My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In this Sunday’s Gospel, the Evangelist tells us that “At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon” (Matthew 15:21). In this Pagan area it is not surprising that He is approached by a Gentile woman, crying out, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon” (Matthew 15:22). Remember, that at this time, the people still held to their old ideas of the Messiah: He would descend from the house of David to overthrow the Romans and restore Israel. No one expected the Savior to concern Himself with Pagans.

This is the reason that the Disciples treat her harshly. They have no pity for her or her daughter, and so they tell Christ, “Send her away, for she is crying after us” (Matthew 15:23). Jesus, who is All-Loving, sees their mistake, and so, He must show them why they are wrong. He does this, by testing the woman.

He explains that He was sent only to the House of Israel—yet she begs more, kneeling in front of Him. And so, he says to her, as a Jew would to a Pagan, “It is not fair to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26). Yet so greatly does she believe in Him that she does not turn away or become angry. She humbles herself and says, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly” (Matthew 15:27-28).

In this moment, Jesus proves to all His Disciples that that things like ethnicity, age, ability, and whether we are men or women, are small compared to that one thing which matters most: True Faith in our Lord. This woman recognized that, despite her dwelling in a foreign land, and being raised as a Pagan, she is not a dog, but a child created in the Image and Likeness of God.

She showed us a future where people need only to accept the reality of our Resurrected Lord and Savior to become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. She also showed us that despite terrible trials and pain we all face in this life, the only necessary thing for us to do is to hold fast to our Lord as a source of comfort and strength, simply saying as she did, “Lord, help me” (Matthew 15:25).

+ALEXIOS
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