

Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

March 23, 2025

I. Introduction

A. Today we will look at four stories dealing with Jesus' interaction with the people and with His disciples.

B. Pray

II. Four stories of Jesus' interaction with the people and His disciples

A. The Canaanite woman seeking healing for her daughter

1. **Matthew 15:21-28**, Jesus went away from there (*Gennesaret*), and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. [22] And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." [23] But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." [24] But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*In sending out His twelve disciples to cast out demons, heal the sick, and preach the gospel, Jesus instructed them to go only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." However, this story provides no clear reason why He said this here. One possible reason is that He wanted His disciples to gain the experience of dealing with her rather than looking to Him to deal with her – which is similar to what He did in the feeding of the 5000.*) [25] But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" [26] And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." (*Take what belongs to the Jews and give it to Gentiles.*) [27] But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (*Her argument is that the God of the Jews can also be the God of the Gentiles, and though they may not be as important as the Jews, they should be allowed to get the leftovers.*) [28] Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, **your faith is great**; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

2. What made her faith great? Neither her faith nor our faith is based on one thing, but rather a combination of things. Consider:

a. **First**, she came to Jesus believing He was the only one who could solve her problem and meet her need, that is, Jesus was not an alternative or a less expensive option, He was her only option.

- b. **Second**, though the healing she sought was for her daughter, she fought for it as if she was the one suffering and in great need.
 - c. **Third**, she called Jesus, “Lord” and “Son of David, which shows that she saw Him as the supreme Master over all, and as the Messiah – the anointed of God to bring salvation.
 - d. **Fourth**, though humble and willing to be seen as unworthy, she was tenacious, stubbornly unyielding, thoughtfully quick in her thinking and words, focused on her need, and committed to the belief that only Jesus could meet it.
3. The truth is, faith is not built on a single thing, but a number of things, and this story supports this. What is your faith built on?
- a. Is your faith built on the conviction that God is your only hope as opposed to being a better hope or an alternative hope or a hassle-free hope or a financially affordable hope?
 - b. Is your faith built on humility, tenacity, a stubborn and unyielding focus on the need, and thoughtfulness regarding who God is, what He does, and what He wants?
 - c. Do you come to God expecting, but not demanding; passionate but not manipulative; honest about what you want Him to do for you, yet willing to contentedly accept His will?
 - d. Do you maintain a sincere confidence in God’s goodness, in the incomparable depth of His love, in His inexhaustible wisdom, and in His unmatched power – even if He doesn’t do what you want?
 - e. The point is, faith in God for healing, provision, protection, salvation, and everything else that comes up in daily life **is** built, strengthened, and sustained on the accumulative effects of a number of things. It is not something we pump up in the moment, but something we carry with us all the time.
4. It is interesting to note that the only times Matthew records Jesus commenting on the greatness of someone’s faith are here in saying to the Canaanite woman, “your faith is great,” and when He said to the Roman centurion “I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel” (**Matthew 8:10**).
- a. Though both were Gentiles, they came to Jesus believing He was their only hope of getting the healing they wanted.
 - b. As Gentiles, their faith stood in stark contrast to the littleness or lack of faith among the Jews.
 - c. And finally, Matthew provides significant details about the conversation between these two Gentiles and Jesus – showing both to be humble, thoughtful, and expectant in their faith.

B. Jesus models compassion

1. **Matthew 15:29-31**, Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. [30] And **large crowds** came to Him (*according to the next story, it was upwards of 4000+ people at any given time*), bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. [31] So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and **they glorified the God of Israel**.
2. The power of signs and wonders (*healing, casting out demons, feeding large crowds, raising the dead, and other such miracles*) to draw a crowd and show the glory, power, compassion, and kindness of God is well established.
3. However, it does not appear that Jesus purposefully used these things to draw a crowd, though He consistently showed compassion on those who came to see such things, and those who came to have their own needs or the needs of someone they brought with them met.
 - a. There is no doubt that healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead, feeding thousands, turning water to wine, and other such miracles can draw a crowd. However, they are not very affective in bringing about a change in a person's heart and leading them to a God-pleasing life.
 - b. We see the truth of this in the fact that the numbers who gave heed to Jesus' teachings were far less than those who come to see or personally experience His signs and wonders.
 - c. Therefore, it is good that God gets glory and praise for such blessings. But it is better when people repent, come to life-changing faith in God, and proceed to live a godly life – for than God gets ongoing glory, and the people whose lives are changed bless those around them with ongoing love, truth, and compassion.

