

Kensington Presbyterian Church



Feeding Time

August 2, 2020

Welcome, during these times of physical isolation we are putting out these worship services that you can do at home. This doesn't mean you have to do them alone. You can invite those who live with you, or connect with others through the phone or computer, or even in small groups outside.

If you have any prayer requests, ideas, or just want to talk, please reach out to your elder or the office info@Kensingtonchurch.ca (as Rev Peter is away from Aug 4-24).

Announcements

Worship Live: You can join us live over the internet - Sunday's at 10:30.

If you would like to join us, please contact the office for details. info@Kensingtonchurch.ca

Re-opening the Church: After considering recommendations from the government and the Presbyterian national office, Session is looking forward to resuming worship in the building Sept 13th - with various precautions, such as cleaning of the building and physical distancing.

Visiting: In the mean time, if you would like to talk or have a physical distance visit (we can bring a chair and sit at the end of the sidewalk or outside your window), please contact your elder or your elder.

Talk, Walk and Pray with the Moderator: The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada is inviting you to join her for talks with people across the country, walking, and in prayer. See her invitation the talks, and prayer list here: <https://>

presbyterian.ca/gao/moderator/

Please continue to check out the website <https://kensingtonchurch.ca/>
or facebook <https://www.facebook.com/KensingtonChurchNDG/>

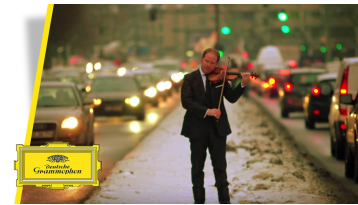
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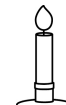
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Peter@Kensingtonchurch.ca
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Approaching God

Prelude:



 lighting the candle
Jésus Chris est la lumière du monde.
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

Call to worship (from Psalm 67)

- L: May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us,
P: **that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.**
L: Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
P: **Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.**
L: Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
P: **The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.**
All: **May God continue to bless us;
let all the ends of the earth revere him.**

Prayer of Approach

Welcoming and generous God, you make all things new. We thank you for gathering us this morning, over Zoom. We praise you for Your invitation to all people into your fold. Justice and right relations have their source in you. We are filled with joy to be counted among your children. We praise you and let all the people praise you.


As we gather, make us one in worship and thanksgiving. We lift our voices to proclaim your all-encompassing love. May our praise join with the praise of all your people. And reach the ends of the earth, for you are our Saviour and our hope.

Unison Prayer of Confession

In your presence we confess that we have not lived as you taught us to live. Forgive us those times we have not welcomed others into our community; and those times we have avoided others because something about them made us uncomfortable. Forgive us for the ways we have judged unfairly; and for the ways we sometimes harbour discriminatory thoughts. Reveal to us our own prejudice which separates us from others,. Reveal to us our own failure to understand the breath and depth of your all-reconciling love.

Assurance of Pardon

Dear friends, while it is true that we have all sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ. To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say, In Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven. Be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another.

 Lord's Prayer (feel free to use another version/translation)
As we turn towards God, we pray the prayer Jesus gave us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is 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.**

♪ Hymn 736: "For the healing of the nations"

Listening to God

Intro to the readings

- We will continue to journey with Jesus through the Gospel of Matthew chapter 15, to the region of Tyre and Sidon where Jesus and the disciples encountered a persistent, some might even describe as a pushy Canaanite woman.

 Reading: Please look up the passages in your own Bible, or click on the name to be taken to an online version (NRSV).

[Isaiah 56: 1-2, 6-8](#)

[Matthew 15: 21-28](#)

Prayer

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to you. O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Message: Faith Transforming Faith

A man is conversing with God. "O Lord, how long is a million years?" God answers, "To me, its about a minute." "O Lord, how much is a million dollars?" "To me, it's a penny." The man then prayed, "Lord, may I have a penny?" God replied, "Wait a minute."

It's a silly joke, I know, yet it highlights the double questions of "What it is we are praying for?", and "How long should we wait for the Lord?"

