



### *The Syrophenician Woman—Obstacles to a Miracle*

Mark 7:24-30 + Matthew 15:21-28

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*Objective Sentence:* Everyone can receive a miracle dealing with the obstacles that hinder God's power from working in our lives.

*Introduction:* Have you ever had things fall apart and not work out the way you expected. In 1977 Nancy and I were driving an old green Rambler that was so ugly the roaches would not even ride in it. I was in school full time and worked 40 hours a week. Nancy worked full time but we were still struggling trying to get through school. We decided to buy a new car so we purchased a brand new Vette—Chevette that is—the third worse car that Chevolet had ever made. The Corvair, the Vega and the Chevette were flops. We lost our credit and thirteen hundred dollars in the deal. How could God have let me do such a thing?

Stories: One Cheek Wagner      Lake Placid

- #1      ***We must learn to deal with our attitude towards God***      (Matt. 15:23 *But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word* )
- A.      ***Pastor Dan:*** *If we cling to a set of preconceived expectations of God and forget that He is one leading us—not us leading Him—we are headed for big trouble spiritually (Phil. 3:10).*
- 1.      **Christ answered her not a word** (Mk 7:25 *a woman ... came and fell at his feet ... she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter* + Matt. 15:23 *Jesus gave her no reply*)

- a. *Pastor Dan:* God is not always going to do things like we think He should and in the way we think He should do them—He never has and never will! God does what is best for us—not what makes things easy for us.
- b. Jesus hid in the house and Mrs. Syro calls him out. Jesus hid from the crowds for four reasons: rest, personal instruction to His disciples, protection and personal prayer time. Jesus walked past Mrs. Syro without saying a word to her.
- c. **Matt. 16:21-23** *Pastor Dan:* Peter received a great revelation of Jesus Christ but when the Lord revealed to Him the plan of salvation which included the death of Christ—Peter said no to God, rebuked the Lord and tried to pull Christ towards what he wanted instead of what God willed.
- d. *Pastor Dan:* We often attempt to force God to do our will instead of allowing Him to do His will in our lives. He sees the big picture and we must trust what He sees instead of what we see.
- e. *E.M. Bounds:* Prayer is the contest, trial and victory of faith—a victory not secured from an enemy, but from Him who tries our faith that he may enlarge it. He tests our strength to make us stronger. Few things give such life and permanent vigor to the soul as a long, exhaustive season of importunate prayer.
- f. **2 Chron. 31:32** God withdrew from Hezekiah, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.
- e. *Adoniram Judson:* I am persuaded that we are all more deficient in a spirit of prayer than in any other grace. God loves persistent prayer so much that he will not give us much blessing without it. And the reason that he loves such prayer is that he loves us and knows that it is a necessary preparation for our receiving the richest blessings that He is waiting and longing to bestow.

**2. Sometimes God just does not make sense (Heb. 11:6)**

- a. **Pro. 3:5-10** lean not unto your own understanding in the instances where God does things that don't make sense to our way of thinking
- b. Job lost his family, wealth, health and his friends
- c. **Jeremiah 12:1-6** Jeremiah says, "... it just isn't fair...."
- d. **Deuteronomy 29:29; Psalm 73:1-3,16-17**

**#2. We must learn to deal with attitude towards others**

(**Matt. 15:23** *His disciples urged him to send her away—they said—she is bothering us with all her begging*)

- A. *Pastor Dan:* Some people are great in dealing with their attitude towards God but they allow the devil to slither into their attitude towards other people. I can still remember one time in particular when my wife and I got into a big argument on the way to church. When song service started she lifted her hands, worshipped the Lord and pretended that she had not been acting totally inappropriately on the way to church. I stood there all clammy saying to her, "You're a hypocrite. How can you act as you did on the way to church and stand here praising God. She responded, "I'm not mad at God I'm mad at you."

