



# 52A PENTECOST 11A LITURGY

Listen and understand

## Abstract

Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Matthew 15:28

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## 52A Pentecost 11A Liturgy

Listen and understand

Sunday, August 16, 2020 | 11A Pentecost | Proper 15  
Year A

*Old Testament & Psalm, Option I*

*Old Testament* Genesis 45:1–15

*Psalm* Psalm 133

or

*Old Testament & Psalm, Option II*

*Old Testament* Isaiah 56:1, 6–8

*Psalm* Psalm 67

*New Testament* Romans 11:1–2a, 29–32

*Gospel* (Matthew 15:10–20) 21–28<sup>1</sup>

Jesus has two tricky encounters, first with the Pharisees, then with a Canaanite woman, that seemed to be linked by food. In fact, the link is deeper – faith and membership of God’s people – and the outcome of the encounters is something of a surprise.

**This week’s resources explore:** not being distracted by what doesn’t matter; learning from the voice of the outsider.

	<p><b>Pre-Service</b> The Greatest Thing Artist: Shannon Wexelberg Album: Adoration Series: We Celebrate You</p>
	<p><b>Introit</b></p>
	<p><b>Greeting</b></p> <p>May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all</p> <p><b>and also with us</b></p>
	<p><b>We Gather</b> Come, with purpose, into the presence of the living God. Come to worship, and to be amazed, to discover and learn new things. Come, knowing that God welcomes us all with open arms.</p>

<sup>1</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

	<p><i>Let us Pray</i>  We gather here, Lord,  ready to focus totally on you.  Help us to be brave enough, like Peter,  to ask the questions that we would like to ask,  and open enough to hear your answer.  In our worship today, speak to us, Lord.  We are listening.</p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b>  All Things Bright and Beautiful Artist: The Choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, Barry Rose &amp; John Scott Album: Favourite Hymns for All Seasons</p>
	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p><i>Let us pray</i>  Lord God, as we come before you now,  we open our hearts to you.  Help us to see that we can learn so much from others,  even from those with whom we think  we may not share much in common.  Make us willing to stand out from the crowd,  to hear your voice, and act upon it. <b>Amen.</b></p>
	<p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>11A  [  <sup>10</sup> Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. <sup>11</sup> What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”  <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?”  <sup>13</sup> He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. <sup>14</sup> Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”  <sup>15</sup> Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.”  <sup>16</sup> “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. <sup>17</sup> “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? <sup>18</sup> But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”  ]  <sup>21</sup> Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>22</sup> A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, “Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly.”  <sup>23</sup> Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”  <sup>24</sup> He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”  <sup>25</sup> The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.  <sup>26</sup> He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”</p>

	<p><sup>27</sup> “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”</p> <p><sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment. <sup>2</sup></p> <p><i>respond</i> For the word of the Lord <b>Thanks be to God</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song/video</b> Purify My Heart Artist: Dovesong Album: Break Through – Praise &amp; Worship Collection Composer: Brian Doerksen (c) 1990 Vineyard Songs Canada (Admin. by Vineyard Music USA) ION Publishing (Admin. by Vineyard Music USA) 1990 Vineyard Songs Canada (Admin. by Vineyard Music USA) ION Publishing (Admin. by Vineyard</p>
	<p><b>We say Sorry</b> Lord, sometimes we look as though we are listening to others. We may even make all the right noises! But we confess that our attention is often anywhere but where it is supposed to be. <b>Forgive us, Lord, for missed opportunities.</b></p> <p>Sometimes we are too distracted by our own concerns. We care only for ourselves, and listen only to those who say what we want to hear. <b>Forgive us, Lord, for missed opportunities.</b></p> <p>Sometimes we don’t listen to people because we don’t like them, or because they are different from us. Sometimes we have bad or unhelpful thoughts. <b>Forgive us, Lord, for missed opportunities.</b></p> <p>Sometimes we don’t listen to you, Lord, because we are too busy, or a bit frightened about what you might say to us. <b>Forgive us, Lord, for missed opportunities. Amen.</b></p>
	<p><b>Words of Assurance</b></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/Song</b> Blessed be Your name – Matt Redman</p>
	<p><b>Response</b></p>

<sup>2</sup> [Revised Common Lectionary](#). (2009). Bellingham, WA: Faithlife.

