

Syrophonecian woman in Mark

Harsher than Matthew's account, and worthy of separation.

Mark uses anastase: ARISE to move Jesus to Gentile territory (same verbal as ANESTE: has risen).

Move to Gentile territory important: having fed the 5000 Jews, and declared all food clean, he moves further in.

The woman (gyne) is particularly bold.

She demands healing (alike Elisha earlier in this same territory :2 KINGS 4: ZERAPHAH AND HER SON AND ELISHA.

Healing is similar: by word, and the mother finds the son, like the daughter *kline*: reclining on the bed and at peace.

Locating this reading: in the middle of the two feeding stories: the feeding of the Jews, and the feeding of the Gentiles.

Thus, it is a pivotal and teaching point in Mark's gospel.

Matthew is uncomfortable with aspects of this: waters it down. He places the woman in the open and around disciples. Mark has this intimately IN THE HOUSE and alone.

The dog narrative is important. The term used initially is "little dog" or "house dog" but the throwing of scraps was the wild working dogs (see Lazarus and Dimas).

The woman responds with *little dogs* or *domestic* placing a suggestion of enmity and slavery between the two classes of people.

Matthew talks about her *faith* as a contrast: Mark doesn't. It is the *logos*, the WORD that is important. Because of your WORD your daughter will *aneste*: arise.

The word again.

A double outsider: a woman alone with a man, and non-faith seems to teach Jesus in a most eloquent and plain way that the Word of God is for ALL PEOPLE.

Does Jesus change his mind, or is this the key to understanding the mission statement of Mark "the Good News of Jesus the Christ, the Saviour of the WORLD.?"

A parallel in Q (Matthew and Luke) is the healing of the Centurion's slave. Bruggeman suggested that the implication of the that healing was a Roman whose relationship with his man slave was more than master/servant also causes the odd eyebrow to raise. *Aneste*. Is this rising of the gospel more than we think?

At the heart of all of this is TABLE FELLOWSHIP.

We gather (or at least used to) around the table for important meals. We share. We discuss. We make important decisions.

It was at the heart of the Jewish and Gentile world. And even those considered less gather up the crumbs under that table.

James reminds us that our faith is worthless unless we follow through with action. Faith without work is dead; work not founded in faith has no value.

At this table, Jesus is challenged to “walk the talk” and set his mission to the World, and not just to the 12 tribes of Israel.

He has arisen, and gone deep into Gentile territory. He has been called out by one that is as eloquent and articulate as himself, a *gyne*: a gentile woman.

And as a result, she finds her daughter *kline*, reclined in bed: the same posture of a meal.

What follows next is a healing in which Jesus has to speak to the man in a foreign tongue in order for it occur; and then he feeds the 4000 gentiles.

He is walking the talk.

And where are we in this?

Granted the same mercy.

We cannot presume to come to the Lord's table,  
trusting in our own deservedness to be there,  
but in the many faceted and deep understanding  
that is the mercy of God.  
Like the Gentile woman,  
we are like domestic dogs,  
not worthy of being at the table  
but able to at least digest the scraps that fall our way.  
And whilst we may find the teaching hard,  
like the early followers of Jesus,  
this is the same Lord who always has mercy.  
May we be granted grace to eat the body of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and to drink his blood  
as we incline at the table of the Lord,  
that God may be one in us,  
and we in him. Amen.