

RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

16 August 2020

callous and cruel. She is simply asking for the healing of her daughter. 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel', he says. 'It is not right to take children's bread and toss it to the dogs.' Jesus has already welcomed Gentiles, and continues to do so, so we need to recognise what is happening here. It sounds harsh, but I think it is more irony than sarcasm, a point several commentators suggest doesn't translate well into English. It is well placed language designed to get a response. Sometimes that is needed. There is certainty banter here, and probably humour, as the woman's swift retort highlights: 'Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table.' She gets what Jesus is saying, and Jesus understands her. They reach common ground. 'Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.'

Nothing Taken For Granted. The Canaanite woman's request may be granted, and her daughter healed, but nothing should be taken for granted if the relationship with Jesus isn't there. It is her own personal faith in Jesus that has made the difference, not just because she was a Gentile now included in the covenant, and certain not because she was a Jew (which she wasn't). There will be Jews and Gentiles who accept that Jesus is the Saviour Messiah, and those who will not. Jesus confirms that 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots',

meaning those from within his own Jewish family who have presumed wrongly; likewise Paul warns the Gentiles, 'If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive root, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches.' There is now no Jew nor Gentile, all are one in Christ.

The Olive Tree. I'd love to plant an olive tree in my garden. Listening to these passages I am reminded of the importance of it being grafted into strong root stock. Our challenge is to be rooted deeply in Christ rather than the habits, practices, and unnecessary traditional ways we may have done things before.

SUGGESTED SONG

When We Walk With The Lord
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HSD1c0Geqc>

BLESSING

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us, so that your ways may be known on earth, and your salvation among all nations. (Psalm 67:1-2)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and always. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

Have you noticed how easy it is to get possessive about things? It is an instinct that rises to the fore every summer when the local beaches get crowded by visitors, and we can't wait until the Autumn when we get our beaches back to ourselves again. Although we know we should be grateful for the visitors who do come this year, given that they won't fully compensate for all the disruption to our lives that this Coronavirus pandemic has brought, we still can't quite shake off that feeling. We can so easily believe that something that belongs to everyone, or to someone else, actually belongs to us. And woe betide if they should change the design or recipe of our favourite this, that, or the other!

This instinct or dynamic has both a positive and a negative side to it. On one hand a sense of ownership of something can increase our responsibility for it. If we believe it is ours, or that we belong, then we will look after it, take care of it, nurture it, and work towards its overall wellbeing. On the other hand we can want that thing to stay the same, to be fixed in time somehow, to always remain as we remembered it in the past, no matter how impractical that might be

or out of touch that might leave us, resistant to change or development, potentially leading to atrophy and death.

Both our main Bible Readings this morning relate in one way or other to the Jewish community who passionately believed that the covenant promises of God belonged to them; yet their possessiveness had caused them to neglect the covenant responsibilities that they were to be a light to all nations, and a means of God's salvation for Gentiles too. In order to protect their investment the Pharisees and teachers of the law had come up with a set of rules and regulations that nobody could ever hope to live up to, and even permitted corrupt practices such as setting aside resources for God's use whilst continuing to benefit from them, and refusing to let them be used by anyone else, such as their needy parents, because they belong to God. Jesus' condemnation of them is withering. They are hypocrites.

Indeed Jesus condemns all who prevent others from receiving his love and grace through their legalism and dogmatism. "These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules." (Isaiah 29:13)

Our Zoom Sunday Morning Fellowship Meeting is at 10.30am and our Monday Prayer Meeting at 7.00pm. If you are able to join us, you will be welcome. If you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs. There are other helpful links at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

PRAY FOR RYDE 2020

Launched on 1 July 2020, the themes for prayer are published daily. Visit prayfor-ryde.org for more information, videos and the link to the daily 7pm Zoom prayer meeting. Here are last week's themes: 9 August, Women's Refuge; 10 August, Chain Stores & Supermarkets; 11 August, Ferries, Hovercraft & Catamaran; 12 August, Trains; 13 August, Sports Clubs; 14 August, Local History Groups; 15 August, Bus & Taxi Drivers. We will update the list here each week until 23 September.

CALL TO WORSHIP

May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. May the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations of the earth. May the peoples praise you, God; may all the peoples praise you. The land yields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. May God bless us still, so that all the ends of the earth will fear him. (Psalm 67:3-7)

BIBLE READINGS

[Psalm 67](#)

[Matthew 15:1-28](#)

[Romans 11:1-32](#)

SUGGESTED SONGS

How Great Thou Art
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_dtbmVdQY4

You're Beautiful
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=riO7nzyqnSw>

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for this new day and the fresh opportunity to live and to serve you. We confess that we often get things wrong, with you and with other people. However, we want to be the best that we can be. So please forgive us for our failings, which you already know and you love us in spite of, and help us to see things through open eyes and pure hearts, the way you see things. Holy Spirit, show us the things that we need to change in our lives, and then set about changing those things that need to change but which we have no control over. We give you permission to transform us more and more into the likeness of Jesus, whom we love and serve. We pray this not for our own sake, but to give God the glory and for the sake of our friends, neighbours and strangers who you call us to live among. Amen.

TO PONDER

When we read about the disciples of Jesus being criticised for not washing their hands before they eat, it certainly resonates with us today. Of course they didn't know about infection control back then, and they certainly weren't affected by Coronavirus and the additional requirements to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. The practices the Pharisees and teachers of the law were focused on were ritualistic religious requirements, 'merely human rules' as Jesus calls them. Yet this is just the tip of the iceberg. There were laws that the Pharisees should be keeping, but had found ingenious and devious ways to bypass. Have a think about this. What rules and regulations do we need to keep today, and why? Particularly in our life as Christian disciples, which things are really necessary and which things do we not need to worry about? If they had been living today, the disciples would be rightly rebuked for not washing their hands! So, what difference does time and context make to the things we need to do and the ways we do them?

SUGGESTED SONGS

He Will Hold Me Fast
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=936BapRFHaQ>

Purify My Heart (Refiner's Fire)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQclw7PtXwc>

MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction. There are so many things that we have to do for ourselves. Our faith needs to be ours, we cannot rely on someone else's faith to save us. Baptism is something we need to want for ourselves as believers, not something that can be done to us reliant on the promises of others. Being a member of the church is something that we do, something that is active, not something that is true just because our name is on a list. Of course there are rights and privileges, which Scripture is quite clear about as sons and daughters of the living God, yet only in so much as we take up the responsibilities of our place in the family, as active members of the body of Christ. Who could be in and who should remain outside of God's family was a big issue for the Pharisees and teachers of the law; an issue that was still rumbling on decades later when Paul was writing to the church in Rome. Paul reminds Israel that they remain God's chosen people, but that they had kept the family benefits to themselves and not shared them with the world. Applying David's words from Psalm 69:22, their table had become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. Gentiles are most definitely part of God's family.

The Canaanite Woman. Which is why when we read Jesus' initial conversation with the Canaanite woman it sounds so