

11th Sunday after Pentecost  
August 16th, 2020

“Me Too!” (Matthew 15:27)  
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today’s text is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 15:27

**“And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”**

Here ends our text.

“Silence is golden”. We’ve heard that saying before. Silence is sometimes more powerful than saying anything. When family members come together, for example, after a long absence, often the first moments are a silent embrace. You can picture a member of the armed forces coming home on leave and meeting his or her family. Or, now all too often, a quarantined family member communicates with loved ones through a silent touch on a windowpane. And then, when released with a clean bill of health, before any words are spoken, silent hugs are often exchanged.

On the opposite hand, a disapproving look by a parent toward a son or daughter that has done something wrong, is sometimes more powerful than saying any words at all.

So, when we see Jesus giving the silent treatment to a Canaanite woman, who was not being very silent herself, but cried out for help, this strikes us as odd, doesn’t it? How could Jesus, who loves all people, and would die for all people, be ignoring this woman in her moment of anguish? Was silence golden in this moment? Was it golden for her? Can we also expect moments of silence from our Lord Jesus?

Yes, silence was golden. It was powerful. It was a moment of testing. Last week we saw how the disciples endured a “loud” testing with wind and waves and thunder on the sea. They cried out in fear. For the Canaanite woman, it was a silent test, as she cried out for help. The silence caused the Canaanite woman to defend her trust and belief in Jesus that He was also a Savior for her. God loves to be caught by the promises He has declared in His word. He loves to be trapped by His mercy. He loves to hear someone tell Him, “yet even...”, yet even, there is mercy for me as lowly and undeserving as I am. There are

crumbs of love that graciously fall from the Master's table for all lost people. There at the Master's feet, the little dogs, are not left to starve for they are part of the family too!

The Gentiles might not have been the first to receive the gracious gifts from the Savior. They didn't have the honor of sitting at the table. But waiting underneath the table is not such a bad thing! For the time of the Gentiles did come! There was a plan included them too... after Pentecost, as Paul described in our epistle reading.

This Canaanite woman cut in line a little bit, didn't she? But she had an urgent need. Her daughter was severely demon possessed. She needed help now! She had heard of Jesus helping many people with all sorts of sicknesses and problems. Her cry was simply, "Me too!" Help me too, Lord of all, Savior of all! Look with mercy on me too!

And, with that cry, Jesus was trapped. He had to break His silence. He loved to break His silence! We will see that silence was golden for her. And for all people, including you and me, undeserving Gentile sinners, who cry out to Jesus, "me too!" there is unsurpassed, bountiful forgiveness and love in the crumbs that fall from the Master's table.

- I. Me too! cried out the Canaanite woman to Jesus for crumbs of mercy
- II. Me too! we cry out to Jesus for crumbs of mercy

That phrase, "Me too!" has become part of our society's consciousness in these recent years, hasn't it? It became the identifying phrase for a movement of justice. All who have been harassed or abused sexually, especially in the workplace, and especially women, were encouraged to not keep silent, but cry out for justice. Out fear of retribution from those in power, and possibly shame, women who have been abused have kept silent. But with time, more women broke their silence and received support, strength and sometimes justice for something that they carried alone. It's never easy to say, "me too". It's not easy to carry pain in one's heart because of the sinful actions of others. The "Me Too" movement sought to bring awareness to what women have suffered to help protect others in the future. When the silence was broken, action could begin to be taken.

And as important as this movement is to the well-being of women, and the giving of justice to those who were wronged, it is still a temporary justice. And the healing of the heart can never come from justice served, as significant as that is.

What the Canaanite woman cried out for was justice. But, it was eternal justice that she sought. And it was eternal healing of her soul and her daughter's soul that would not keep her silent. She was confronting demonic possession in her daughter. She had no power over this evil. There were none that could help her with the abuse that she and her

daughter were suffering. None. She came to the only One who was able to deliver this to her.

And what merit did she bring that would cause her to receive the attention of Jesus? Her people, the Canaanites, worshipped many false gods like Baal and Ashera. God had punished the Israelites repeatedly any time they brought these false gods into their communities. He exiled them to wake them up. Where was Ashera, the Canaanite goddess, to help this woman's daughter?

This woman had no case. The Canaanites were included in the list of nations that the Israelites were to destroy and not take up their gods. Listen to the hard words in Deuteronomy 12 that Moses speaks to the people.

**“When the Lord your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ 31 You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.”**

Why should Jesus help this Canaanite? Why should Jesus help any sinner, or any sinner for that matter? For we are all sinners and undeserving to sit at the Master's table. We bring nothing to the table. Yet, this woman continued to cry out, for at the Master's table a sinner finds all things, forgiveness, salvation, healing, and eternal life. Her cries were not golden to the disciples' ears. Send her away! But, they were to Jesus! She persisted in the face of all opposition. She sought justice, not because she deserved it, but because Jesus freely gave it to all people. She sought the justice that comes only from God who offered His Son as the righteous sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Listen to the words of our Old Testament reading in Isaiah 56 again.

