

A PRAYER FOR EVERYBODY

NO. 2597

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1898
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT CHRIST CHURCH, WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD
(During the renovation of the Tabernacle)
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 23, 1883

“Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.”
Matthew 15:25

OUR text tells us of a case of real distress, and it shows us how a woman prayed when in agony. It is a good thing when young people begin to write, especially if they think of writing for the press, if they will, before they send away their manuscript, take their pen, and strike out every superfluous word. Even as a general rule, for conversation or for correspondence, every word that we can do without is, better omitted.

As it is difficult to travel if we are encumbered with a great quantity of luggage, so is it difficult to make our meaning clear when it is crushed beneath the weight of too many words. Take your pen then, young author, sit down quickly, and strike out all the merely ornamental words that you have written, and when you have got rid of them, you will probably have some respectable sentences left.

This woman had no need to omit any of her words, for she was not in a state of mind to utter a sentence that could be pruned of a single word. She was in such a condition that every word that came out of her mouth was like hot shot poured out of her heart. I had almost said that every letter, as well as every syllable and every word she uttered, was coined in blood. She speaks, at any rate, burning language, at blood heat, and the words, as they drop into my ear come with a kind of overpowering force, so great is their intensity, “Lord, help me.” There is not a syllable to spare, the words are all short, simple, living, burning, from the first one to the last.

I like this kind of pleading, and I commend it to you who are accustomed to pain and sufferings, or who have to do with this rough world, as many of you have. You find that in your time of distress, you have to throw away a great many merely ornamental things, and you only keep what is real, solid, and substantial.

Here is a woman who must deal in realities, for she has at home a real daughter, really tormented by a real devil, but she believes that before her there is a real Savior, and she intends not to let Him slip away through any lack of intensity on her part. She follows Him with clamorous cries, if she be repulsed, she still pursues Him, and when at last, He gives her what looks like a wry word, she will not believe it, but she adores Him, she worships Him, and she cries out of the depths of her soul, “Lord, help me.”

I want to speak specially about her prayer. We have begun with it, and we will end with it, but before I get to the prayer, there are two or three other things I want to hold up for your admiration.

I. First, let us ADMIRE THIS WOMAN'S IMPORTUNITY.

I do not hesitate to say, although I am speaking in a large assembly, that there is not one person here who ever did experience such rebuffs, or meet with such difficulties as this woman did. There may be some who would have a right to stand up and say, “Ah, sir! you do not know my experience, my coming to Christ was very hard.”

I do not know your experience, my dear friend, but I feel sure of this, that your experience cannot be compared with hers, for in her coming to Christ, she had to surmount greater difficulties than you ever

knew, and greater difficulties than any of you are realizing now, even though you should be almost driven to despair by the obstacles in your pathway. This poor woman had three special difficulties.

The first was that *the Lord Jesus Christ did not answer her cries*, “He answered her not a word.” He was Himself the Word, and yet, He did not give her the word she wanted. Jesus is the blessed Spokesman of the Eternal, by whom God breaks the infinite silences, and speaks to man, yet “He answered her not a word.” He was in the habit of answering prayer, yet He gave her not a single word of response to her petition. He had never been known to turn away a sincere suppliant without a kind reply, yet He gave her not one word.

But even then, though she had not a word from Christ to hang her hopes upon—not a promise, not a single word of invitation or encouragement—yet still she clung to Christ, and would not let Him go until He blessed her.

There is not one of you, dear friends, who can say that our Lord Jesus Christ has not spoken to you, for here is a Book full of His words—a Book, mark you, not a line of which this poor woman had ever seen. She lived in a region where the Old Testament was altogether unknown and the New Testament was not then written.

But you have the words of Christ in your homes. They lie upon the pew ledge in front of you. You can carry them in your pockets wherever you go. A two-penny Testament can be had by everybody, so it cannot be said that Jesus Christ has not given you a word. Then how often have you had good words from Christ through the preacher of the Gospel! How often has He let fall handfuls on purpose for you, poor troubled soul! You have had sweet words, gracious words—

“Wonderful words of life,”—

and plenty of them too. Therefore I say that there is one point in which this woman’s difficulties far exceeded yours, and as she pressed on until she gained the desire of her heart, will not you do likewise?

Do not remember how the men of Nineveh hung on to nothing but this—“Who can tell?” It was a very poor little nail that they clung to—“Who can tell?” Yet they did cling to it, and they found mercy. There have been some who have found comfort in what God has not said, “I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain,” so will you not find comfort in what He has said?

