't that amazing? What caused Him to do that? My answer is this, the tug of a desperate, believing soul. It drew Him all the way across Palestine to minister to her one need.

You see, I've learned in my own ministry, sometimes I find myself in the strangest places. I think, "How did I ever get here. What is there for me to do here." And then I'll find that there was one believing person who cried out to God and God heard that cry and chose to send me as an answer. So bear that in mind. There's a tug of a desperate believing soul that can draw God into a situation.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. Next week I'll be sharing with you on another inspiring theme from the Word of God.

My special offer this week is my book The Marriage Covenant. The basis of a happy family is a happy marriage. My book places in your hand the key to these two blessings: a happy marriage that will produce a happy home.

Also, my complete series of talks this week on You and Your Household is available in a single, carefully edited cassette.

Stay tuned for details.

Radio Program

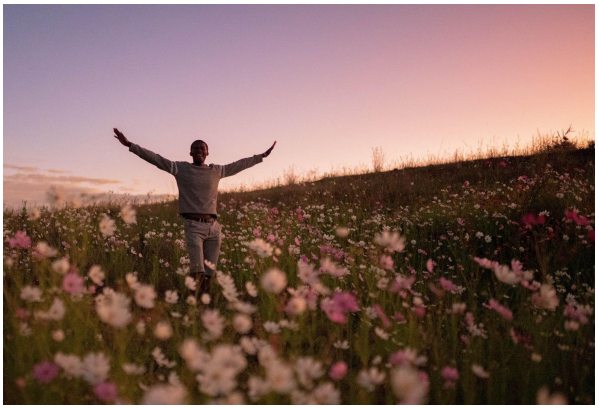
Transcript: TS-R097-105-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



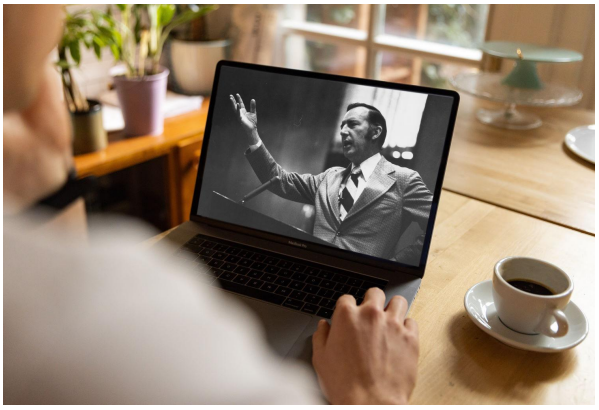
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries