



The Mar Thoma Church Diocese of North America & Europe Christian Education Forum

Lenten Meditations

FIGHTING FAITH OF A DISPOSSESSED WOMAN

Matthew 15:21-28

The Canaanite woman's story as a story of protest and reclamation evolved from her faith. This is a story of conviction and struggle in which a displaced woman reclaims her place at the table. Canaanite woman won in the struggle due to her strong conviction and faith. She breaks the boundaries of ethnicity, of the empire, of gender, of culture, and speaks for her daughter. She speaks for the one who cannot speak, for the one who cannot move, for the one who has no strength to fight back against the dominant powers of religion and politics.

1. Fighting Faith of a dispossessed woman.

She fought with Jesus and reclaimed what she deserved. Her cry for mercy before the son of David was a cry of restitution. By her action she was challenging the dominant paradigm of relationships that discriminated against her both because she was a polluting outsider and because she was a woman.

2. Vision embedded Faith.

The woman's presence was a way of showing the resistance of the oppressed people, holding that the present system of oppression does not have to remain in place. Faith carries a vision of a transformed world. Christ accepts her vision embedded faith and thereby affirms her vision

3. Communication Restored.

Although Jesus ignores Canaanite woman, the disciples urge him to act. The woman approaches Jesus to make her petition clear and sound. She breaks their dialogue, and she breaks the borders of their communication to make her voice heard. As an act of complete openness, the woman kneels before Jesus, challenging with the vulnerability of her otherness. The Canaanite woman has come to break the bread together with him as an act of restitution and humanization.

Jesus understands her demand and moves back from his earlier position to give the woman the place that she deserves at the table. This text has to be read in the context of the dispossessed, discriminated and alienated people and their cry for justice and survival. Faith does not demand a submissive action towards the evil. But it fights with evil, it restores the denied communication and it carries a vision of a life-affirming world.

Prayer: We remember all the dispossessed and discriminated today. Lord, listen to their cries and deliver them. Help us to be with them in their struggles and protest.
Amen.

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"Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"
Matthew 15:27