Especially may you be cheered and blessed by such words as these—“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” “I will pardon them whom I reserve.” “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”

Now, between “not a word,” and all these words, what a difference there is, and so, what a difference there is between you and this poor woman! How much you have to help you! Come then, to Jesus, come even now, pleading the promise and you shall not go away without the blessing.

Next, this woman had another great difficulty, and that was, that *all the disciples were against her*. They said to Jesus, “Send her away, for she crieth after us. She disturbs us, we cannot hear Your exposition. We cannot be heard ourselves, which is also very important. ‘Send her away, send her away.’ She has such a harsh voice, she does not speak our language, she talks in the tongue of Tyre or Sidon, and we do not like it. She is so troublesome, she is first bawling out after John, and next she is calling after Peter, there is no keeping her quiet. ‘Send her away, send her away.’”

Now, although this must have been a very secondary thing compared with Christ’s silence, yet it may have bred in her heart great discouragement, and she may have felt in her spirit that she could not long hold out, yet she did hold out until the blessing came. Now, I venture to say that there is no one here who is seeking the Savior who has had Christ’s disciples against him.

O dear heart, there are many in this house tonight who are not against you! They would do anything they could for you, to cheer you, and bring you to the Savior. I know some who, when this service is over, will very likely waylay you in the aisles. They are always looking out to find persons who may be

under concern of soul, to see whether they can utter a word of encouragement to them. They will not say, “Send her away.” They will want you to stop a little while, and will talk to you very earnestly about your soul, and try to point out to you the way into life and peace. I am sure that you have not the difficulty that this poor woman had.

If you had, I would still exhort you to imitate her importunity, but as you have not, let her importunity shame you if you are in the least degree backward, and come you at once boldly to the Savior and say, “I must now find the mercy that I need, I cannot go away until I do find it.” God grant that many of you may make that good resolution!

There was, however, a third discouragement which must have been greater than the other two, and that was, that when the Savior did speak, He said, *“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* It was as much as saying, “I am not sent to this woman of Tyre and Sidon, I can do nothing for her within the bounds of my commission,” and yet, when the woman heard that sentence, instead of being daunted by it, she came to Christ, and worshipped Him, and said, “Lord, help me.”

I may be addressing someone who has been thinking over the doctrine of election—a doctrine which ought not to give trouble to anybody, but it often does. It may be that you have said in your heart, “What if I should not be elected? What if the blessed things of the covenant of grace should not be for me?” I beseech you, do not be persuaded by Satan to stop there, but go to Jesus just as this woman did. She seemed to say to herself, “Whether this Christ of God be sent to a Tyre and Sidon woman or not, I shall go and worship Him, and cry, ‘Lord, help me.’”

She heard that Christ was not sent to that country, but she seemed to say, “If You are not sent, Lord, yet still I am here. If You were not sent to me, perhaps I am sent to You. She felt that there must be some way of getting over the difficulty. She believed that, by some kind of ingenuity, even if she could not tell how, the difficulty could be removed. This glorious, loving Savior, into whose radiant face she looked, could not repulse her, she felt that He could not.

And dear friends, I can no more believe that Christ will repulse a sinner than I can look up to the sun, and believe that it will ever freeze me. It cannot be, it is too bright, too full of warmth, to turn me into ice, and I cannot look into the Savior’s face, and believe that He will ever cast away a poor soul that comes to Him. So, somehow or other, this poor woman seemed to feel, “I cannot get over the difficulty, but I will go round it.”

That is always a wise method, for my own part, I have often learned what a joy it is to cast anchor under the lee of a great impassable thing that I cannot understand. I like, if I am traveling, to see the river open up, and to find my barque gliding gently along between the surrounding hills, but if all of a sudden, I find that the channel is entirely blocked up, I am just as comfortable if the sailor lets down the anchor, and we spend the night under the lee of some big, towering rock. Why not? It is very well to understand things, but I do not know that we are much the better for understanding anything.

Understanding sometimes puffs us up, but we are always benefited by believing. So, my friend, when you come hard and fast against something which you cannot get over, do not try to get over it, but just pull up there, and say, “If it be so, let it be so, but anyhow, God is gracious, Christ is merciful, and I am going to cast myself at the crucified Savior’s feet, and to trust in Him.”

