

11th Sunday after Pentecost August 16, 2020

10th Sunday after Trinity Proper 15 (20)
Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.
An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

Available on line at:

- www.bethlehemlutheranchurchparma.com/biblestudies
- Through www.facebook.com at “Living the Lutheran Lectionary”, “Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma”, or “Harold Weseloh”
- All links in this on-line copy are active and can be reached using Ctrl+Click

Gather and be blessed:

- **Thursdays at 10 AM (5pm Kenya/Uganda):** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
- **Wednesdays at 7 PM in a house church setting:** For details, contact Harold Weseloh at puritaspastor@hotmail.com
- **Tuesdays at 1:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya (Suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions in Kenya)
- **On Facebook through Messenger** in a discussion group shared by people throughout the United States, Kenya and Uganda. Contact Harold Weseloh on Facebook Messenger.



<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2017/08/jesus-and-the-canaanite-woman-sermon-on-matthew-1521-28-by-pr-charles-henrickson/> See quote on page 12

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 653 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) Not Listed

“In Christ there is no east or west”

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 615 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 522

“When in the hour of deepest need”

"In Christ there is no east or west"

"First presented at a 1908 exhibition of the London Missionary Society, the hymn "In Christ There Is No East or West" was intended to encourage missions and evangelism. First published in 1913, it was written by John Oxenham, the pen name of William Arthur Dunkerley (1852–1941). The 1908/1913 hymn had four stanzas. The original first stanza appears in LSB with only minor changes in capitalization. The original second stanza read: "In Him shall true hearts everywhere / Their high communion find. / His service is the golden cord / Close-binding all mankind." In LSB 653:4, "disciples of the faith" replaces "Brothers of the Faith" and "child" replaces "son," as compared to the original version of stanza 3. Similarly, "Christly souls" of the original stanza 4 is now "Christian souls."..."

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies> study by Paul J. Cain
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RsEJOHXE8kg> First tune, "McKee" used in LSB Andrew Remillard
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5yaYRwU1z_E Second tune, "St. Peter" Andrew Remillard

"When in the hour of deepest need"

"Paul Eber was among the most gifted of the Wittenberg poets and hymn writers. He suffered childhood illness, was handicapped after being thrown from a horse, buried all but two of his 14 children, and endured blistering theological attacks. Though we know little of the circumstances surrounding the composition of this hymn, one of its first known uses was in a service that was a call to prayer issued by Johannes Bugenhagen on Ascension Day 1547, after Emperor Charles V demanded that the city of Wittenberg lay down its arms... Read the stanzas of this hymn again. Compare them to the prayer recorded in 2 Chron. 20:6–12. See how the hymn stanzas connect to the verses from Scripture..."

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies> study by Larry A. Peters
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EavXeYxdCdU> Heirs of the Reformation: Treasures of the Singing Church © 2008 Concordia Publishing House
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f09ZZJf35IU> "During the Covid19 epidemic, I have decided to do a Hymn of the day series that I am posting on Sunday mornings." Balint Karosi Organ and voice with organ interludes between several verses. Misty Ann Sturm, soprano, Balint Karosi, organ

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

O. T. - “for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples”

Psalm – “let all the peoples praise you!”

Epistle – “I ask, then, has God rejected his people?”

Gospel – “**great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.**”

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), Genesis 45:1-15 or Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 (Next week: Isaiah 51:1-6; RCL, Exodus 1:8-2:10 or Isaiah 56:1, 6-8)

“God does not make it a secret that he wants all people to be saved. He calls out to all people to repent of their sins, no matter what they have done, and he offers to them the forgiveness that only a God and Savior can offer. We see this call to repentance and offer of forgiveness many times in Scripture. Jesus sent his disciples out into the world to preach the message of Christ to all nations, not just a select few. Today in our Gospel, we see Jesus going against the normal Jewish practice of preaching and teaching. He tested the faith of a Gentile woman and called her response, a Great Faith. These are only two of the many times that God showed his love to unlikely sinners who did not deserve his grace and mercy. This is the same love that God shows to each of us because we are sinners too. If we think that someone else is not worthy to stand in the Lord’s house because of who they are and what they have done, then we better realize that we do not deserve to be here either. We did not do anything to earn or deserve God’s grace and neither did they. They needed to have their sins washed away as much as we do. Jesus came to take their sins away as much as he did to take our sins away.”

