

THE ANATOMY OF GREAT FAITH – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, Dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you healing word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

We come again, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, friends. Today, I want us to consider what I call, "The Anatomy of Great Faith." And the text is taken from St. Matthew's Gospel 15:21-28.

Matthew 15:21-28

²² *And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."*

²³ *But He answered her not a word.*

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

²⁴ *But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

²⁵ *Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"*

²⁶ *But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."*

²⁷ *And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."*

²⁸ *Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.*

PRAYER:

Father, thank You again for this privilege we have to approach Your Word. And we trust that You would speak to our hearts; speak to the needs in our lives, in Jesus Name. Amen!

The Anatomy of Great Faith.

The great faith displayed in our text is surprising. And it is surprising mainly because of its unexpected source. We should expect Jesus to find great faith among His people, the Jews – descendants of Abraham, the man of great faith. But surprisingly, He found it amongst Gentiles on two different occasions, and those two only in the gospel. Jesus commended two people for their great faith. And both happen to be gentiles. One is in this text under consideration, and the other is in St Luke Gospel 7, the account of the Roman Centurion.

In Luke 7 (in the interest of time reading from verse 7)

Luke 7:7- 9

⁷Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You [that is, the Roman Centurion speaking to Jesus]. But say the word, and my servant will be healed [in other words from where You are. He did not allow him to get to His house]. ⁸For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”

⁹When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”

Two different occasions! Two gentiles! Jesus commended them...their great faith.

We want to see what made the faith of the gentile woman great in the eyes of Jesus Christ. In other words if we are to cut open the faith of this woman, if we were to slice open the faith of this woman, if we were to dissect it – which is what we are about to do now, what do we see? That’s why we said: the Anatomy of great faith. And we want to see how we can get such faith. But before we explore

that, we need to get to know this woman a little better – the woman of great faith. Who was she?

The scripture says that woman was from the gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon where the Phoenicians lived. Some texts describe her as the syrophenician woman.

She had a daughter who was grievously tormented by demons; and was desperate to obtain help for her daughter. She must have heard of the miracles Jesus performed: how He healed all kinds of sicknesses and diseases, how He cast out demons. So based on what she heard she came crying after Jesus and His disciples. She cried to Jesus, *have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David*. At first, Jesus did not seem to pay attention to her. And we shall see why shortly. His disciples did not help either. On their own part the woman was a nuisance. And their concern was to get rid of her as quickly as possible. But the woman's persistence paid off because Jesus stopped to attend to her.

The following observations, what great faith is made of, are gleaned from the interaction between Jesus and the woman as we read in our text. From their interaction I identify the following characteristics of great faith: what I call the Anatomy of Great Faith. Great faith. What makes it great?

- i. Great faith is inspired by love and works through love.

It was out of love that the woman owned the misery of her daughter. We see the same quality in the great faith of the Roman Centurion in Luke 7:7. Because of the love the Roman Centurion had for his six servants - six slaves, he sent for Jesus.

And in the Roman Empire at that time slaves were a dime a dozen. Slaves were rare property. Nobody cared about slaves. A slave could kill a slave and nobody would ask you a question. But this man, because of the love he had even for his slave, he sent for Jesus.

So you can see that compassionate love inspired his great faith. We can see that compassionate love inspired the great faith of this woman from Tyre and Sidon.

We find that also in the great faith of the great Saviour, for we read in the Gospels often: Jesus moved with compassion, forgave; moved with compassion, healed; moved with compassion provided food for multitudes.

Great faith is inspired by love and works through love.

- ii. Great faith does not wallow in ignorance but is amenable to correction.

Verse 22:

²² *And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."*

The gentile woman addressed Jesus as Son of David. That was out of ignorance. But we excuse this woman's ignorance because she did not know that that appellation, that title, Son of David, was a Jewish privilege. It is like somebody addressing your spouse by the pet name reserved for just the two of you. If you and your spouse called each other *mine* you would most likely pay no attention to anyone other than your spouse who calls you *mine*. That is an intrusion into a privilege reserved for just the two of you. A gentile using the title exclusive to Jews should not expect to get a response from Jesus.

When Blind Bartimaeus came to Jesus he said to Him, *Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me*. He was on the right ground because he was a Jew. It is not surprising then that Jesus answered her not a word.

By the same token it is very unlikely that God would pay attention to anyone who calls Him Father when he or she is not yet justified or born from above or born again. God will not pay you attention because you are usurping a title that does not rightfully belong to you; because it is only to those who have received Jesus Christ, those who are born from

above, that God has given the right (I know the Old King James says, power to be called children of God, but, the right word there from the Greek is authority or right or privilege) to be called children of God.

If you have not received Christ you cannot approach God and call Him Father.

iii. Great faith is never silenced by silence.

Remember Jesus was silent towards this woman. He didn't say a word to her. But we find in verse 23 that great faith is never silenced by silence.

Because in verse 23

²³ *But He answered her not a word.*

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

But the woman continued to follow them and to cry Jesus.

Great faith is known for its persistence, for its patience, for its perseverance. The woman was not discouraged by Jesus' silence, neither was she deterred by the negative attitude of His disciples who felt that she was a nuisance. Even though Jesus answered her not a word she patiently persisted; and her persistence upset His disciples.

Let me remind you that Abraham's great faith had the same badge of patient perseverance also. Because according to:

Hebrews 6:13-15

¹³ *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.*

Let us stop here, friends, and we will continue next time.

PRAYER:

Father, we thank You for Your Word today. I'm praying, dear Lord, that You would open the hearts of all my friends in radioland, so that You would minister life to them, so that faith will arise in their hearts; and by faith they will receive the miracles that You would send in response to faith. Let it be so, Father, for all who hear me, in Jesus Name. Amen!