C. Observing the need and doing something about it

1. **Matthew 15:32-39**, And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people (*4000+ people*), because they have remained with Me now three days (*even if Jesus wasn't also teaching, speaking with and healing even a thousand folks could easily stretch into 3 days*) and have nothing to eat (*possibly because they had only brought enough for a day or so*); and I do not want to send them away hungry, for **they might faint** on the way (*Jesus saw the need, had*

compassion, and did what was necessary to meet the need)." [33] The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" (*Seems they forgot how Jesus handled the feeding of the 5000. And yet, Jesus did not criticize them for failing to conclude He could feed this group just like He fed the 5000. Maybe He was giving them time for their faith to grow.*) [34] And Jesus (*following the same format as in feeding the 5000+*) said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." [35] And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; [36] and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. [37] And they **all ate and were satisfied** (*just as with the 5000, Matt 14:20*) and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. [38] And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. [39] And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadhan (*MAG uh dan*).

- a. Once again, we see God providing above and beyond the need. Though it is probable that He consistently does this, it is also probable we don't see it because it is not as easily discernable as the leftover baskets of bread.
- b. However, take as an example our salvation. We talk about it as being saved from the penalty of sin so we can live forever with God.
- c. And yet, His salvation also frees us from the enslaving power of sin, and from the ongoing practice of a specific sin or area of sins. He includes with His salvation the guarantee that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to resist. He includes the power and amour necessary to be victorious, along with the comprehensive work of the Holy Spirit in teaching, leading, convicting, and empowering us to walk the narrow path of godliness. And He provides the Bible with its directions on how to live a godly life.
- d. That is just one example of God going above and beyond in providing what we need. Therefore, I urge you to look harder and longer at God's work in your life to see the largest picture possible of what He has done and is doing.

D. Religious leaders want miraculous proof of Jesus' authenticity

1. **Matthew 16:1-12**, The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven (*a miraculous sign that would prove to them that He was sent by God*).

- a. This isn't the first time the religious leaders put Him to the test. Matthew records at least seven other occasions – some for the purpose of exposing Jesus as a fake, and others to get Him to say or do something that could be used against Him in order to turn the public against Him or get rid of Him.
 - b. You can find these additional tests in **Matthew 12:38; 15:2; 16:1; 19:3; 22:15-17; 22:23-33; and Matthew 22:34-40.**
 - c. Following the test in **Matthew 22:24-40**, Matthew says this, “No one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question” (**Matthew 22:46**).
2. [16:2] But [Jesus] replied to them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ [3] And in the morning, ‘There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times?
 - a. The principle here is that we show how capable we are of thinking, reasoning, discerning, assessing, and coming to a reasonable conclusion in relation to God when we do this in other areas of life.
 - b. Jesus affirms this principle by asserting that if they are capable in one area, they are also capable in the area of religion, the truth about Jesus, and the biblically understood signs of the times. They just need to put forth the effort.
 - c. However, their present spiritual condition is a limiting factor to being motivated to put forth the effort required – which is why they are asking for a sign instead of reading the available signs.
 - d. Remember, Jesus was talking to Jews who had the OT, the Temple, and religious education – just as He is now talking to us with our NT, Church, and religious teachings.
3. [4] A (*sinfully*) evil and (*religiously*) adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.”
 - a. This is the same answer He gave some scribes and Pharisees back in chapter 12.
4. [4b] And [Jesus] left them and went away. [5] And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread. [6] And Jesus said to them, “Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
5. [7] They began to discuss this among themselves, saying, “He said that because we did not bring any bread.” [8] But Jesus, aware of this, said, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? [9] Do you not yet understand or remember

- the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets full you picked up? [10] Or the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many large baskets full you picked up? [11] How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”
- a. This time, Jesus did express disappointment that these past experiences were not enough – though they should have been enough – to build the disciples faith enough to know that their failure to bring bread would not be a problem for Jesus.
 - b. The lesson here is that their limited faith hindered them from discerning the real meaning of what Jesus was talking about, just as any limitations on our faith hinders us from understanding specific truths in God’s word and how they are to be applied to our lives today.
6. [12] Then the disciples understood that Jesus did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- a. The number of times that the OT and NT warns us about bad leadership and bad teaching within the religious community ought to convince us that this is a real and present threat to the health of the church and our own spiritual well-being. And sadly, though we have been adequately warned, the threat still persists and God’s people are still taken in and still follow bad leadership and bad teaching.

III. Conclusion

- A. Faith in God is essential to knowing God, growing in the understanding of God and His ways, making sense of the word of God, rationally applying the word of God to everyday life, living a mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy life, and remaining faithful to the end.
- B. May we never diminish the necessity of faith. Rather, may we value faith so much that as a group we encourage it, nurture it, and support it so that individually and as a group we live more nearly as God created and saved us to live.