

Every disaster is a chance to grow in our faith. Every setback is a chance to leap forward. Every misfortune is a chance to trust the one who is in control of our destiny. Even when bad things happen, we can trust our Lord who is in control.

And so we have our Gospel text. A woman is in crisis. Surely she has tried every cure available to her: the witch doctors of Tyre and Sidon, prayer, and any other fix she could get her hands on. The problem still remains, her daughter is badly demon oppressed. She isn't herself. The forces of darkness have laid hold on this woman's daughter. What would you do to get your daughter back?

“And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and [kept on crying out], ‘Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.’” This woman begged Jesus for help. It wasn't a nice formal request in a letter. It wasn't a one time deal. She kept on bugging him. What we'll learn from this is that our God isn't a god who just writes a blank check and walks away. He doesn't wind up the watch and come back at the end of time. He isn't here only on big days such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, and confirmations. He's with us all the way. **JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM.**

Yet I. The invitation might seem like a rejection. It would appear that Jesus was giving the woman the cold shoulder. Despite all this entreating, **“...he did not answer her a word.”** A polite person would have gotten the message. A normal person would have given up.

It goes even further. The woman kneels before him. This same word “knelt” could also mean worship. It's the same word used of the wise men who bow down and worship Jesus. It's the same word that Satan uses when he wants Jesus to worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of the world. This woman clearly recognizes Jesus as someone more than just a carpenter or teacher.

If the cancel culture crowd gets a hold of this next line of Jesus, maybe Jesus is next on the chopping block because He definitely says something that isn't politically correct. **“And he answered, ‘It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.’”** In saying this Jesus is calling the woman a dog. Our ears can barely register how much of an insult that is.

JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM. Yet sometimes this invitation might seem like a rejection. It may seem to us that God is frowning at us when He seems to be saying “no” to our repeated requests and prayers. Nonetheless, Jesus plays with us to see if we're serious. He likes being asked.

Behind that cold demeanor to the woman was a heart that marveled at her faith and did eventually heal her daughter. Jesus is the one who dilly dallied at the death of Lazarus, coming days late just so He could raise him from the dead instead of simply heal him. Jesus is the one who disguises Himself from the Emmaus disciples, and then pretends to go farther once the Emmaus disciples

reach their destination *so that* the disciples could “...[urges] him strongly, saying, “**Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.**”” Then and only then does Jesus reveal Himself to those disciples at the dinner table in the breaking of the bread.

JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM. And He does so playfully. He might hide from us, but He hides from us like a kindergartener. Have you ever played hide and seek with a kindergartener? They’re not that good at hiding, and even if mom helps them find a great hiding spot, it won’t take long before you hear giggling come from the closet, or the coat rack starts to jiggle unexplainably.

The invitation might seem like a rejection. If you’re in the midst of suffering, or you’re going through a tragedy, and it seems as though God has a frown affixed to His face. Don’t buy it. Behind Jesus’ frown is a smirk. Behind a cold shoulder is a warm embrace. Jesus invites us to trust Him even when we seem to encounter resistance. Keep on praying. Keep on worshipping Him. Keep on hearing from Him in His word. Seek the companionship and support of Christian friends. There’s no need to be gloomy; Jesus is on your side. You know that He loves you. You know that He died to bring you life and life to the fullest. You know that He is preparing a place for you, and He KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM.

II. The invitation might take persistence. A widow lived alone in her two bedroom house in Wisconsin. Her only son lived on the East Coast. He didn’t call often. It used to be that whenever he called she would pick up right away. But after she missed a call from her son during one of her exercise classes, she got an idea. For the next week she didn’t answer her phone and got a voicemail from the son each day. She enjoyed listening to the voicemails when she had a free afternoon just to hear her son’s voice.

Finally, after the week was over, the phone rang again, it was her son, and she finally picked up. The son answered frustrated saying, “Where have you been, mom? I’ve been calling you all week!” The mom replied, “I’ve been listening to your voicemails! I’ve gotten more calls from you this week than I have all year!”

I wouldn’t necessarily follow this advice with your children because that is a bit manipulative but suffice it to say that the mom wanted to hear her son’s voice. She didn’t want something from him; she just wanted *him*.

We have a God who doesn’t just love us, He likes us. He wants to hear our voice. He wants to spend time with us. Sometimes we feel like we’re a bother to him, but don’t think that! To be certain, we know we’re sinful and we ask for forgiveness every day, but in the Father’s eyes, your sins have been covered by Jesus, and He only sees the best of you, those amazing things that make you, you.

JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM. Model the Canaanite woman’s faith. Keep on asking, even if it’s just for the breadcrumbs. Bow down

before him, even if He has to step around you. Get to the point where the disciples are saying to Jesus, ‘Just go ahead and give her what she wants so we can get on with our lives!’

This isn’t a matter of how many times you need to ask Jesus. This isn’t an equation if you ask this many times fervently, then out will pop your request. This is an invitation to trust Jesus, that indeed, He is walking alongside you. He’s right here even as He always is. And hearing from you is its own reward in His mind. He doesn’t just love you; He likes you. He wants people who are persistent because He likes to hear from each one of us, His brothers and sisters.

JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM, and III. The invitation always comes with a blessing. After this woman’s display of persistence and faithfulness, “...**Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.**” Jesus is inviting us to trust Him as our Lord and Savior. This doesn’t just happen at your baptism or confirmation. This happens every day of your life. Jesus keeps sending out this invitation to believe in Him as the Son of God who has died to forgive you your sins, who has paid the penalty for your imperfections, and has rose again promising you life eternal.

Just like the Canaanite woman, we believe that Jesus is more than just a good moral teacher, a smart guy, or a useful guide. He is the God of the universe in human flesh. He is the one who will deliver us in the day of trouble. He is the one who has taken us from death to life. He is the great healer and physician of souls who watches over us and protects us.

And he doesn’t just want us to know that like we know $2+2=4$, He wants us to trust Him as the Lord of our life and God of our salvation. Jesus will pretend to hide from us. He’ll pretend to give us a cold shoulder. He’ll make us think our calls are going to voicemail all so that we can not only trust Him for the things He gives us, but for who He Himself is.

And with this invitation comes a blessing. Those who trust in Him never leave empty handed. He healed the woman’s daughter. He fed the 5,000. He raised Lazarus, and He revealed Himself to the Emmaus disciples. What we leave with may not be readily apparent. It may just seem like a cracker of bread and a sip of wine. It may seem like some kind words and positive thoughts. It may seem like a guy wearing a dress waving his arms around like he’s casting a spell.

But beyond all the humble outward appearances, JESUS KEEPS INVITING US TO TRUST HIM. And keep on trusting Him so that you leave this place with your hands full and your hearts renewed. Keep on coming back, keep on hearing from Jesus your savior. He has so much more to give than breadcrumbs.