- <http://www.summerlinlutheran.org/home/180013610/180013610/Images/Isaiah%2056%201%206-8%20%20Sermon%20B%20LV%202017-9-3.pdf>

Pastor Tom Unke [Summerlin Ev. Lutheran Church \(WELS\) Las Vegas, NV](#)

Salvation for Foreigners

56 Thus says the LORD:

“Keep justice, and do righteousness,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my righteousness be revealed...”

6 “And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it,
and holds fast my covenant—

7 these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.”

8 The Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares,

"I will gather yet others to him
besides those already gathered."

Israel's Irresponsible Leaders Verses 9-12

"Historical Context: Gathering Israel, Gathering Foreign Nations

The historical context for Isaiah 56 sheds light on the idea of gathering. From 587-516 CE, the Israelites endured a Babylonian forced migration (exile) and were thus scattered throughout the neighboring nations. Distressed by the loss of homeland, Israel's prophets encouraged the exiles with visions of a gathering and return.

So for example, Isaiah 43:5-6 proclaims, "I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you; I will say to the north, 'Give them up,' and to the south, 'Do not withhold; bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth.'" Isaiah, in particular, made that vision even more powerful by reminding the Israelites of their national story. In that story, God gave Hebrew slaves their own land after rescuing them from Egyptian oppression. Isaiah invokes this old story of gathering Israel to bring hope to the exiled Israelites. A return to homeland involved hope that God would act on their behalf again. This is often called the "Second Exodus." The exiles would be drawn out from the nations and gathered in their homeland.

By the time our passage was written, the prophet explains that the Second Exodus had already taken place. Isaiah 56 is usually dated to the post-exilic period, when some Israelites had already returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (516 BCE). Hence, for Isaiah, the great gathering of Israelites had come to pass. The Second Exodus from the nations had taken place. The national foundation story of the Exodus promised that Israel could rebuild its national life, once again.

However, Isaiah 56 is not about a return of the *Israelite* exiles. Isaiah 56 promises that every person who calls on the name of the Lord will be gathered. The vision extends the promise to foreigners (as well as the eunuchs in verse 4 and the outcasts of Israel in verse 8). Israel's great gathering invites outsiders to come in. Thus, all people "joined to the Lord" are now invited to God's earthly house of worship. The scene is one of outsiders on a pilgrimage..."

- http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1049 Ingrid Lilly Assistant Professor in the Philosophy and Religion department, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY
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"Thus says the Lord ... " (Isaiah 56:1a) starts the third major movement in the book of Isaiah. Rather than getting caught up in trying to reconstruct the historical *Sitz im Leben* of Isaiah 56-66, consider reading this final movement of Isaiah as suggested by John Oswalt: Isaiah 56-66 "serves as a reprise of the opening themes of the Isaian symphony ... they are written to show how the theology of chapters 40-55 fits into that of chapters 1-39."¹

While Isaiah 1-39 diagnoses the problem of Israel's lack of trust in Yhwh, with foci on Israel's faithlessness and Yhwh's judgment, and Isaiah 40-55 provides a witness to God's redeeming disposition (e.g. "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem ... ") and promise to restore, Isaiah 56-66 returns to a basic question: With the diagnosis *and* the renewed promise both in view, what now?

The first movement in this “what now?” is Isaiah 56:1-8. It addresses the reality that God’s blessing spills over the boundaries assumed by God’s people -- the insiders.

Reread Isaiah 55 as the segue into this Sunday’s pericope. In particular recall:

Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you (Isaiah 55:3-5).

Note that central to the reestablishment of this everlasting covenant with David² is that the covenant will spill over to “nations that you do not know.” The covenant with David as the everlasting covenant is transformed from one of safety from enemies toward their welcome (2 Samuel 4:11b).

And so this third movement of Isaiah 56-66 begins by exploring the spillage of the everlasting covenant against the backdrop of the religious practice of drawing lines in particular lines that exclude the foreigner and the eunuch. (Yes, the preacher is encouraged to include the whole of Isaiah 56:1-8, as the donut hole created by the lectionary weakens the force of the text.)