**Listen and understand**  
**Matthew 15:(10-20), 21-28**

We are in the middle of a pandemic lockdown.  
     but let's face it's so cold here in southern Australia  
     none of us want to get out much anyway.  
 But our minds wander on what might be, plans.  
     we are thinking of what Christmas will look like, maybe our next holiday.  
 I know my wife is. She loves getting away.  
 Some people spend ages planning the perfect trip.

There is a travel company called Black Tomato.  
     the name should give you a hint.  
 The company offers "Get Lost" holidays.

It takes a certain amount of courage to take a trip to a surprise destination.  
     Most of us like to have a little more control when it comes to our travel  
 plans.

Our reading today starts like this:  
 "Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon . . ."  
 Now, Tyre and Sidon were Gentile towns about 80 Kms away from Galilee,  
     and there's no explanation why Jesus why Jesus decided to go there  
 Apparently, the only obvious reason Jesus might have travelled to this challenging  
 destination  
 was to minister to this desperate woman.

We're told  
 "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.'"

Matthew makes a point of saying that this was a Canaanite woman.  
     In Jesus' day, no observant Jew would speak with a woman outside his own  
 family  
 and particularly not a Canaanite.  
 They were traditionally considered enemies of the Jewish people. (2)

At first, Jesus seems to snub her cries for help.  
 Matthew tells us that Jesus "did not answer her at all."  
 And the disciples were no help. They urged him saying,  
 "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us."  
 Jesus answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Still she doesn't give up.  
 She came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.  
 And he replied with another crushing remark:  
 "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

Now it's time for Jesus to be surprised.  
 "Yes it is, Lord," the Canaanite woman said.  
 "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

This all seems like an un-Christ-like conversation for Christ to have that ends with Jesus commending the woman for her great faith!

There are only three people in the Bible who were specifically commended by Jesus for their great faith: a Roman officer who pleaded with Jesus to heal his servant, a woman who had been haemorrhaging blood for twelve years and touched the border of Jesus' robe in hopes of receiving healing, and this Canaanite woman who came to Jesus begging him to heal her demon-possessed daughter. (3)

The funny thing is that none of these three people had the right according to the Jewish law to approach Jesus with a request for help. They were separated from him by a huge wall of cultural and religious norms. By the Law, none of these 3 people had the right to bring their desperation to Jesus. But Jesus didn't reject them or correct them. In fact, he commended each one of them for their great faith.

Desperation is a scary state of being. Desperation can drive us to make unthinkably bad choices. Some of us know what it's like to feel desperate, just like the Roman officer and the bleeding woman and the mother with the demon-possessed child. We feel like we almost can't breathe.

There is a popular phrase "Desperate times call for desperate measures." I want to suggest to you that a more helpful phrase would be "Desperate times call for Jesus." That's what these faithful people believed.

This Bible passage about the Canaanite woman shows us that desperation doesn't disqualify you from having great faith. Neither does your gender or social status. All that's required is the willingness to bring your desperate need to Jesus.

This woman who wasn't from the Jewish faith addressed Jesus as Lord. The word she used refers to one who is Supreme or Master. How did she know, even when Jesus' own disciples weren't sure of his claims. She knew that the power of life was in his hands. Somehow, she knew he was her only hope.

Anne Lamott, has said that her prayer every morning is, "Help me, help me, help me." Her nightly prayer is "Thank you, thank you, thank you." In between those two prayers, she says, is an occasional "WOW" prayer when she is suddenly aware of God's work in her daily life. (5)

Jesus walked a 180 kms round trip to Tyre and Sidon to minister to this Canaanite woman.

