

Jesus the Jew is among the Gentiles.

The last time Jesus was in Gentile territory he drove a legion of demons from a tormented man into 2000 pigs who rushed headlong into the sea.^{Mk 5}

In response to this manifestation of God's reign, the people asked him to leave - they weren't ready!

As far as Jesus knows, nothing has changed.

His preaching, teaching, healings, & exorcisms will not be welcomed.

So, instead of the countryside, marketplaces, & villages...

he withdraws into a house - he wants to escape notice.

But someone who's ready finds him - she's a Gentile woman coming on behalf of her daughter who is troubled by a demon.

By Jewish standards, she's doubly unclean:

Gentile woman + demon daughter!

But even so, she has heard of Jesus & acted on what she's heard, finding him in the house of his hiding, she has bowed at his feet demonstrating her faith in God who flows through him.

She has begged for an exorcism, not for herself but for the good of another.

She has what Jesus is always looking for: perseverance, faith, and service. It must be disconcerting that these qualities are coming from uncleanness!

To her request for an exorcism, Jesus says no.

There's a proper order to be followed.

The Jews are offered the food of the kingdom first.

It wouldn't be right to pass over the children of promise & carelessly give God's life & love to dogs - those who are unclean.

Despite her qualities of perseverance, faith, & service,

She's still an unclean Gentile - that overrides everything else.

Notice that she doesn't argue with Jesus' refusal.

She doesn't retaliate or attack or use any sign language!

Even now, at this moment & not at some future time,

the dogs (she & her daughter) could receive a single gift of God (crumbs) from among the many gifts that are given to the children (the Jews).

She does not seek to be great or the 1st.

She seeks to serve her daughter's well-being,

And she's willing to become least to make that happen.

The spiritual secret of becoming least is so that God can become most

This is the attitude of the kingdom -

the new humanity that Jesus is bring about!

This is also the attitude that releases God's saving work in Jesus.

Her "saying that" reveals how completely she's in sync with God's will to h

Jesus, whose will to heal is always present, is so empowered that the healing takes place at a distance!

Jesus doesn't make a house call on the little girl.

Her mom's faith is so in sync with God's love animating Jesus' being, and has so released the Spirit that the normal ways of mediation have been surpassed.

God's Spirit is not confined to space & time – ever!!!

Geography means nothing when one is open to the healing Spirit of God!!!

Those who are least allow God to be most.

Jesus is now a man on the move – he's back in Gentile territory.

His conversation with this woman was not an isolated incident

but a sign of where God might be active & so where Jesus must go.

If 1 Gentile is ready, maybe more are!?!?

More Gentiles are ready – well, kinda!

The tales of Jesus' wonder working has preceded him.

They bring him a hearing impaired man whose speech is impeded.

They expect the miraculous touch of Jesus' hands will cure the man.

This expectation, miracle mongering, pollutes the atmosphere, divides & misdirects attention.

Jesus must take the man away from those who brought him.

What Jesus has to do he wants done in private.

Although the ears detect sounds & the tongue produces sounds, it's not the ears that hear or the tongue that speaks.

The heart, the spiritual center of the person,

is the source of hearing & speaking, right?!?!?

When the heart is open to God, then the person can hear & speak.

If the person cannot hear or speak, it's because the heart is hard.

When Jesus puts his fingers into the man's ears, he reverses the flow of attention.

The man no longer struggles to decipher sounds coming in from outside.

He listens inward, his heart is attuned.

Jesus is directing his attention to the center of his being.

Then Jesus spits on his hand & touches the man's tongue with his spit.

Spit comes from the inside & symbolizes the Spirit.

Jesus is connecting his Spirit, the Holy Spirit he received at his baptism, to the man's spirit.

Now he & the man are in sync, in communion with one another.

Then Jesus looks to heaven.

As Jesus' baptism revealed, the heavens are permanently opened.

God is available – the Holy Spirit is always descending with love!

So we are called to look upward too – to God’s loving presence – that the core of our being is united to the beloved Son who is filled with the Holy Spirit.