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2112 **Samuel Giere**

Associate Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa

Verses 3-5, which are not part of the reading, make reference to “eunuchs” prompting this case study. “A New Word on Homosexuality? Isaiah 56:1-8 as Case Study” Consider reading the article as a way to examine your understanding of interpreting scripture.

- http://wordandworld.luthersem.edu/content/pdfs/14-3_Sex/14-3_Gaiser.pdf

Psalm 67; RCL, Psalm 133 or Psalm 67 (Psalm 138; RCL, Psalm 124 or Psalm 138)

Psalm 67 – A missionary psalm

The title tells us the audience of the psalm: To the Chief Musician. On Stringed Instruments. A Psalm. A Song. Some believe that the Chief Musician is the Lord GOD Himself, and others suppose him to be a leader of choirs or musicians in David’s time, such as Heman the singer or Asaph (1 Chronicles 6:33, 16:5-7, and 25:6).

This wonderful psalm is sometimes forgotten or neglected when God’s people think of their favorite psalms. Though Martin Luther wrote five large volumes of exposition on Psalms, he skipped Psalm 67 entirely. Nevertheless, this psalm has a heart to see God’s way, God’s salvation, and God’s praise extended through all the earth...”

- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/psalm-67/> (c) 2020 The Enduring Word Bible Commentary by David Guzik – ewm@enduringword.com

Make Your Face Shine upon Us

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

67 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us, **Selah**

- ² that your way may be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.
- ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!
- ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth. **Selah**
- ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you!
- ⁶ The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, shall bless us.
- ⁷ God shall bless us;
let all the ends of the earth fear him!

"TITLE. *To the Chief Musician.* Who he was matters not, and who we may be is also of small consequence, so long as the Lord is glorified. *On Neginoth*, or upon stringed instruments. This is the fifth Psalm so entitled, and no doubt like the others was meant to be sung with the accompaniment of "harpers harping with their harps." No author's name is given, but he would be a bold man who should attempt to prove that David did not write it. We will be hard pushed before we will look for any other author upon whom to father these anonymous odes which lie side by side with those ascribed to David, and wear a family likeness to them. A *Psalm* or *Song*. Solemnity and vivacity are here united. A Psalm is a song, but all songs are not Psalms: this is both one and the other..."

➤ <https://www.christianity.com/bible/commentary.php?com=spur&b=19&c=67> Charles Spurgeon

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"Psalm 67 in the psalter

This is one of a quartet of psalms labeled "songs," dedicated to the music director and expressing praise and thanksgiving (Psalms 65-68). Psalm 67 calls for a string orchestra to accompany the song. These psalms frequently mention *earth*, using the Hebrew word 'aretz, which occurs in the first verse of the Hebrew Bible. That word occurs in Psalms 65:9; 66:1,4; 67:2,6,7; 68:8. God has blessed the whole *earth*, with its blue rivers and seas, amber grain fields, green pastures, and forests (Psalm 65:9-13; *blessed* in v. 10). *All the peoples of the earth* (Psalm 66:1-4) are called to praise for God's mighty acts among them. Psalm 67 prays for God to continue blessing inhabitants of the *whole earth* (vv. 2, 7) which means asking God to supply that which the *earth* produces (vv. 6-7). Psalm 68 (notoriously difficult to understand) speaks of a God-driven *earthquake* (68:8).

Benediction, blessing, and saving (Psalm 67:1-3)

In a religious context, a *benediction* is a part of a worship service referring to God's gifts or *blessings*, as given to a congregation and a people...

This psalm uses the language of that benediction (Psalm 67:1). When the Lord is angry, the Lord hides his face, paying no attention to the people and their prayers (see also Psalms 13:1; 27:9; 30:7). When the Lord shows favor, the Lord turns toward the worshippers with a beaming, smiling face (Psalm 67:1; see also Psalms 4:6; 31:16; 80:3, 7, 19)...

Blessing and mission (Psalm 67:4-7)

There is another emphasis in this psalm. In addition to praising God for saving and blessing Israel, there is a robust concern for people of other nations. It is the task of God's people to bring the Good News about their God to other inhabitants of the planet (v. 2). God's people are blessed -- to be a blessing to other nations (Genesis 12:1-3).

The refrain in vv. 3 and 5 makes the same point. There's a wideness in God's mercy that goes beyond God's people Israel and the Christian church. This psalm says, "Let the peoples praise you, O God," and then as if to second the motion, the next line repeats the idea and expands it: "let all the peoples praise you."

