

Lectionary passages:-

Genesis 45 v1-15;

I Kings 19 v9-11;

Romans 11 v1-2 and v29-32;

Matthew 15 v21-28;

Psalms 67;

In the Matthew passage once again we see Jesus in an unusual situation. He is faced with a woman whose daughter is ill and needs help. The woman is not a Jew, but a foreigner, a Canaanite, and Jesus initially claims he comes principally to Israelites.

It is a strange passage; one feels Jesus is putting this person down because they are foreign, not Jewish or maybe he like many men of the time did not want to speak to a woman?

Perhaps it is an encouragement to all who feel we are not good, deserving people or good Christians, to be brave enough to come to Jesus for help. After all he did say come to me, I will in no way cast you out. To call on the name of Jesus is the only way to receive an answer.

1. There are some deep truths for us to take on board and the passage in Genesis 45 when Joseph is approached in Egypt by his brothers seeking food, they do not know who he is, and initially he turns them away with the intention of encouraging them to be brave and to trust.
2. This Canaanite woman knows who Jesus is, which is amazing because many of the Jewish people to whom he came did not know or believe who Jesus was. This is the secret to all answered prayer, to calling on the Lord; we need to know to whom we are coming, asking, requesting help from. The Messiah, the Christ, the son of God.

We begin the Lord's Prayer - Our Father ...who lives in heaven, this is to whom we pray!

3. She is also convinced Jesus will hear her, after all even if a man feeds his family with food he would not cook for a dog, he does give the scraps to the dogs after, would not Jesus give her the scraps of his ministry as it were, to help her, she is convinced it is enough it is all she needs, a bit of Jesus! What a great picture. Jesus does not have to renounce his call to Israel!

We don't need all of heaven we just need that bit we need, there is enough for us, even us!

4. Jesus recognises her faith, her confidence in him; he recognises she is not going to go without an answer!

Is this the sort of faith Jesus sees in us?

Are we convinced Jesus has the answers to our needs?

Are we convinced he is both able and willing to meet us at the point of our need?

Her prayer is answered at that moment, no need for further consultations, or a home visit, no need to make any further comments nor a need to make any promises to him.

5. Jesus did many miracles in his time, but the ones that are recorded are there to encourage us, to remind us it is faith in Jesus not our parents or our history or our good deeds or even having a face that fits, Jesus responds to all who call on him.
6. Last week we saw the disciple Peter walking on the water; Jesus comes not just to his own but offers a blessing to all who come to him in faith. The gospels are littered with such examples, the Thief on the Cross and the Woman at the Well (John 4) to name just a couple.