

## Pastor's Column

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### Faith of the Canaanite Woman

*“She comes and speaks  
Finding Jesus, seeking hope and healing  
She is ethnically wrong  
Her sex prevents her from asking help  
The daughter has not been right  
Suffering, they say under a demon  
The mind never clear  
The heart never finding a moment of peace  
Faith and desperation make an interesting mix  
Finding the healer who has found success  
Noting it involves a trip into a strange land  
A land questioning her very right to exist  
Though she speaks Jesus acts as if he does not hear  
As if she is not worth noticing  
He continues to lecture to his apostles  
She does not take silence for an answer  
She continues to speak, asking for mercy, praying  
When Jesus takes notice he turns away  
Speaks some words to the disciples about this woman  
Tells them that it is not right to give the children's food  
to such a dog  
The mind staggers at such cruelty  
To ignore the woman's very existence  
To insult her as if she is not even there  
Not even willing to address her directly  
One is shocked at this Jesus  
Is this the Jesus who had compassion on lepers?  
Is this the Jesus who left Palestine and entered Greek cities?  
Is this the Jesus who showed compassion to the Roman officer?*

*One is shocked at this Jesus  
Is this the Jesus who chose to cross Samaria?  
The Jesus who showed compassion to the Samaritan,  
The Jesus who offered nothing but love?  
One is shocked at this Jesus  
Is this the Jesus who forgave the adulteress?  
Seeing the men holding the stones  
Yet his words to the woman were “neither do I condemn you”  
The story does not end in harshness  
Jesus begins to speak as expected  
The woman addresses the Lord to his feet  
Pointing out that the dogs are allowed to eat the table scraps  
One wonders at the words of Jesus,  
What he knows and does not know  
We know he answered according to the questioner's heart  
His harsh words were spoken to the disciples –  
Did he know the faith of the woman?  
Did he only speak the thought of the disciples out loud?  
Did Jesus wait for the rebuttal?  
A lesson taught by the sharp mind given to the ‘least of these?’  
The final words were then spoken  
‘Good answer’  
‘Your daughter is healed, you have great faith’  
Apparent cruelty followed by high praise  
So difficult to read and understand the contents of the hearts  
The result is clear, for the daughter was in her right mind.”  
—Michael Jay*