**“Others Gathered”**

Psalm 67

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

Romans 11:1-2a, 13-15, 28-32

Matthew 15:21-28

Pentecost 12

From Isaiah 56: “The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, ‘I will gather yet others to Him besides those already gathered’” … and from Jesus, recorded in Matthew 15 to a Canaanite woman from the region of Tyre ad Sidon. “’O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly”.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Bridge**

Strangers can, sometimes, **be strange**. It’s where the word came from. What / who we’re not **used-to** is strange **TO US**. These days, it’s more than “**different**” that we contend with, it’s **diametrically opposite sometimes**. We’re a polarized society. Mostly it’s safe to say that “people are just people”, yet this polarization of ideas and temperaments makes someone new a potential **undesirable meet**.

Most of us, though, have to interact with strangers for work or school or in our neighborhoods. One, sometimes, can’t pick our neighbors entirely, and working with someone gets expected for the time of a collaboration or in service to a customer, stranger or not. But it isn’t required to consider **brotherhood or sisterhood with strangers** unless drawn to do so by God’s expectation dictated by, for instance, texts like todays.

**Text**

Jesus **appeared** to have “**walked right by**” a stranger who was trying to get His attention. The Son of God **seemed** to have even **ignored** this Canaanite woman from that district that’s not His own local one (beyond traditional Hebrew borders).

And there’s, probably, an **appropriate lesson to be learned from this initial reaction of His**. **Strangers from God** ought not to **expect His attention**. Just because a pagan hollers-out to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit doesn’t mean the Godhead is forced to listen. There’s no promise for such an expectation. There’s no promise that just-ole-anyone can constantly and consistently ignore the Lord God and yet expect them Him to jump at a random call somewhere His direction. It’s an **arrogant assumption**, and it’s not Scriptural to expect Him to answer. **Strangers** aren’t promised to be heard … like **friends** are.

And (with that) we find two different **populations** in **audiences** of the event accounted by one of them, Matthew. **Disciples** were all there. Jesus, had just before, come from criticizing **Pharisees**, so all **the house of Israel** was represented and addressed in this exchange. Supposed **friends** were with and surrounding Jesus, it was to them that He discussed and talked and heard … and commented toward.

He’d withdrawn outside of Israel, north and coastal, The region of Tyre and Sidon is where the account occurs. And there, there was an extremely mixed crowd, mostly of **strangers to Israel**, the majority of the residents **foreign** to Israelites, pagan and secular and just different / even diametrically different and even at odds or opposed with Israel in most things.

And there a stranger made a **compelling** **ARGUMENT** to the Lord, and it was the **ARGUMENT** that Jesus wanted His disciples to hear and see … and **from whom**. **She** (someone who, culturally wasn’t supposed to address a Hebrew man) came to Him “**crying**, ‘**Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon**”, and the intimation was that she recognized that **He was the promised “Son of David”**, and **what that means**.

“Send her away” disciples asked Jesus to do. She was bothering **them** (a **nuisance / not to be troubled with**). Jesus **played** “hard to get” … but that, ultimately, to gain her **ARGUMENT**, which was the point … and He wanted disciples (Hebrews disciples) to hear it: “but she came and **knelt before Him**, saying, ‘Lord, help me.’ And He answered, ‘It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’ She said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet **even the dogs eat the Crumbs that fall from their Masters’ table**.’” ….

Think about that! **Dogs gaining and eating the “Crumbs that fall from their Masters’ table” …** **there’s** **the lesson**.

The Isaiah text got coupled to this Gospel reading because it illustrated this as the prophecy of **the fulfillment of exactly this**. “**FOREIGNERS GETTING JOINED TO THE LORD, TO MINISTER TO HIM, TO LOVE THE NAME OF THE LORD, AND TO BE HIS SERVANTS /** **FOR EVERYONE** **who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast TO My covenant—THESE** **I will bring to My Holy Mountain, and make THEM joyful in My House of Prayer; THEIR burnt offerings and THEIR sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a** “**House of Prayer for** **ALL PEOPLES. The Lord God,** **Who** **GATHERS THE OUTCASTS OF ISRAEL, DECLARES, ‘I WILL GATHER YET OTHERS TO HIM BESIDES THOSE ALREADY GATHERED**.’”

**Application**

Paul differentiates Israelites from Gentiles, yet his point, really, is that **ALL are, originally, Gentiles away from and apart from / outside-of God’s Gospel grace**. Foreigners are, just, everyone fallen and in desperate need of saving. Hebrew disciples, even, are just and also Canaanite women properly to be ignored by God without and apart from a stance from within His mercy and willingness to “gather” to the Heavenly Father “friends” fed beneath His table Good “Crumbs”.

And **what is** that “Crumb” … the “Crumb” pushed off of the “Master’s table” (out of the Master domain of the throne room of Heaven, to fall to the ground so that dogs could eat and enjoy?

It’s the **Bread that is of Life sent from the Father’s presence, incarnate (made flesh) to be on earth and, ultimately, become sacrificial and sacramental nourishment,**

**down from the Divine Throne “Meat indeed” / “Bread of Life” …**

**and that FOR anyone who humbly begs, knowing themselves an unworthy dog,**

**under the proper table**.

The **Canaanite woman** **got it right …** **SO RIGHT**. The disciples were to **learn there from that**. “’O woman, **great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed instantly**.”

“**Gentiles” are, really**, just “**others**” not naturally Sons or (for that matter) Daughters of God, which the world gave up when Adam and Eve gave that up in a horribly bad call. “Israel” doesn’t exist **BY NATURE**, but only **by gift**, “**chosen** **by God**”, “**justified freely** **by grace**, **received** **through a faith passively enjoyed by those given it**, **humble before God and men as not self-sufficient, but God saved / rescued / demons cast from us to be made beloved with Christ Jesus under the Father, thankfully His by no effort of our own, but by His mercy sending His own Son as “morsel” perfect and filling, to die for all mankind and, yet, be appreciated by people receive His graciousness, confessing our sin and confessing His and His Father’s NAME upon a mercy bestowed**. ….

It’s **for “friends” made that** **(foreigners made children)** that God promises to hear their cries and their every utterance and need.

Both lessons needed to be learned by Hebrew disciples and a Canaanite woman … and any Canaanite or Greek or German or American citizen or, even, the blessed Church. We need to remember **from where we’ve been brought … and into what we’ve been blessed to gain, by God’s mercy and will**. And we need to remember who else is wanted in that eternal and divine (well-fed) family.

It will be in just a few moments where we’ll **graphically gain the “Crumb” of the Father’s “Master table”**. The sacrificed then resurrected and living and ruling Jesus, in body and blood raised to forever life and life-giving consequence, is ours to enjoy and taste. May we never forget the wonder of the gift … and its magnitude and Source. **Thank You for it all, Lord God**, in +Jesus’ name. Amen.