

“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.”

Today’s second reading is talking about obedience to God, which is an act of faith in Him. In the gospel, the Canaanite woman, with great faith, desperately asked Jesus to drive away the demon that were tormenting her daughter.

We want to be a person of great faith, but at times we face obstacles that keep us from having that kind of faith. The Canaanite woman teaches us how to overcome the obstacles and have strong faith in God under all circumstances.

The disciples came to Jesus and asked him, “Send her away, for she keeps calling out after us.” The disciples were a hindrance to the woman’s approach to Jesus with faith. Our faith may get shaken due to certain words or acts of some Church leaders or other people. Their failure to set examples can break our will to have a deep faith in God. We may be tempted to leave God or His church when we are scandalized by their hypocrisy. However, others’ bad examples do not exempt us from our obedience to God. Instead of being negatively affected by them, we need to focus on the invisible God who is in charge and continuously have faith in Him.

Jesus did not say a word in answer to her. Sometimes, the silence of Jesus can be a barrier to our faith. We are tempted not to trust in God when our sincere prayers left unanswered or our hopeful expectations are shattered by His silence. We feel powerless and think that we did things in vain. But often God’s silence can be a blessing. When we unknowingly ask God for something harmful to us, God’s silence to it would be His best response. Even if we ask Him for something beneficial to us, God’s silence gives us enough time for us to better prepare ourselves so as to receive His gifts. God’s silence is not a rejection. So, we can respond to God with unwavering faith despite His silence.

“I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” At times, we are challenged in entrusting ourselves to God when we feel discriminated against by Jesus. Even if we live a faithful life, do our best to follow the Lord, and offer dedicated services for God and His people, we are tempted to think that

we are being unfairly treated by Jesus when we encounter relatively many hardships. We know that worldly blessings are not necessarily fruits of our faith life. However, there are times when we think that we are receiving less spiritual blessings and graces than beginners in spiritual life or those who do not seem to take their faith seriously. We, then, tend to feel that we are less loved by Jesus, and this makes us want to refuse to believe in God.

We can overcome this if we believe in God's love for us and in His goodness. Grass looks greener on the other side. Often times, one's apparent spiritual gifts from God may lead to his/her arrogance and fall. Not all spiritual blessings generate fruitful outcome. Only humble and trustworthy person can receive God's spiritual gifts as blessings for he is convinced that God gives proper amount of His gifts at the right time. Thus, we should consider differences as God's providence, not partiality. In that way, we can remain steadfast in our faith in God.

"It is not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs." What an offensive remark! The Canaanite woman was likened to a dog only because she was a gentile. From time to time, our pride gets in the way of our faith in God. We have certain expectations of God. We humble ourselves by saying that we are like a worm before Him, yet if we find it difficult to accept anything less than expected. We, then, may get upset with Him and led to disbelief. But, the woman's condescending reply, "Even the dogs eat the scraps that fall from the table of their masters," makes us think. She does not even expect to be treated as someone who deserves to sit at the master's table. Although she knows that she can only eat the scraps that fall from the table, she loves the scraps of blessing or grace. As a result, Jesus gave her the bread that was reserved for the children.

My pride tends to stand out when I am disappointed in what I have received, or when I regard only great blessings as worthwhile and crump blessings as trivial, or when I look at myself as someone who deserve to receive big favors from God. My pride becomes a stumbling block in my firm faith in God. A humble person ardently asks for and gratefully accept God's blessing

regardless of its proportion simply because it's coming from God. Even though they are scraps from the table, they are great blessings since God's love and mercy are melted in them.

The Canaanite woman blamed no one. She did not negate what Jesus said. She neither had hard feelings toward the disciple nor criticized them. She did not complain about Jesus' silence. She did not protest against Jesus' unfair remark. She did not get angry at the insulting words of Jesus. She just humbly accepts it by saying, "Please, Lord."

Humanly speaking, the ways Jesus treats us at times may not be our liking. However, we should not get angry at Him or criticize Him. This should be an attitude of true believers as it enables us to have solid faith in God so that we may hear Him saying to us, "Great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."

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