Now this woman, notwithstanding this terrible discouragement, after actually hearing the Savior say, “I am not sent to you,” yet nevertheless persevered with her appeal. None of you have ever heard Him say that you are not among the elect. Why should not you be elect as well as anybody else? None of you have ever climbed to heaven, and found that your names were not written in the roll of God’s chosen, and you never will climb there to read it at all. All such things are hidden from your sight. Your business is to cling to Christ’s dear feet, and never let Him go until He grants you the desire of your heart.

That is my first remark,—admire this woman’s importunity.

II. Now for a few minutes I invite you, dear friends, to ADMIRE HER RESORT TO THE LORD HIMSELF, “Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.”

She is to be admired, first, *because she turned away from the disciples*. I could not help smiling as I read just now what the disciples said, “Send her away; for she crieth after us.” Poor soul, she never cried after them, she knew better than to do that. It was their own self-importance that made them think so. If she had begun to cry after them, their black looks would soon have stopped her from doing so, but she did not make such a mistake as that. “Oh, no!” she seemed to say, “It is not after you that I am crying, neither Peter, nor James, nor John, can give me the help I need.”

So is it with us, we are not crying after the saints, as some poor souls are doing, hoping that saints, long since dead and buried, who have done with this mortal life, may make intercession for them before the throne of God. No, we are not crying after them, if any of you are, I pray you cease that folly, and cry to the Master, and let this be your cry, “Lord, help me.” Not, “Peter, help me,” nor “Mary, help me,” but “Jesus, help me,” “Lord, help me.” He can do it, but the saints cannot.

They were poor sinners, who had to be saved by grace like the rest of us, and they are singing now to the praise of the God of grace, but they have no grace to give to us. Mind, dear friends, that you never think of going to them, but go straight away to the Master, as this poor woman did, “Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.”

She went, also, *away from all prescribed paths*. The Savior seemed to say to her that there was no way for her to come, He did but seem to tell her that the road at present was intended specially for the house of Israel, and He had come to bless them beyond all others. But the woman seems to say, “If there is not a road open, I must make one, I will go over hedge and ditch, but I must find my Savior.” Her heart was so strongly resolved upon coming to Christ that, whether she came in the orthodox way or not, she must come.

Oh, how I wish that some poor sinner here might be so stirred up with the same desire that he would say, “I must find the Lord Jesus somehow. If I have heard one minister, and God has not blessed him to me, I will hear another, and if hearing the Gospel is not blessed to me, I will sit up at night, and read the Scriptures, and if the Bible is not blessed to me, I will go on my knees, and cry to God for mercy, and I will never cease crying to Him till the mercy comes. For somehow or somewhere, I must get it. I must find God in Christ Jesus, that I may obtain the salvation of my soul.”

Yet once more, dear friends, I admire this woman, and I hold her up as a model for your imitation, because she resorted to Christ. Away from the disciples, and from all prescribed paths, *she went to HIM*. Yes, that is the beauty of it, “Then came she *and worshipped HIM*.” She fell at His feet, and her prayer was, “Lord, help me.”

She did not prescribe how she should be helped, for she believed in His wisdom. She did not dictate to Him what He should do, for she believed in His judgment and prudence. All she said was, “Lord, help me.” She did not think that her case was beyond His power, for she believed in His almightiness, so she prayed, “Lord, help me.” She did not think her case could be beyond His pity, so she pleaded, “‘Lord, help me.’ True, I am only a Gentile dog, but ‘Lord, help me.’ I am a Syrophenician woman, but ‘Lord, help me.’ I have a poor daughter possessed of a devil, but ‘Lord, help me.’”

She pleads thus with Christ, and it is wonderful what such pleading can accomplish. Do not come here, and merely repeat certain prayers, do not go home to your closet simply to say prayers as if to nobody or to everybody, but get absolutely at the feet of Jesus, and plead with Him, saying, “Lord, I will not let thee go except thou bless me,” for that is the kind of prayer that opens the gates of heaven, the prayer to which nothing can be denied.

III. Before I come to the closing portion of my discourse, I ask you to ADMIRE THIS WOMAN’S APPROPRIATION OF HER DAUGHTER’S CASE TO HERSELF.