- 1. **Problems are what we see when we take our eyes off the goal—stay focused on Christ (John Maxwell)**

- a. **Pastor Dan:** Jesus had passed her by and now the disciples saw her as a nuisance and wanted to get rid of her. She knew exactly what was happening as the twelve gathered around to Christ to get the final word on silencing her. Miss Syro focused on Christ, realizing that the answer to her problem lay in His power alone, she refused to allow rejection to stand in her way of a miracle.
- b. **2 Corinthians 3:18 T. L. Osborn:** You will not have a faith problem if you know what to look at.
- c. **E. Stanley Jones:** You are made into the image of that on which you habitually concentrate your attention. Whatever gets your attention gets you. Our faith is God-centered, not you-centered [not centered on others]. So look away from your sins and diseases; look away from yourself—look away to God.
- d. **Matt. 15:26 E.M. Bounds:** The Syrophenician woman... was stopped in her approaches to Christ by the information that He would not see anyone. She was denied His presence, and then in His presence was treated with seeming indifference, with the chill of silence and unconcern. **Pastor Dan:** Even when Christ did speak to her He was not very encouraging. He said I AM NOT SENT TO YOU (Matt. 15:26)
- d. **Rick Warren:** I've discovered when I'm walking humbly before the Lord and just being who I am—being honest and depending upon God—I'm immune to most insults. Almost nothing can hurt me.
- e. **A.W. Tozer:** The man who has struggled to purify himself and has had nothing but repeated failures will experience real relief when he stops tinkering with his soul and looks away from himself to the perfect One.
2. **Follow after Christ (Matthew 6:33)**
- a. **Pastor Dan:** Miss Syrophenician followed Christ and did not allow herself to become distracted from her miracle by becoming entangled in an argument with those who were insensitive to her needs.
- b. **A. W. Tozer:** All the time we are pursuing Him we are already in His hand.
- c. **Isaiah 55:6-11**
- #3. **We must learn to deal with our attitudes towards us (Matt. 15:26 It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.)**
- A. **Pastor Dan:** Jesus informed Mrs. Syrophenician that it was not proper to give bread, the blessings, power and miracles of God, to pagan idol worshippers who lacked the ability to appreciate the source from which they were derived. She responded to Jesus saying, "Lord, even dogs eat from the crumbs which fall from their master's table." In other words she said, "Lord, it is impossible to appreciate what you have unless I can have a little taste of it for myself. Just give me a little crumb and I'll forever humble myself and eat what you provide for me. If you feed me, a stray, I will never go away. (Ps. 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him)
- B. **In order for you to properly appreciate the source of miracles you must have a correct attitude towards yourself. There are two improper attitudes that people often harbor towards themselves that must be resisted and overcome through faith in Christ (James**

**1:9; 1 Cor. 12:15,21 ). If your thinking isn't right than your faith won't be right. (Isaiah 26:3)**

1. **If we think less of ourselves than we ought to think (Ro. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation ... )**
  - a. *Pastor Dan:* The sin of inadequacy or inferiority enters our lives when we think less of ourselves than we ought to think. Inferiority promotes doubt and hinders faith in our lives.
  - b. **Romans 12:3 Think right about ourselves.**
  - c. **1 Jn. 3:1-4** Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God
  - d. **John 3:16-18**
  - e. *William Makepeace Thackeray; 1811-1863:* The world is a looking-glass and gives back to every man the reflection of his own face. Frown at it, and it in turn will look sourly at you; laugh at it, and with it, and it is a jolly, kind companion.
  - f. *W. Clement Stone:* There is very little difference in people, but that little difference makes a big difference. The little difference is attitude. The big difference is whether it is positive or negative
  - g. ***The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius:* A man's life is what his thoughts make of it."**
  
2. **If we think more of ourselves than we ought to think (Pro. 16:18 Pride goes before destruction and haughtiness before a fall)**
  - a. **1 Peter 5:5-8**
  - b. *E. Stanley Jones:* **You are neither a worm nor a wonder—you are just a bundle of fine possibilities, if developed. You don't belong either to groveling in the dust or to soaring in the clouds; but you belong to the earth, with your feet on it, and walking straight into tasks that you can do.**
  - c. **Psalms 149:4; Proverbs 22:4**
  - d. *Pastor Dan:* We overcome the tendency of thinking of ourselves more than we should think of ourselves by involving ourselves, through loving service, in the lives of those who are less fortunate than us.
  - e. ***Warren Dalton:* With the right attitude, all the problems in the world will not make you a failure. With the wrong mental attitude, all the help in the world will not make you a success**
  - f. **Jn. 15:4-7** If you abide in me ... my words abide in you

*Closing and Invitation:* Story of Little Miss Lindsey P.

Christ sought a wholehearted commitment of faith in God from her. Laying somewhere between that which happens to us, and our response to what happens to us, is our ability to make things better or worse by the way we choose to deal with them. Choice is everything and this Gentile chose the right way. Our choices will determine the good or bad effect from the things that happen to us in life. Good choices will make even the bad things, in the long run, to turn out good and bad choices in the long run will cause even the good things that happen to us in life turn out to be bad. Choice is everything.