Brother and sisters in Christ, we continue to follow Jesus, in the lectionary reading of the week, through the Gospel of Matthew chapter 15, to the region of Tyre and Sidon, where Christ and the disciples encountered a persistent, some might even describe as a pushy, hackling woman of Canaanite origin.

You may recalled the story of the feeding of the five thousands two weeks ago, then the story of Peter walking on water last week. Both took place in and around the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus first began his earthly ministry.

Yet, in the story today, which is recorded in both Matthew 15 and Mark 7, we found Jesus in an unusual and puzzling location, in the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon, just south of the modern day city of Beirut, Lebanon.

The port cities of Tyre and Sidon occupied an interesting place in the history of Israel. In the late Bronze Age (about 9th to 10th century Before Christ), they were undoubtedly two of the most important cities in the Phoenicia maritime trade network of the Mediterranean. In the time of David and Solomon, the twin cities enjoyed a relatively good relationship with Israel, supplying the needed construction materials to build the first temple in Jerusalem.

However, since that time, as Israel was locked into a protracted and adversarial conflict with the Kingdom of Aram (also known as Syria), the strategic located Tyre and Sidon,

and their plentiful trade resources were likely used against Israel.

A number of Biblical prophets prophesied against Tyre and Sidon, most notably Ezekiel. The people of Tyre and Sidon had become overly confident in their natural island defences and overly proud of the wealth and beauty of their cities. They developed a feeling of jealousy and rivalry toward Jerusalem, and delighted in the misfortunes she faced and even tried to exploit them for commercial opportunity. For those reasons, Ezekiel foretold a time when nations would lay siege against them and destroy their pride and joy, which happened shortly after under the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.

In the time of Jesus, the rebuilt Tyre and Sidon were portrayed in somewhat of a better light. In Mark 3 and Luke 6, as the name of Jesus was gaining fame because of what he was doing, a great number of people came to Jesus, including the citizens of Tyre and Sidon.

In other parts of the Gospel, when Jesus was pronouncing 'woe' over the unrepentant towns of Israel, Tyre and Sidon were held up as a hypothetical model, "For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes." (Matthew 11:21, Luke 10:13)

Coming back our passage today, there was, however, no indication that Jesus travelled to Tyre and Sidon to make good on that hypothetical ministry - he wasn't there to preach repentance in light of the coming Kingdom of God. In fact, Matthew informed us that Jesus 'withdrew' to the

region. In the parallel passage of Mark, the Gospel writer was even more illustrative, "[Jesus] entered a house and did not want anyone to know it."

However, Jesus could not keep his presence secret. A Canaanite woman came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly." (Matthew 15:22)

How dare a triply unclean woman even thought of petitioning Jesus, a well regarded Jewish teacher! Not only was she a Gentile, a woman, and her daughter was demon-possessed! I am speaking of course from the perspective of the Jewish custom of the time. In that perspective, we could understand the silent treatment Jesus gave, for he 'did not answered a word'.

Notice, it was the disciples who became impatient, was annoyed, irritated enough, that they came to Jesus and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.' Oh, the irony of a foreigner addressing Jesus as 'Lord', comparing to the disciples commanding Jesus as if he was a servant.

To that cruel demand, Jesus added a different layer of cruelty, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel." Evidently, Jesus understood the demand of the Law, he saw his ministry as consistent with the prophetic ministries of Israel's past. He was sent by God to save the lost children of God, namely the covenantal Israelites. Until the remnant of Israel is fully redeemed, he had no time to waste on the Gentiles, much less on a woman who did not know her

place. Disciples' cruelty may be physiological, the cruelty Jesus demonstrated in that statement was theological.

But the woman was persistent, putting into deed her previous word of proclaiming Jesus as 'Lord', she came and knelt before him, pleading a second time, "Lord, help me!" she said.

