

A Canaanite Woman

Matthew 15:1-28

by Don Falkos

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Some Pharisees came from Jerusalem to see Jesus. They asked, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old traditions? They don't wash their hands before they eat."

Jesus replied, "Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother.' But you say it's perfectly all right for someone to tell their parents, 'Whatever help I may have given you I have given to God instead.' You disregard the Law of God in order to follow your own traditions. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he said, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'

Later, Jesus told his disciples, "Ignore the Pharisees. They are blind guides leading the blind. The food you eat doesn't defile you. It passes right through your body. But from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. They are what defile you, not eating with unwashed hands."

Jesus went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman who lived there came to him and said, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is suffering terribly. She's possessed by an evil spirit."

Jesus didn't respond. His disciples said, "Tell her to go away. She's bothering us."

Then Jesus spoke to the woman. "I was sent to help God's lost sheep – the people of Israel. It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

She knelt in front of him, pleading, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from their master's table."

Jesus said, "Because of your faith the evil spirit has left your daughter." And at that moment her daughter was healed.