In its closing wish that "all the ends of the earth revere him," Psalm 67 links up with the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2847

James Limburg Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.

Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32; RCL, Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32 (Romans 11:33-12:8; RCL, Romans 12:1-8)

"The biblical texts appointed for this day conspire together to make the case that everyone should feel welcome in our congregations. Why? Because God says they are welcome! Isaiah comes right out and names them as foreigners. No one will be left out, God promises, gathering the faithful and the foreigners, the insiders and the outcast, all together as one people. Paul, who has struggled these last couple of weeks to understand why so many of his own people have rejected the Messiah, finally realizes that he simply cannot comprehend God's ways but can only trust God's promise, both to Israel and all the world. In fact, were we to read one verse further, we would see and hear Paul faithfully throw in the towel and surrender in awe to the mystery and grace of God: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33).

As strong as these two readings are, however, it's in Matthew that things really get cooking...

- <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1598> "David J. Lose was called as senior pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in 2017. From July 2014 to June 2017, he served as president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia..."

The Remnant of Israel Verses 1-10

11 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham,^[a] a member of the tribe of Benjamin.² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. *Do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? ...*

Gentiles Grafted In Verses 11-24

¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. ¹⁵ For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead?...

The Mystery of Israel's Salvation Verses 25-36

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. ²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now^[b] receive mercy. ³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all...

Footnotes

- a. Romans 11:1 Or *one of the offspring of Abraham*
- b. Romans 11:31 Some manuscripts omit *now*

"Paul contrasts two ways of living your life. We can live by the law, which is a sort of spiritual meritocracy in which you get what you earn. You try to prove yourself to God, yourself, and to others.

Living by the law is a terrible idea. It doesn't work. It's impossible to achieve and therefore oppressive. It encourages sanctimony and legalism. And worst of all, it isn't necessary, for God never asks us to prove ourselves. He only asks us to let him love us.

In this sense, a pilgrimage can be a fool's errand if you think you can walk your way to the love of God by some arduous achievement.

In contrast, Paul commends a life of faith. By faith we accept God's free gifts. By faith we get precisely what we don't deserve, and even more.

Faith believes that God isn't a Divine Accountant or Probation Officer. He's an indulgent father who throws a party for his indigent son. He's like an employer who pays employees a full day's wage even though they only worked for an hour. He's like a lavish wedding host who provides copious amounts of the best wine.

But Romans 10:5-15 isn't really about how much God wants to bless me. It's about how God wants to bless others, and in particular, how he wants to bless the very people for whom I have contempt. In Paul's time and place, that meant convincing conscientious Jewish believers that God wanted to bless pagan Gentiles — "for there is no difference between Jew and Gentile," writes Paul, "the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him."

For Paul, Jews are no closer to God and Gentiles are no further from God. We're all equidistant to the heart of God's love..."

- <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/Essays/20140804JJ.shtml> Dan and Patti Clendenin. "Dan Clendenin founded the Journey with Jesus webzine in 2004... In 2012 Dan and his wife walked the 500-mile Way of St. James in Spain. In 2014 they walked the 458-mile pilgrimage across southern France called "Le Chemin du Puy." In 2016 they walked the 350-mile "La Via di Francesco" from Florence to Assisi to Rome. In 2019 they hiked the Tour du Mont Blanc."

Matthew 15:21-28; RCL, Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28 (Matthew 16:13-20; RCL, the same reading)

"As strong as these two (previous) readings are, however, it's in Matthew that things really get cooking. We have the quintessential insider/outsider story here, as Matthew reshapes a narrative he has inherited from Mark to break open the idea that some are chosen and some are not. Keep in mind, while reading, that in many ways Matthew's Gospel is the most "Jewish," the most interested, that is, in demonstrating that Jesus is the Jewish messiah, the fulfillment of prophecy, righteous according to the law, Moses' successor, and so on. In that context, listen to Jim Boyce's excellent summary of matters as Matthew pits the insider disciples against the outsider Canaanite woman:

So stretch your imaginations to entertain the scene. Gathered in one corner are those familiar disciples, for Matthew the true blue representatives of the faithful lost sheep of Israel, now leaping into the fray like so many ravenous beasts, as it were self-styled guarantors of the holy tradition, on their guard lest the mercies of God be wasted on the unworthy. Like a gang of watchdogs at the door they are about the checking of IDs and keeping out the non-pedigreed riffraff. On the other side of the gate stands this outsider, a woman no less, one lone representative of the dogs of religion, now become as it were a lost sheep plaintively pleading for the mercy of the master shepherd. No English translation can capture Matthew's careful orchestration of the painful choral refrain. "Lord, have mercy," the dog's solo bleating cry. "Get rid of her," the "lost-sheep chorus" barks back in reply.

