

Pentecost 10 8/17/14
Matthew 15:21-28 A

V. 27 of the Appointed Gospel for the Day: EVEN THE DOGS EAT THE CRUMBS THAT FALL FROM THEIR MASTERS' TABLE.

“You open Your hand; You satisfy the desire of every living thing (Ps 145:16).”

That's what God does. That's what God is all about. So that's what Jesus, very God of very God, does. He goes around feeding His children. And, you know who His children are, right? The lost sheep of the house of Israel. Take a look at how He feeds His children.

When Jesus came down from the mountain after delivering the Sermon on the Mount, a leper came to Him. This lost sheep of the house of Israel was hungry for healing, healing from this flakey, festering, terminal disease. So, Jesus, very God of very God, stretched out His hand and touched him to give him a total cleansing of all his leprosy.

A similar thing happened when some people brought their friend, a paralytic, to Jesus. The crowd around Jesus was so immense that they could not get through, so they lowered him through the ceiling to Jesus. He was hungry – hungry for healing. And there was Jesus, very God of very God, feeding His children. He put before this last sheep a complete menu of total healing – the healing of his body and the forgiveness of his sins.

That's what Jesus does. He fed so many of His children with

He worked tirelessly to feed His children with forgiveness, life, and salvation, deliverance from demons, and even raising some of them from the dead. That's what Jesus does. He worked so tirelessly, that the time came that he grew tired, so He got in a boat and sailed across the Sea of Galilee. And what happened? 5,000 sheep of Israel, plus their wives and

children, pressed in upon Him because they were hungry. What did Jesus do? He fed them. He fed all of them with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. Then, he had the disciples go around and gather up the leftovers, so that there are 12 baskets full of leftovers.

That's Jesus. That's what Jesus does – He opens His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing. Wherever Jesus is, there's a **smorgasbord**. You know what a smorgasbord is, right? When I was growing up way out west, on special days, we got to go to the Plainsman Hotel for smorgasbord. There was meats of all kinds, salads and potatoes, and side dishes, and deserts. That's what we Norwegians call a smorgasbord; I think you call it a buffet.

Wherever Jesus goes, He feeds His children with a smorgasbord of healing, forgiveness, deliverance, life, and salvation.

That's what He was doing in Tyre and Sidon – feeding His children. As He was doing this, a Canaanite woman came up to Him. A Canaanite! The gall of some people, huh?! She was a member of an idolatrous people, who were the enemies of God's children when they entered the Promised Land. Here she is – walking right up to Jesus, very God of very God, with a problem, "Have mercy on , O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

See what's going on here? She knows about Jesus. She knows wherever Jesus goes, there is a smorgasbord of healing, forgiveness, life, and salvation. And, she wants to be fed. The problem is, she's not a child. She has no place at the table. She was a sinner, and she knew it. She was not a Jew, and she knew it. She had a demon-possessed daughter and she could do nothing about it. She doesn't belong there, and she knows it. But, that doesn't stop her.

You see, she comes in faith, expecting everything that she has heard about Jesus to be true – that He feeds His children.

She doesn't even ask for a seat at the table. She begs from the floor like a little dog. And very God of very God "did not answer her a word." But that doesn't stop her. She's still there, pleading, begging, "feed my daughter." The disciples, those who had a seat at the table, were outraged, maybe even a little embarrassed by her, so they beg Jesus, "Send her away. In essence, they say, "Throw her a bone, so she shuts up and leaves and we can continue feasting at the table."

Jesus doesn't play their game, by their rules. But, she's still there. In faith. Not expecting a reward for who she is, or who she is not. She is simply trusting in the mercy of God. She's begging and begging and begging. Even though He says, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," she, in faith, comes one last time, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." And, Jesus does what He does. He feeds her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly."

God opens His hand to satisfy the desire of every living thing.

This is a benefit of being baptized. You are a child of God. You have a seat at that table. You get to eat of the smorgasbord of healing, forgiveness, life, salvation, and all of God's good gifts in Christ. You also have a promised, reserved seat at the marriage feast of the Lamb in heaven that has no end. That's what Jesus does and that's who you are.

So why is it that, from time to time, we feel like little dogs? On this side of heaven, we can find ourselves severely oppressed, be it by sickness, disease, loss, heartache, regret, guilt, shame, worry, fear, or whatever it is that weighs heavily upon you. In His mercy, God allows this

– just as He allowed the 5,000 to grow hungry, He allowed the wind and waves to bear upon the disciples, and He allowed this Canaanite woman's daughter to be demon-possessed. He does not do this to punish us or because He delights in our misery. He does it for our good.

He allows affliction to enter our lives, so that we see our helplessness and we go to Jesus' table. We can cry in faith, "We're your children. Feed us." There you expect to find a smorgasbord, but the table is empty. Jesus answers us not a word.

What happens then? Like little dogs – beloved household pets, we beg, "I need Thy presence every passing hour, in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

What do you do when it seems to our human reason and senses that God is silent? We beg. We cry to Him in faith, for even the crumbs of His mercy are good enough. Jesus gives you grace, just as He gave the Canaanite woman His grace.

Our lesson this morning can be a more difficult lesson to understand. Our lesson is teaching us about the grace of God. God does not treat us as our sins deserve. He treats us in love, love that sent Him to send His Son to be our Savior. Jesus died for one and all. Jesus went to the cross for the lost sheep of Israel, for the Canaanites, and for you. When He did, He died to take away all the curse of sin -- your sickness, disease, loss, heartache, regret, guilt, shame, worry, and fear. All that gets in your way of saying, "I can trust Jesus no matter what."

Jesus took it all that away from you and replaced it with faith, great faith that clings to Jesus no matter what – sun or rain, good days and bad days.

In the weakness of our human nature, when it seem that God has closed His heart and His ears to our cries for mercy, we must turn from our human reason and senses, which make us think God is ignoring us, to walk by faith in the promises of God's Word. We walk by faith and faith always trusts that God, does indeed, have mercy on us all.

Faith always looks to Jesus, trusts in Jesus, is comforted in Jesus. Faith trusts that He will feed you with even the crumbs of His grace, which will strengthen you, to get you through the darkness of today.

Faith knows He will feed you in His own good time and in His own good way, in the way and time He knows best. Don't take my word for it. Ask the Canaanite woman. Or better yet, ask her daughter.