

August 17, 2008
 Messiah
 Pentecost 14 - A

Matthew 15:21-28
 "Building our Lives on the Crumbs of Christ"

Introduction

1. "Crumbs" does not usually mean something "good"
 - a. For instance – when your children are snacking at night and you get up the next morning and there are "crumbs" left all over the counter top – usually not a good thing!
 - b. Or the husband fixes a hole in the sheetrock, and if your wife says to you, "That looks crummy" – that's not necessarily a compliment
 2. So the question for today is this: Why would the woman in our Gospel Reading today be satisfied with the "crumbs of Christ"
- I. Let's focus on what's going on here between Jesus and this woman**
- A. Jesus has left the populated Jewish area and has moved into a dominantly Gentile (non-Jewish) area
 - i. to Tyre and Sidon
 - ii. Way up northwest of the Sea of Galilee, along the Mediterranean coast
 - B. A Gentile Woman sought Jesus out and rushes up to Him
 - i. A Gentile is a non-Jewish person
 - ii. Ordinarily – they would have been a part of the Gentile culture and Gentile religion
 1. A Gentile ordinarily worshipped many gods
 2. In that day – Gentiles were known as being openly adulterous, abortions were funded by the government, believing in One God would have been unheard of, women were mistreated, and all the people bowed down to many idols, images, and gods
 - C. But this Gentile woman seems to be different
 - i. Her words to Jesus show she knows something about Him
 - ii. Whether she heard Him teach before, or others have told her about Him...
 - iii. Her words are not the words of a woman who is unfamiliar with Jesus
 - iv. She says, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David"
 - v. This woman confesses her dependence and need on Jesus
 - vi. She confesses Him to be "The Lord" – This was a Jewish Word for the One True God who created the world, and who saves the world
 - vii. And the clincher in her confession is that Jesus is "The Son of David" – believing Him to be the Promised One of the Hebrew Scriptures
 - viii. Her need is apparent and drastic – her daughter is severely possessed by a demon; and this mom wants Jesus to get rid of it
 - D. The Disciples here are not acting very "Churchly"
 - i. They say to Jesus "Send her away"

- ii. The Church never wants to send people away, but to draw people to Christ
 - iii. Sometimes we get like the Disciples: wanting our “Little circle” of church people to not include others, afraid of change, irritated with the distraction of having to tell others about our Savior
 - iv. But I would have to imagine that even the disciples saw their sin; as do we
- E. And then there’s the dialog between the woman and Jesus
- i. At first He does not speak to her → maybe to allow this woman to show her great in not giving up on Jesus, but pursuing Him all the more
 - ii. Finally Jesus says, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel”
 - iii. Jesus was saying this to make the point that He did NOT come just for the Jew, but for the Gentile as well
 - iv. And the next move of the woman is a great example of faith for you and me, she comes up to Jesus, kneels before Him in humility, and says, “Lord, help me”
 - v. And He continues the conversation to show Who is truly is, and says, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs”
 - vi. Now you may like dogs, but calling a Gentile a “dog” was not necessarily a compliment
 - 1. As one Early Church preacher states, “Gentiles were dogs in that they did not worship the True God and went barking after other gods
 - 2. And in this sense, we too are “dogs” as we go barking after the world, and put the True God on the “back burner” so often
 - 3. We are not like that obedient black lab, we are like that wild mut that, at every opportunity, will run away and not listen to its master
 - vii. But this Gentile woman receives Jesus’ condemnation, and does not deny that she is a sinner
- F. And then she says the “C” word, “yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the CRUMBS that fall from their master’s table”
- i. Here it is – this woman professing the Christian faith
 - ii. “The religion of the Gentiles” was to go howling after the “whole loaf,” wanting the “whole bakery”
 - iii. But this woman realizes that even the “Crumbs of Christ” are of greater value and benefit than all the world
 - iv. And even though this woman was willing to settle for the “crumbs” of Christ – she got ALL OF HIM! – the full wonderful, forgiving, freeing, loving Son of God, Jesus Christ!
 - v. And Jesus did indeed heal her daughter and drove out the old wicked foe – as this is the gift He gives to all of us!

- II. So, as this woman built her life on “The Crumbs of Christ” – what does it mean for us to build our lives “on the crumbs of Christ?”**
- A. What does it mean for Landon to build his life on the “crumbs of Christ?”
- i. It means, though he felt only a few drops of water, Landon received the whole well-spring of Christ, His love, forgiveness, and salvation upon his head and into his soul
 - ii. He will need his mother’s help in his early years, but to build His life on the Crumbs of Christ will be to come to the Lord’s house to continue to receive the crumbs of the Christ in God’s Word – as God’s Word is fed into His life and soul –
 - iii. bringing Him up in the Lord, to absorb him in Christ for all eternity
- B. What does it mean for Jamie to build her life on the “crumbs of Christ?”
- i. It means what she has learned from God’s Word up to this point, and from Luther’s Small Catechism, she says, “This I believe!”
 - ii. And as she now also receives her First Communion, she may receive only a morsel; but indeed this is not just a crumb of Christ that falls from Heaven – this is ALL OF GOD who is fed into her this day, and every time, as she eats His Body and drinks His Blood for forgiveness, strengthening of faith, and eternal life
 - iii. Jamie confesses a “way of life” today – the way of Christ, the Christ who keeps Satan far away, and who freely forgives without any merit of our own
- C. What does it mean for Rebekah, and every other children leaving a Christian home to begin being on their own?
- i. As our Christian children leave our homes for college, or military, or for whatever reason...
 - ii. Not just a “piece or crumb” of Christ goes with them – ALL OF HIM goes with them!
 - iii. We have planted in them the foundation of the faith, we have shaped and formed them in Christ, and we trust the Lord to keep our children in His tender care, and to keep them for all eternity
 - iv. And we pray – they will continue to eat the “crumbs of Christ”, that they will go to church, that they will continue in the Word, and be satisfied and filled with the “crumbs of Christ” throughout life’s journey

Conclusion

1. Crumbs are not always bad –
2. Especially as they relate to Christ – for to have a part of Him is to have ALL of HIM!
3. Yes, our sins, and our Gentile ways are “truly crumbly”...
4. But Jesus is the Bread of Life – we eat of Him, and we live forever. Amen.