And into this fray strides the shepherd, who not only welcomes this newest and most unlikely of disciples, but praises her great faith!

Yes, all are welcome. All. Everyone. All..."

- <http://www.workingpreacher.org/craft.aspx?post=1598> "David J. Lose was called as senior pastor of Mount Olivet Lutheran Church in Minneapolis in 2017. From July 2014 to June 2017, he served as president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia..."

"The Holy Gospel beginning in the 15th Chapter of St. Matthew"

Traditions and Commandments Verses 1-9

What Defiles a Person Verses 10-20

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman Verses 21-28

21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. **22** And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” **23** But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” **24** He answered, ***“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”*** **25** But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” **26** And he answered, ***“It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”*** **27** She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” **28** Then Jesus answered her, ***“O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.”*** And her daughter was healed instantly.^[a]

Jesus Heals Many Verses 29-31

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand Verses 32-39

- a. Matthew 15:28 Greek *from that hour*

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” “Praise to You, O Christ”

When Jesus entered Tyre and Sidon, an indigenous Canaanite woman formed a one-woman welcoming committee.¹

Jesus is no stranger to Tyre and Sidon; he compared that region to Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum where the inhabitants did not respond positively to Jesus’ miracles.

Thus Matthew’s readers might anticipate Jesus doing powerful deeds in Tyre and Sidon and a positive response (Matthew 11:20-24). The Canaanite woman’s greeting is part of a pattern; we find her words on the lips of others who approach Jesus with pressing needs: “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David” (Matthew 15:22; see also 9:27 and 20:30).

The Matthean Jesus is the son of David from the beginning of the narrative as revealed in the genealogy (Matthew 1:1, 16). Perhaps with her initial words, the woman is claiming an ancestral relationship to Jesus. Three women in Jesus’ genealogy are Canaanite women: Rahab, Tamar, and Ruth (Matthew 1:3, 5). The anonymous woman’s foremothers are Jesus’ kinfolk.

The words “Have mercy” demonstrate the Canaanite woman’s knowledge of his power and willingness to show mercy on all who approach him (see Matthew 14:13-21). The title “lord” by which she addresses Jesus acknowledges him as a man in relation to her as a woman and demonstrates respect for Jesus as a Rabbi. The phrase “on me” reveals her as the object the mercy she seeks, her request is a personal one; what impacts child, affects mother.

And finally the title, “Son of David” is perhaps her way of acknowledging him as her kin, as royalty, and as the Jewish Messiah (anointed one). The Canaanite woman strategically, clearly and succinctly confronts and informs Jesus of her problem: “my daughter is tormented by a demon” (verse 22). She does not directly request healing for her child, she desires mercy, which she presumes would take the form of an exorcism...”

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4542 Mitzi J. Smith

J. Davison Philips Professor of New Testament, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga.

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"Reversals and contrasts mark Matthew's wonderfully and intricately-woven story of a Canaanite woman's faith.

Unique to Matthew's narrative, Jesus in his preaching has challenged his hearers to learn the ways of God's mercy (see 9:13 and 12:7). Now in a favorite Matthean motif (see 14:13 and elsewhere), Jesus "withdraws" and enters territory in which the boundaries of God's mercy is tested.

Under Matthew's hand Mark's parallel story (7:24--30) has been completely transformed into a story of remarkable faith in an unexpected place. In Mark's story both the culminating reference to the faith of the woman and the disciples, who play so significant a role in this story, are completely absent. Here as characters and theme they join the central figures of Jesus and the Canaanite woman in an intense and weighty encounter.

Even the animals get into the story as the suggestive and provocative images and roles of sheep and dogs join these characters and permeate the tightly interlocking and contested dialog. One soon wonders just who in the end are meant to be the sheep and who the dogs in this story? And what of the "shepherd" who seems caught in the middle of this exchange? Largely lost in translations is the choral contest that Matthew has set up--with the woman on one side and the disciples (who do not even appear in Mark's narrative) on the other.