What follows, in my opinion is one of the most offensive, and most difficult passage to interpret. In verse 26, Jesus replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." Let us pause here, and let those words sink in a little bit more.

It is not difficult to understand that statement. Children refers to the Israelites who enjoys a unique and covenantal relationship with God. Bread is salvation that which reconciles people with God, thus bringing in an ever-lasting Shalom. Dogs are of course referring to the Gentiles, who are underserving of God mercy and compassion. Even if they were to be included in God's overall economy of grace, they would only occupy a very tiny fraction, not worthy of wasting the Messiah's precious time.

That statement was highly offensive, truly insulting, to both the modern and ancient sensibility. To that particular Gentile dog, that Canaanite woman, 'Shoo! Go away!'

Anyone, facing such injustice, such a power imbalance, insulted in such a way, would've stormed out in protest — teeth clenching, tears streaming, heart howling — but not that Canaanite woman. She calmly, humbly and wisely, retorted 'Yes, but...'

Agreeing with Jesus, but nevertheless, inviting him to reconsider the breath and depth of God's love for the world, for all humanity. In verse 27, "Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Yes I am not disputing your understanding of God's plan for salvation, I am not questioning your principled statement of faith concerning your call, but isn't the grace and the blessing of God so vast and inexplicable that even the largest cup of the world would bound to overflow?

To that response, in verse 28, then Jesus said to her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Your request is granted.' And her daughter was healed at that moment. Her prayer was answered positively, and she didn't even need to wait one minute.

Many biblical scholars had interpreted this passage as Jesus testing the faith of the Canaanite woman. Some even boldly claimed that the faith of the woman somehow opened the eyes of Jesus, and changed the Lord in a very concrete way. I am not going in that direction,

I don't claim to know the mind of Christ, our Lord and Saviour. What I will say is that the faith of this Canaanite woman, in this encounter with Jesus, changed the way that Christian faith was practiced — sort of the tipping point of the irresistible cascading process. Starting from the Lord himself, carried on through the Apostolic tradition, particularly of Peter and Paul, all people, Greeks or Jews, men or women, would all be welcomed into the Church, into the Kingdom of God. In a very real way, we all have to thank

this Canaanite woman, for the way she demonstrated her faith.

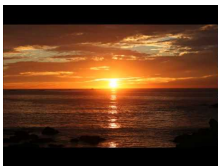
John Calvin, in his biblical commentaries, had this to say about the greatness of her faith.

She not only recognized the actual office of Christ, and ascribed to him heavenly power, but pursued her course steadily through formidable opposition; suffered herself to be annihilated, provided that she held by her conviction that she would not fail to obtain Christ's assistance; and, in a word, so tempered her confidence with humility, that, while she advanced no unfounded claim, neither did she shut against her the fountain of the grace of Christ, by a sense of her own unworthiness.

This commendation, bestowed on a woman who had been a heathen, in Calvin's language, is remarkable. God did something new through her. Her prayer maybe simple, her interaction with Jesus maybe short. She certainly did not understand the subsequent impact of her action, yet her faith, yes it still is a gift of God, is truly transformational.

Thanks be to God. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Moment to Remember Ken Harris
Music: Homeward Bound (by Bryn Terfel)



Responding to God

Offering

Financially, we have set up a donation option on **our website**. Just click the '[Donate Now](#)' button, and then the pretty button. It gives you various options that are easy to follow. You can now donate through **interac e-transfer**. Our name is [Kensington Presbyterian Church](#) and the e-mail address is info@kensingtonchurch.ca. Mailing a cheque or signing up for Pre-Authorized Remittance (**PAR**) are also good options.

Prayers of the people

Note: Those taking part in the Sunday service will have the opportunity to name specific concerns they would like to be included in this prayer.

Hymn 274: "Crown him with many crowns"

Sending & Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Ghost,
be with you all. Amen.

Que la grâce du Seigneur Jésus-Christ,
l'amour de Dieu
et la communion du Saint-Esprit
soient avec vous tous. Amen.

postlude:

