



Repentance for our shameful excuses and attempts to justify our sins, and faith which trusts His Word of solace that forgiveness of sins comes through Christ alone! No parents of any age or time can ever say they faithfully abided by the exhortation in Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” So when the parent of adult children sees their children wandering from the faith, the first thing that should do is drive them to repentance. For when in the humility of penitence we beseech the Father with our urgent pleas to save us and our children, we are candidates for the Gospel. God can say, “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28). We come to Jesus in meekness, trusting that He remembers His mercy! Here God can say, “I give you springs of living water in Holy Baptism. I give you the medicine of immortality in the Lord’s Supper. I give you My Word that is good for both body and soul unto life everlasting.” John 6:51, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.”

So in repentance and faith, we come back to our Canaanite woman. She remained persistent. First, she was ignored. The second time, Jesus told her, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” In other words, “Sorry, I didn’t come to help people like you”, which makes us feel really uncomfortable. How could Jesus seem to show such partiality? That can’t be it – God shows no favoritism. Romans 2:11, “God shows no partiality.” Jesus is testing her faith. Faith perseveres in trials. Proverbs 24:16, “For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity.” In our Epistle reading we confess along with the Apostle Paul, “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup> and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup> and hope does not put us to shame.”

This Canaanite woman had character. She persevered in this trial. She insisted the Lord have mercy! She held onto hope that Jesus would help her, for God remembers His mercy! The third time, in utter humility she “came and knelt before Him saying, ‘Lord, help me’” (v. 25). And Jesus answered, “Is it not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (v. 26). This statement refers to the family order. The house of Israel are the people to whom Christ first came. The dogs, that is, the Gentiles – all non-Israelites – were not a part of the immediate family as it were. And yet she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

In the humility of faith, this woman acknowledged her “place at the table.” She confessed that even the crumbs off the Master’s table are better than scraps in the street. Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire!” And her daughter was healed instantly (v. 28).

The Lord remembers His mercy. If you’re ever tempted to believe that you’ve been ignored by either your Christ or your Church, keep being persistent. Keep “calling in” as it were through prayer. Keep reaching out and letting your voice be heard in love. Don’t sit idly by. In the humility of repentance, come and receive Jesus in His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. It will strengthen and preserve you in both body and soul unto life everlasting. That is God’s promise. God’s promises are never discouraging or demoralizing! The spiritual healing of God’s gifts when received in faith is as immediate as the physical healing of the Canaanite woman’s daughter. What God gives you are no crumbs off the dinner table, but the very Supper the Lord has instituted and given for you! When faith trusts Jesus’ words, “You are forgiven”, the benefits of that forgiveness are instantaneous. You don’t need to feel forgiven. You just need to trust Jesus’ words that you are forgiven. And where there is forgiveness there is life and salvation. The forgiveness of sins abounds in the Divine Service. We receive it in the Absolution. We confess it in the Kyrie. We hear it in the Gospel reading and sermon. We partake of it in the Sacrament. Clearly the Lord remembers His mercy. Faith needs to remember it, too! He who has ears to hear, let him keep on hearing! In Jesus’ name, Amen.