Identified as a foreigner, still this Canaanite woman has all the appropriate language of a true Israelite. She persistently cries out for God's mercy (the Greek imperfect underscores the repetition, while in her *kyrie eleison* one is certainly meant to hear the worship language of the faithful).

On the other side her pleas are matched by the shouts of the disciples, "get rid of her!" (in the original Greek their words are an alliterative and ironic echo of the woman's cry: *apolyson*). With dramatic effect the story sets before us a Jesus flanked by two competing choruses: on one side one lone creature crying "*kyrie eleison*," and on the other a band of bullies shouting her down with their "*apolyson*..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=980 James Boyce

Emeritus Professor of New Testament and Greek, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

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"The woman greets Jesus as the "Son of David." Her recognition is all the more remarkable because the disciples have been a bit slow in recognizing Jesus. In Matthew 14, after the walking on the sea, they do recognize Jesus as the Son of God, but it is not until 16:16 that Peter declares Jesus as Messiah. Yet, this woman hails Jesus as the Son of David, begs his mercy, and entreats his power over a demon that has "severely" possessed her daughter (v. 22)... How is it possible that this woman has more insight into Jesus' identity than his disciples? She is, after all, an unclean outsider, part of a people who are remembered as an old enemy of Israel..."

Perhaps, Jesus' refusal to listen to the disciples gave the woman hope that her request would be heard. She does something that is significant in this Gospel: she kneels before him.

The author of Matthew uses this action as one befitting a king. The magi, who are also Gentiles, are the first to offer worship to Jesus in this way (Matthew 2:2, 8, 11). The unrepentant slave bows before the king in the parable of unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:), and the mother of James and John kneel before Jesus as a king of a kingdom (Matthew 20:20). For the woman to treat Jesus in this manner is in keeping with her earlier declaration of Jesus as the Son of David.

Kneeling is not only a sign of kingship, but also recognition of power. There is a connection between those who kneel before Jesus and the healings that Jesus performs. A leper kneels before Jesus and asks to be made clean (Matt 8:2). A ruler kneels and asks for his daughter's healing (9:18). At the end of this Gospel, when the resurrected Lord appears, the disciples bow before him, and Jesus says that all authority in heaven and earth is his (28:17-18). Bowing in worship also recalls Jesus' command to worship only the Lord God (4:9). This woman kneels before one whom she recognizes as having authority not only to sit on the throne of David, but to wield power over evil..."

- https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2145

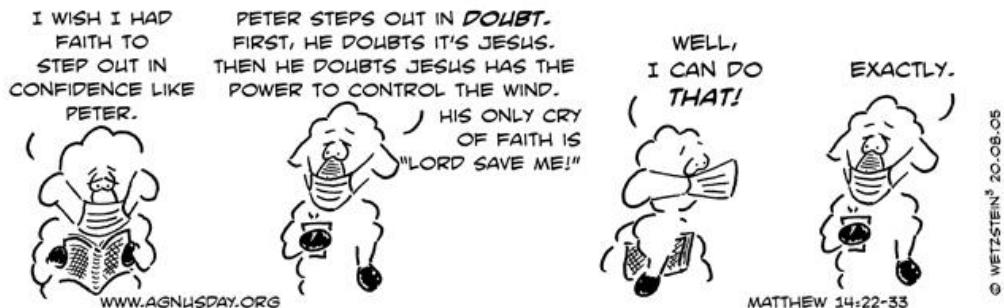
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- *Angus Day appears with the permission of <https://www.agnusday.org/>*

The Matthew Challenge? If you aren't writing are you at least reading?

Weekly review thoughts



"My friends, this is the merciful Lord in whom we are trusting. And today God is strengthening you in your faith. He is building in you a faith that perseveres. Persevering faith in a merciful Lord. Faith like that of the Canaanite—or “Canine-ite”—woman, who was willing to come like a little dog to eat at the Lord’s table. Great was her faith because great was her Lord, the one who called forth that faith. He is the Lord who has mercy on us, even when it looks like he doesn’t. Kyrie, eleison. “Lord, have mercy.” Pastor Charles Henrickson