**“My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed. 6 “Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants—”**

God has salvation and righteousness for the foreigner also! Isaiah continues:

**“My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” 8 The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says, “Yet I will gather to him others besides those who are gathered to him.”**

What great hope there is even for a Canaanite woman! What hope there is for Gentiles like us!

Jesus told her in the words we hear from Mark 7, in the parallel account:

**“Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”**

Mark includes a phrase which help us understand why the Canaanite woman had reason to hope. Mark says, **“Let the children be filled first...”** First! That means there’s a second and a third and so on. This is not an either/or table of grace, but a both/and. You just have to wait your turn! Who’s going to get the Coronavirus vaccine first is the question that some are raising to try and stir up conflict. Well, as in the past, first responders, doctors and nurses, and those at highest risk like the elderly should receive the vaccine first. But, don’t worry, everyone will get it, every race included! We’ll all have to patiently wait our turn!

And the Canaanite’s turn came, for her answer was what Jesus was waiting to hear. It was what He was wanting to hear! Even the little dogs get the crumbs. Me too! All I want is a crumb of mercy, Lord, Son of David. You are of the lineage of David, but you are my Lord too!

Some may raise their eyebrows to hear Jesus call her a “little dog”. But it was good news to her ears! For it is an endearing term which is used for one’s house pet. And, oh how people love their pets...sometimes more than their family! I remember the story of the Leona Helmsley who died in 2007 and left 12 million for her pet dog, “Trouble” while turning her back on her grandchildren. The little dog lived in luxury until its last day.

Nowadays, pet owners are encouraged to let their dogs watch the dog channel which is specifically made for the stimulation of a dog’s brain. Oh, the pampering that pet owners give their cats and dogs. Their part of the family after all! They’re always in the family photo. Yes, we are the “little dogs” too and part of God’s family!

## II. Me too! we cry out to Jesus for crumbs of mercy

When I was growing up our family had a little tradition with our pet dog. As the dinner meal progressed, Hunter would inch himself closer and closer to the kitchen table. There was an invisible 3 ft. circle around the table that he knew he wasn’t allowed to cross. But, he knew his time was coming. All the scraps that happened to fall from the table during the meal, or were purposely dropped by this stealthy hand, were his. And when our

family closed this meal with a thanksgiving prayer, as soon as Hunter heard the word “Amen”, he rushed under the table and found all the goodies that were left for him.

Amen. Let it be so for our all God’s creatures who God made and provides for. Amen. Let it be so for all God’s people who He feeds with His gracious hand. Oh, the treasured “crumbs” we sinners find at the Master’s Table. Jesus offers Himself, the Bread of Life for us to eat by faith. “Chief of sinners, though I be Jesus shed His blood for me”. Me too!

So, we have been hearing in the past Sundays from the story of the feeding of the 5000. When Jesus saw the multitudes coming, He had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a Shepherd. Jesus told the Canaanite woman, that Jesus came for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, first. But, Jesus also said in John 10, that He had other sheep that needed to be brought into the sheepfold.

**“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one Shepherd.”**

At the Master’s table where His word of salvation is heard, where the voice of the Shepherd is heard, faith is given. The Canaanite woman trusted Jesus voice and Jesus told her, **“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”**

At the Master’s table, the sacraments are freely given. We, undeserving sinners cry out “Me too!”, don’t forget about me! And Jesus graciously washes all of our sins away in our baptisms. We receive justice, God’s justice, His complete pardon. We receive the Christ’s righteousness that covers us and presents us holy to the Lord. We are brought into His sheepfold. Yes, all I want to be is a sheep, sing the children, “Baa, baa, baa, baa”, and eat in the green pastures of His love and forgiveness.

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever. (Psalm 23:5-6)**

We are served at the Master’s table now into eternity! So, we cried out with praise in today’s Psalm 67.

**“Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.”**

For God has made His saving power known to *all* nations, says the Psalmist!

And, at the Master's Table we receive the very body and precious blood of Jesus who offered Himself as the sacrifice for all sins. Take and eat, take and drink and your sins for the forgiveness of your sins! Given and shed for "Me too!" Amen! We come to the altar, to the Master's table, to receive the gracious crumbs of mercy!

And now it's come full circle hasn't it? Paul says in our epistle from Romans 11 that He continues to reach out to the unbelieving Jews so that they come back to the Master's table! How? By the mercy shown to the Gentiles! Oh that the Jews become jealous, in a good way, of the mercy He has shown to the Gentiles!

**"For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all."**

And that is the good news for you and me and all people. God would have mercy on all people. Our cries for crumbs...our "me toos"... would compel Jesus to give what He wants to give...salvation for all. And that moment of silence, as we wait for the Lord's answer, it is a golden moment of silence. For then, He declares His eternal love for me and you. You're welcome at the Master's table! Justice is served! "Great is your faith!"

*"Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, Till all the world adore His sacred name. O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree, As Thou hast promised, draw us all to Thee. Let ev'ry race and ev'ry language tell of Him who saves our lives from death and hell." Amen.*

**"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Galatians 4:7)**