

**Great is Your Faith!**

*A Missionary Commentary on the  
Sunday Readings*

**Sunday Readings**

Isaiah 56:1, 6-7

Psalms 67:2-3, 5, 6+8

Romans 11:13-15, 29-32

Matthew 15:21-28

[USCCB link to the Sunday Readings](#)

Jesus and his disciples are on mission and headed toward Tyre and Sidon when a Canaanite woman cries out, “Have pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is tormented by a demon.” Jesus says nothing. The disciples ask Jesus to send her away “for she keeps calling out after us.” Jesus ignores the irritation, prejudice, of the disciples and engages her, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” She comes closer to Jesus, does him homage, and simply says, “Lord, help me.” Jesus replies, “It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.” “Please, Lord,” she responds, “for even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters.” Then Jesus exclaims, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” Her daughter is healed.

Jesus teaches his disciples – and teaches us – what mission is all about. Mission proclaims the Kingdom of God, heals and feeds over 5,000 people, and re-envisioning what makes a person “unclean.” Those who lived with the story of Jesus, as told by Matthew, would have noticed the contrast between “the little faith” of Peter who faltered walking on water (Matt 14:31) and the “great faith” of the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:28). The woman “did him homage” before Jesus healed her daughter, but the disciples did him homage after he walked on water and saved Peter. She draws closer to Jesus and surrenders any pretense or station. The disciples wanted Jesus to send her away.

Jesus told the parable of a man who found a treasure hidden in a field. Jesus found a treasure in the “great faith” of the Canaanite woman on the road toward Tyre and Sidon. He made sure his disciples saw it as well.

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## **Notes on the Sunday Readings**

### **First Reading**

The prophet Isaiah clearly envisions a future when “foreigners” will join with Israel on God’s holy mountain and will enjoy the same salvation, justice, acceptance, and joy.

### **Psalm**

The psalmist prays that “all people” will praise the Lord, that we will make the Lord’s way known, that we will see how God guides all nations, and that all peoples will praise God.

### **Second Reading**

Saint Paul wrote during a time of great religious hostility. Both Gentiles and Jews were “delivered to disobedience” so God can have mercy on all because God’s gifts are irrevocable.

### **Gospel**

St. Matthew, like St. Mark, tells the story of the Canaanite woman. In St. Matthew’s version, there is more of an exchange between Jesus and the woman, and the disciples are more involved. A better translation might be “puppies” for “dogs.” In St. Mark’s Gospel, her daughter is at home but, in Matthew, her daughter could be with her, and Jesus proclaims, “Great is your faith!”

*Notes and commentary by Don McCrabb, D. Min  
US Catholic Mission Association Executive Director,.*

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