



“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Mark 7:30 "And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having departed."

Recently I was in Phoenix with the Monte Vista congregation. Great church. Amazing shepherds. Powerful preacher. Loving and encouraging people. If you are ever in the Phoenix area, you want to make this church one of your visits. While with this church, I was teaching some morning classes from the life of Jesus. Our Lord was busy. He was focused and on a mission, always.

Our passage today comes from one of those studies. It is about the Syrophenician woman who came to Jesus. Her daughter was severely demon possessed. She calls Jesus, "Son of David." She begs Jesus to help her. The disciples, in typical fashion, want Jesus to send her away. She was bothering them. Jesus never said a word. She persists. She bows. She pleads, "Help me." Jesus tells her that He came for Israel and one doesn't give food first to the dogs. He was not calling her names, insulting her or being mean. She never takes it that way. She understood what the Lord was saying. Many want to go to the original language and describe the type of dog that Jesus was referring to. I think that is missing the point. One doesn't cook a meal and when everyone is seated at the table, the first to eat are the dogs. One cooks for the family. The dogs get the leftovers. We understand this. She understood this. She didn't want the meal. All she needed was crumbs. The Lord's crumbs were enough to help her daughter.

That impressed Jesus. Her faith, being a Gentile, was greater than what He had seen even among His disciples. The Lord tells this woman that the demon has left. Now, Jesus never saw the girl. He didn't have to. His power transcends distance. He didn't have to look at the child first. He knew.

Our verse tells us, "And going back to her home..." She left. She didn't know if the child was cured other than what Jesus had said. Yet, that was all that she needed. Jesus said the demon was gone, and this woman knew it was. Faith. Faith that Jesus could. And, faith that Jesus did. She went home with the assurance of Jesus.

And, so it is with us.

(OVER)

How do you know you are forgiven? It's not a feeling, like being in love. It's not a sensation. It's not an expression upon your face, 'you just look saved.' No, it's none of those things. How do we know? Just like this Gentile mother. Jesus said so. She left Jesus knowing that when she got home, her daughter would be cured. She knew. Jesus promised. Jesus keeps His word. Jesus doesn't tell us things just to make us feel good. He doesn't say things just to get us to leave Him alone. We are forgiven because the Scriptures show that.

How do you know that you are going to Heaven? This is harder for many of us. We want to go to Heaven. We hope we can make it to Heaven, but there is that element of uncertainty. Paul knew. He knew that there was a crown awaiting him. Not only did he know that, but he knew that crown would be awaiting others as well. How do you know Heaven is yours? Perfect attendance at worship? Nope. Got the books of the Bible memorized? Nope. Give a lot? Nope. Been a pretty good person? Nope. It's just the same as that mother heading home knowing the demon was now out of her daughter. It is by faith. God's grace is what saves us. Grace alone? Grace without us having to do a thing? That would mean everyone is saved. The Bible doesn't teach that. Being a disciple of Jesus puts us at the ownership of our faith. We must obey the Lord, walk with Him, and grow, share and serve. Yet, even after all of that, it is God that saves. It is God's amazing grace that we need. How do you know? The Bible tells me so.

How do you know that God loves you? That seems simple, the Bible says so. However, for many, their life is filled with trouble, misery, drama and trials. They pray but they receive no immediate answer. Others seem to be sailing smoothly through life, but not them. It's a roller coaster—always. Constantly. Up, down. Twisting this way and then that way. And, in all of this, thoughts begin to cross their minds. Does God really love me? If He did, why is my life a mess? The Psalmist in Ps 73 wondered about this. His foot nearly slipped. He looked around and those who had no respect for God were doing better than he was. Things sure seemed upside down in his world. But he came into the sanctuary and there he learned some lessons. Yes, God loves you. The length and quality of your life is no reflection of God's love. We know, just as that Gentile mother knew, by faith.

Sometimes we want more than just faith. That's all that she had. We want a tangible assurance that we can hold in our hands. We want something visible. We want more than a promise. We want more than faith. And, right there, is often the problem. It's a faith issue. Trust God. Trust Him. He knows what He is doing. He is always right.

She went know knowing. She went home believing. Jesus said, and that was enough.

How about you? Do you trust His words? Are you walking in confidence, hope and joy or uncertainty, fear and doubt. Hold on to God's promises. Cling to God's hand. Someday we are out of this place, and we will be where we have always wanted to be, home with God.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