And Jesus walked in our shoes all the way to the cross  
for no other reason than that he loves us.  
He shared our weakness, our questions, our pain.  
The night before his arrest Jesus prayed so desperately that he sweated drops of  
blood.

He understands what it is to be desperate.  
He didn't come to wave a magic wand and take away all our troubles.  
But he did come to show us that we are not alone.  
His message and his ministry kept coming back to this one truth:  
There is a God, and God loves you.

Desperate times call for Jesus.  
What was the Canaanite mother's first request of Jesus?  
". . . have mercy on me."  
She knew that mercy is an essential part of God's character.  
And so even though she knew she had no right to approach Jesus,  
she was counting on his mercy to meet her needs.  
And even when Jesus was silent,  
even when he tried to turn her away,  
she knelt down at his feet.

Jesus complimented this Canaanite woman for her great faith.  
Great faith is pretty simple, at least by Jesus' standards.  
Bring your desperation to him and trust in God's love for you.

The God who gave up His power and majesty and ultimately His life  
to save us from the power of death  
loves you too much to ever turn you away.

Desperate times don't always call for desperate measures,  
but desperate times always call for Jesus.

Amen

### Hymn/song

Search Me, O God Artist: Hillsong Worship Album: Hillsong Worship Composer:  
Nigel Hendroff & Steve McPherson

### Offering

### Notices

### Prayers for all people

*Ask people to sit quietly and reflect on what they really want God to do in their lives.  
Invite them to imagine themselves as the Canaanite woman. Say: Do not give up  
praying till you feel a peace, that Jesus has heard you. Tell him that whatever the  
answer you will accept it humbly and gratefully. Say to him: 'Speak, Lord, for your  
servant hears you.'*

Lord, the Pharisees were offended by your words.  
You could have been offended by the Canaanite woman's words.  
I ask that, as I go about my business, I will take the time to consider each person I

	<p>meet as unique, special to you, and worthy of my listening ear. May I not be offended just because something is out of my comfort zone.</p> <p>The Canaanite woman sought your help. She loved her daughter so much, she was so desperately in need, that she wouldn't give up till she had her answer. <b>We pray in faith.</b> <b>Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.</b></p> <p>Lord, may we learn from this woman, to wait on you expectantly, patiently, persistently, doggedly. Grant us the courage of our convictions when we truly believe we are doing your will. <b>We pray in faith.</b> <b>Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.</b></p> <p>We pray today for those who feel excluded, whatever their situation, whatever the reason: for prisoners, refugees, the homeless; for the sick, the mentally unstable; for any who feel that they are outsiders. <b>We pray in faith.</b> <b>Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.</b></p> <p>We pray for ourselves when our faith is weak, or we feel that we don't belong. <b>We pray in faith.</b> <b>Hear us and answer our cry, blessed Lord.</b> <b>Amen.</b></p>
	<p><b>Lord's Prayer</b></p> <p>Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. AMEN<sup>3</sup></p>
	<p><b>Hymn/song</b> Before You I Kneel (A Worker's Prayer) Artist: Keith &amp; Kristyn Getty Album: Hymns for the Christian Life (Deluxe Version) Composer: Keith Getty, Stuart Townend, Jeff Taylor &amp; Kristyn Getty</p>
	<p><b>We are sent out</b> We go out today,</p>

<sup>3</sup> English Language Liturgical Consultation, 1988



	<p>renewed and strengthened in faith,  ready to serve you, Lord,  and find you in the people we meet.  We go out to follow you, and our hearts.  Lead us, good Lord.  <b>Amen.</b></p> <p>May the Lord bless us  and keep us  May His face shine upon us  and be gracious to us  May he lift up His countenance upon us  and give us peace</p>
	<p><b>Benediction</b></p>
	<p><b>Thank you</b></p>

