Elder's Corner

The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." (Mark 7:26-29)

This portion of the life of **Jesus Christ** has always intrigued me. Our **Lord** has obviously left Galilee and has entered Gentile territory, certainly in part because His chosen people 's hearts were **far from** Him **(Mark 7:6;** they had made **the word of God of no effect** with their **tradition (Mark 7:13);** and, their hearts were filled with all manner of **evil (Mark 7:21-23).** And, to be honest, He may have gone there to obtain a bit of privacy, to avoid the multitudes that constantly thronged Him (see **Mark 7:24).** But knowledge of **Jesus,** His teachings, and His mighty works (miracles, etc.) extended beyond Israel's borders, as we learn from the person **Jesus** encountered.

She was a Greek and a woman. In that culture she didn't possess a lot of leverage. Yet it seemed that she knew something about this Man—addressing Him as **Lord and Son of David.** Though she **kept asking Him,** Matthew's account of this event says **the Lord** didn't answer **her a word (Matt. 15:23).** There are those who are critical of **Jesus** for what they view as indifferent and almost cruel behavior toward **her.** John MacArthur has probably the best answer for our Lord's critics, "The reason Jesus did not answer her immediately was to allow the robust character of her faith to be put on display."[1] After healing the woman's **daughter**, He complimented her for her **great faith (Matt. 15:28),** something that He never did for any Jew. When **Jesus** did answer **the woman, He said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 15:24).** At this point, **the faith** and wisdom of this **woman** became evident. **Jesus** was not in **Israel** now, and furthermore, drawing from our Lord's own words, and perhaps from her own experience as well, she surmised that messy **children and little dogs**[2] can eat at the same time from the same **table,** with both being satisfied.

Many years ago, Dr. Doug Bookman stayed at our house while speaking at our assembly. We happened to get into a discussion about **the new covenant** which **the Lord God** made **with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Jer. 31:31, 32).** Dr. Bookman pointed out that the incident with **the Syro-Phoenician woman and Jesus** pictures with accuracy the relationship of the New Testament church and **the new covenant.** Though **the Lord Jesus Christ** (the head of the church) ratified **the new covenant** with His **blood (Luke 22:20)**, that **covenant** is not made with the church, and furthermore, Paul reminded those in the church at Ephesus that before they came to **faith in Christ,** they were **"aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).** Obviously, in Dr. Bookman's view, **the new covenant** is **the table** laden with desirable benefits. We, the church, are the **little dogs.**

Bookman pointed out that because of the **unbelief** of the Jews they have been **broken off** from the privilege to be at that **table (Rom. 11:20),** and the church stands **by faith** in Israel's place. But because our place cannot be at **the table,** we gather under **the table** to humbly **eat the children's crumbs,** the spiritual benefits of the **new covenant**.[3] Paul reminds the Ephesians of the **"Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).** Might just a couple of those **new covenant** blessings be **the Lord** forgiving our **iniquity** and remembering our **sin no more (Jer. 31:34).** How about the **Lord** putting His **Holy Spirit within you**, causing you to **walk in His statutes (Ezek. 36:27).** Are you satisfied with **the crumbs** available **under the new covenant table?** I certainly am.

Remember, even to partake of those **crumbs under the table,** faith in **Jesus** who ratified **the covenant** with His **blood** is necessary. Trust **Jesus Christ** as your Savior, take your place there, appreciating **the crumbs**, knowing that someday **the children of Israel** will be there with you in their rightful place as beneficiaries of **the new covenant**. Maranatha.

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[1] John MacArthur, *Mark 1–8*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), 367.

[2] Word for pets, not savage scavengers.

[3] The new covenant contains spiritual benefits for all plus a multitude of temporal kingdom benefits only for Israel.