

Monday Quotes



Grain

“Open your eyes to the beauty around you, open your mind to the wonders of life, open your heart to those who love you, and always be true to yourself.” –Maya Angelou

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

Field

22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly. Matthew 15: 22-28

Thoughts

A chaplain I worked with used to take in foster girls who had been sex trafficked (boys are trafficked too). She said it was extremely difficult for the youth not to view themselves through the eyes of their former traffickers. Some would run back to their traffickers, the way domestically abused adults return five, six, or more times to their abusers before making a final break. The chaplain talked about one of her foster children who returned to her trafficker, but life with him was brutal again. One night, there was an opening to escape him, when she had a vision of Jesus; she later said it revealed the lies the trafficker told about who she was and the wrong image others in society created of her. This was her nudge to finally leave for good and return to her foster home. Having faith in God's abundant love leads us to advocating for our neighbors, but also for ourselves and loved ones. Today's scripture reading demonstrates that.

So many passages in the Gospels are about Jesus including people who are viewed as “other.” But in Matthew 15, a woman stands up to Jesus and his disciples after all of them appear to be pushing her away for being an outsider. The Canaanite woman, nameless in the story, continued with her plea for help and argued for fairness. In the end, Jesus in so many words responded, Fantastic job! "Woman, great is your faith!" Wait, was Jesus testing her? Or, was he having a bad day when he said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” allowing exclusive voices to momentarily influence him? Maybe he was still growing, or he was really speaking to the disciples and other onlookers.

Whatever way we interpret Jesus initially denying Canaanite woman's plea, how God worked through the woman was remarkable. As a female living in a first century patriarchal culture and who was foreigner to the Israelites, apparently alone in this scenario, the woman had every reason to cower. The No from someone she obviously recognized as a great spiritual leader and the disciples' overt disapproval of her presence must have seemed like formidable barriers. What gave her the confidence to continue with her request? Desperation for finding healing for her daughter had to play a role. But Jesus pointed to her faith. She had faith in God's abundant love that stretched across boundaries. May God grant us the grace to know we have permission to do the same. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy Crane