I urge you who seek the conversion of others to follow her example. Notice, she did not pray, “Lord, help my daughter,” but “Lord, help *me*.” At first, she pleaded for her daughter, and mentioned the circumstances of her case, but as she grew more intense and fervent in her supplication, there seemed to be no division between the mother and the daughter. The mother had absorbed the daughter, the great heart of the pleading one seemed to contain the one pleaded for with all her agony, “Lord, help *me*.”

Do you catch the idea? When you are pleading with God for your Sunday school class, it is not simply Mary, and Jane, and Sarah, that you pray for, but you have incorporated all those girls into yourself, and therefore you plead, "Lord, help me." And you, my brother, need to get to this point if you are really to prevail for your scholars, that you will not be asking for John, and Thomas, and William alone, but you have so identified yourself with John, and Thomas, and William, that if they are lost, it almost seems as if you are lost, and if they are saved, it will be another heaven to you for each one of them to be in heaven.

You know that, when Elisha restored the Shunammite's dead son, "he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child." Then, as it were, they became one, and then it was that the new life came through the prophet into the dead child, and this is the way to pray for our scholars and our hearers.

I am sure that, if a minister wants conversions, he must identify himself with his people. There are people nowadays, who make a difficulty about Moses praying for Israel, "If thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of book which thou hast written," and they raise questions about Paul being willing to be separated from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh.

Oh, but there is no difficulty in the matter if you once get to feel such an intense love for the souls of men that you would, as it were, pawn your own salvation, and count it little if you might but bring the people to the Savior's feet. A man who has never felt that willingness does not yet know the true throb of a pastor's heart, he has not been ordained to be a shepherd if he would not lay down his life for the flock if it were necessary. When you get to that point, then the blessing will come. "Lord, help *me—me*, for in my own proper self, I do contain these people for whom my prayer is put up."

IV. Now, lastly—yet it is the chief part of the subject—I want YOU TO ADMIRE THIS WOMAN'S PRAYER ITSELF.

I began my discourse by pointing out to you its sententiousness, its freedom from superfluities. Now, again I bid you admire it for the same reason. Notice that *it asks everything in one little word*, "Lord, help me." It seems to me to be a very comprehensive prayer, for although it uses but one very small verb, that verb means a great deal more than at first sight it appears to mean.

When the woman said, "Lord, help me," she did not mean what we generally mean by help, that is, "Lord, do something for me, and I will do the rest." She could not do anything towards the casting out of the devil from her child, so by that word "help" she meant, "Lord, do it all," for that is the kind of help Christ gives.

Have you ever heard of the poor half-witted being who, nevertheless, had sense enough to understand the Gospel? Someone said to him, "Well, Johnny, how were you saved?" "Oh!" he answered, "Jesus Christ did His part, and I did all the rest." "And pray Johnny, what did you do?" "Well," he said, "Jesus Christ saved me, and I did all I could to prevent it," and that is about all "the rest" that any of us ever do. We do not really help in the matter of our salvation, for we cannot, it is Christ's work from first to last, and grace must have all the praise for it. Blessed be that sovereign grace of God!

But that word "help" did mean just this—"Lord, wilt thou do all that is wanted? I am in a dreadful fix, I cannot cure my poor child, and I cannot pray aright about her. You have almost shut my mouth by that last word, 'I am not sent,' yet 'Lord, help me.' Teach me what to ask for, teach me how to ask for it, teach me what to think of next, teach me what to do next. Never was a poor creature in such a plight as I am, Lord, do get me out of it, do save my poor daughter." It was asking everything in a word which did not at first sight seem to mean much, "Lord, help me."

And if you notice, *the prayer was one which brought Christ and the poor woman together*, "Lord" and "*me*." And here is the link, "Lord, help me." Some of you poor creatures want to get to Christ by doing something for Him. You have undertaken a very heavy task, you will never get to Him that way. The only way is for Him to stoop down, and do something for you, so you shall go into partnership, and

have fellowship with one another, and if you agree to this arrangement, He will find everything that is needed, and you shall have it all given to you gratis.

Those must be the terms—that He, from first to last, must do all, and be all, and have all the glory. If you will agree to that condition, the company may be started at once, and what a blessed company it shall be—the Lord and yourself linked together by that little word “help”—“Lord, help me.” If you are to succeed as this woman did, you must imitate her perseverance even in spite of Christ’s apparent refusal to help her.

