

Matthew 15:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Analysis

Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table (Ναί, κύριε· καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν, Nai, kyrie; kai gar ta kynaria esthiei apo tōn psichiōn tōn piptontōn apo tēs trapezēs tōn kyriōn autōn)—she accepted Christ's categories ('Truth, Lord') without offense, then used his own metaphor to appeal for mercy. She didn't need the full blessing (the 'bread'), only crumbs from Jesus's abundance.

Her response is theological genius: acknowledging Israel's priority without disputing it, recognizing that even overflow from Israel's Messiah suffices for Gentile need. She demonstrated profound humility (accepting 'dog' status), sharp wit (turning Jesus's analogy in her favor), and unshakeable faith (believing even 'crumbs' from Christ could heal). Jesus immediately declared 'O woman, great is thy faith' (v. 28) and granted her request.

Historical Context

This exchange occurred in the region of Tyre and Sidon (v. 21), Gentile territory northwest of Galilee. Jesus had withdrawn there temporarily (v. 21), likely for rest and privacy. Yet even in Gentile lands, he encountered faith exceeding what he found in Israel. Her response became a pattern for Gentile inclusion: accepting Israel's historical priority while claiming grace that transcends ethnic boundaries. Paul later systematized this theology in Romans 9-11.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does the woman's acceptance of Jesus's difficult words without taking offense demonstrate spiritual maturity you can emulate?
2. What does her confidence that even 'crumbs' from Jesus are sufficient reveal about the abundance of his grace and power?
3. How did this Gentile woman's 'great faith' expose the 'little faith' of Jesus's own disciples and the religious leaders of Israel?

Interlinear Text

τῶν δὲ εἶπεν Ναί κυρίων καὶ γὰρ τῶν κυνάρια
which And she said Truth Lord yet which the dogs
G3588 G1161 G2036 G3483 G2962 G2532 G1063 G3588 G2952

ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῶν
eat from which the crumbs which fall from which
G2068 G575 G3588 G5589 G3588 G4098 G575 G3588

τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν
table which Lord G846
G5132 G3588 G2962

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 3:8 (Parallel theme): Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

Luke 16:21 (Parallel theme): And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Romans 10:12 (References Lord): For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

Romans 3:29 (Parallel theme): Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

Matthew 5:45 (Parallel theme): That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 8:8 (References Lord): The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

Luke 18:13 (Parallel theme): And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Romans 3:4 (Truth): God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Genesis 32:10 (Truth): I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Ezekiel 16:63 (References Lord): That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord GOD.