This is a lesson which is taught us in many other parts of the Word. She that wins her suit with the unjust judge is the importunate widow who will not be refused. He that gets the loaves at midnight is the man who continues knocking till his friend rouses himself, and gives him all he asks. O beloved, plead thus with God! Plead earnestly, plead for your salvation as you would for your life, lift up the cry—

*“Gracious Lord, incline Thine ear,
My requests vouchsafe to hear;
Hear my never-ceasing cry;
Give me Christ, or else I die.*

*“Wealth and honor I disdain,
Earthly comforts all are vain;
These can never satisfy,
Give me Christ, or else I die,”—*

and you shall surely have Christ, for He never finally refuses to listen to such pleading as that.

Lastly, dear friends, I commend this prayer to you because *it is such a handy prayer*. You can use it when you are in a hurry, you can use it when you are in a fright, you can use it when you have not time to bow your knee. You can use it in the pulpit if you are going to preach, you can use it when you are opening your shop, you can use it when you are rising in the morning. It is such a handy prayer that I hardly know any position in which you could not pray it, “Lord, help me.”

Often, when you are brought to some great emergency, you may use it, and feel as if it was the best prayer that was ever composed. Do you suffer much? Do you sometimes fall back upon the pillows feeling that you cannot bear any more? Does it not seem natural then for you to pray, “Lord, help me”? Do you often lie awake at night? Have you counted the clock round in your seasons of suffering? Oh, then, I know that you will feel that this is a good prayer to offer in the middle of the night, “Lord, help me.”

Do you wake up in the morning just as weary as when you went to bed? Are you gradually losing strength? Are you slowly wasting away? Do they tell you that you will soon be gone? Oh, then, as the clock ticks, I think it may remind you of this prayer, “Lord, help me. Lord, help me. Lord, help me.” It is a sick woman’s prayer—a sick child’s prayer—a sick man’s prayer. It will suit any of you at such times.

Or are some of you losing a great deal of money just now? Is business very bad? Are you out of a situation? Have you walked up and down the streets, and worn your shoes out, and yet found nothing to do? I think this prayer will suit you at this moment, and all day tomorrow, “Lord, help me, Lord, help me”—for He can, you know. The keys of providence are not taken out of His hand yet. He knows how to deliver the righteous out of all their troubles. Go to Him with this prayer, “Lord, help me.”

Are any of you very much tempted from without by surroundings that are peculiarly dangerous? Are you tempted by Satan? Are any of you exposed just now to some very special trial? Have your feet almost gone? Have your steps well-nigh slipped? Now here is a prayer that will just hold you up, and keep you from falling, “Lord, help me. Lord, help me.”

“No,” says someone, “you have not touched my case yet.” Perhaps you are going to a new situation, or you are just undertaking fresh duties, and you wonder how you will be able to fill the sphere which was occupied so well by the one who went before you? Well, do not enter upon that new sphere without

this prayer, "Lord, help me." If you pray that prayer from your heart, you will be succored, you shall play the man, and do well for God and for His truth.

Possibly you are already in a situation where you are under great strain, where, perhaps, your physical strength is overtaxed, and your mind is depressed by the wear and tear of a cruel servitude. Well if you cannot get out of it, pray the Lord to help you in it, and let this be your constant cry, "Lord, help me. Lord, help me." It is wonderful how He can aid and direct His people.

And you, young brother, against the door, you came just inside, hoping to get a message that will guide you in your present difficulty, here is that message. Go home and pray about it, cry to God about it, and you shall have direction, and let this be your cry, "Lord, help me, Lord, help me;" and He will help you.

Is there a dear little girl here who wants to find Christ? I give her this short prayer to pray tonight, "Lord, help me." Is there a greyheaded man here, leaning upon his staff, who has not yet found the Savior? Then, as you sit in that aisle, cry, "Son of David, Jesus Christ the Lord, do help and save me," and He will.

This prayer will do to live with, this prayer will do to die with. It is a prayer for those who usually worship in this place, it is a prayer for the people in the streets all around, it is a prayer for everybody and a prayer for every place wherever you may be, "Lord, help me." Blessed be His name, the Lord will answer this prayer! He has helped His people, He still is Israel's Helper, He will be their Helper even to the end. Therefore, put your trust in Him, and go forward with confidence into the future, and may His gracious presence be with you evermore! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 15:10-31

Verses 10-11. *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.*

True religion does not consist in meats and drinks, in feasting or in fasting. It is not that which goes into us, but that which comes out of us, which is the main matter.

12. *Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?*

They thought a very great deal of the opinion of the Pharisees, and they were greatly concerned because their Master had offended them. These Pharisees set themselves up as the judges of everything that was correct and proper in religion, yet Christ offended them by His plain speaking.

13. *But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.*

The truth is often intended to a rooter up. I have no doubt that our Lord said many things which had no other intention than the discovery of these deceitful men to themselves and others, that their baneful influence might be destroyed. Our Savior was a true iconoclast, a great image-smasher, and these men, who were the chief *icons* or images of the day, had to be broken down. He therefore put the truth in the very form that would offend them.

14. *Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.*

Our Lord did not soften or tone down His previous language, but He revealed the true character of the false guides by whom so many were deluded.

15. *Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.*

"We do not understand it, what is its meaning?"

16-17. *And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever enters in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?*

And so there is an end of it.

18. *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.*

The main matter to be considered is the heart, not the mouth, and other parts of the body. Note how our Lord, by this great truth, puts the axe to much that looks very fair and good, and cuts it down as worthless. If we serve God with the heart, there is the core of true religion, but if not, we may have as many ceremonial washings as there are hours in the day and days in the year, and we may be careful to avoid this article of diet and to feed on that, to wear this garment and not to wear that, and to observe this day and not that, but all this outward religion will be of no use whatever, if our heart is not savingly affected by the grace of God.

19-21. *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

He did not like the Pharisees well enough to stay among them. His own word concerning them was, "Let them alone," and He did very severely let them alone, "Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." He must not go into Tyre and Sidon, for His commission for the present was confined to Palestine, the chosen land.

Do not regret this, dear friends. To have extended our Savior's work over a greater area, would not have been really to increase it, and it was very important that during the very short active lifetime of our Savior—a little more than three years—He should confine His operations to a comparatively small district, so as to produce a permanent result there which would afterwards radiate over the whole world.

So our Savior, who knew what was best for men, confined Himself within a very narrow sphere, and my brethren and sisters, I am not sure that we are always wise when we want a great sphere. I have myself sometimes envied the man with about five hundred people to watch over, who could see them all, know them all, and enter into sympathy with them all, and so could do his work well.

But with so large a number as I have under my charge, what can one man do? And you, my brethren, may increase the quantity of your acreage, and yet grow no larger crops. You may think that you will succeed better on a wider scale, but if you do not do so well in the greater field, it might have been wiser to narrow your boundaries rather than to widen them.

However, if our Lord might not go into Tyre and Sidon, He went as near to them as He could, "Jesus departed into the *coasts* of Tyre and Sidon." And if you, dear friends, think there is a limit to your sphere of usefulness, always go as near as ever you can to the limit, go up to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22. *And, behold,—*

For it is a great wonder that such a person should have come to Jesus, "And, behold,"—

22-23. *A woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word.*

This was another marvel—a silent Savior—silent when it would have been so natural for Him to speak a kind and gracious word, "He answered her not a word."

23. *And his disciples came and sought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

"She crieth after us," and it is very important that *we* should not be troubled." We disciples are apt to think so, especially if we get a little lifted up, and come to be apostles. "Send her away; for she crieth after us." She knew better than to cry after the disciples, it was the Master whose help she wanted. Some sinners are a great nuisance, they make so much noise in seeking Christ, and what a mercy it is that they do so! Oh, to have such troublesome people about us all day long, and all night long too! It would be worth while to be vexed in this style. But the disciples said to Jesus, "Send her away; for she crieth after us."

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

“Therefore, I cannot attend to her.”

25-26. *Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet—*

“It is not comely, it is not fit”—

26. *To take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs.*

The original means, the little dogs that play with the children, they lie under the table, and pick up the crumbs that their masters (the children) let fall. The woman caught at that expression at once—

27. *And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.*

“I may be only a dog, and these Jews round about You are Your children, but I have gotten in among them, and I am looking for a crumb or two as it falls from their table.” This was grand faith on her part, and it was speedily rewarded.

28-31. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.*

The Savior appears to have gone this journey on purpose to bless this woman and her daughter, and having wrought the miracle, He went where great multitudes came to Him, bringing their sick folk to be healed, and the result was, “They glorified the God of Israel.” There may be some poor soul here in as great distress as this woman was, if so, may that one get a blessing, and then may the blessing spread through all the neighborhood till multitudes are saved!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—492, 551

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.