

Service for Week 10th -16th August

2026 By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, as you reached out to the sick and suffering bringing wholeness and healing to so many. We bring before you all in any kind of need, praying again for your healing and renewing touch in mind body and spirit.

Restore them and make them whole by your grace.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive them who trespass
against us. And lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.

Amen

Bible Reading Matthew 14:21-33

Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."

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." He answered, "I was

sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

In our text today from Matthew's gospel we read that while Jesus was on his preaching and healing mission around the country a Canaanite woman came and pleaded for Jesus to heal her daughter from demon-possession. The disciples ask Jesus to send her away but she continues to plea for help.

Jesus has what we may think is a rather hard response because he tells the disciples that his priority is to first preach his message to the people of the Jewish faith. Then when the woman implores Jesus to help her daughter he says "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." Jesus was saying that children (the Jewish people) should be fed first.

I think Jesus was surprised and was touched by the woman's spirited reply

when she said "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." In other words, she would be very grateful to receive any help however small he could give to her daughter. Jesus responds by saying "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." and heals her daughter.

There are several accounts, in the gospels of Jesus healing people who had been possessed by evil thoughts and actions. In Mark's gospel a man in Gerasene who was living rough among the tombs was possessed by a legion of devils. In Matthew a boy who had seizures and a man who was dumb and could not speak was possessed.

We can think of them as two types of gospel account. There is healing when Jesus casts out an evil spirit from someone who the gospels describe as also having a physical illness or a disability such as the boy with epileptic seizures or the man who was dumb. In those days two thousand years ago, the belief was that illness and disability was caused by the devil and was put upon people because of their sin or the sins of their ancestors. So, when Jesus healed them physically, he was also casting out the evil spirit that had inflicted them. This belief we now know through our knowledge of modern medicine is totally false. Illness and disabilities are not caused by evil spirits as some sort of punishment for

wrongdoing as they are unfortunately part of life and part of God's creation.

Then there are the accounts of healing by Jesus of people who have been possessed by evil thoughts and actions. These include the man in Gerasene who was possessed by evil spirits and the Canaanite woman's daughter in our gospel text. Today we would say they were mentally ill but mental illness is not evil it is only when people lose the ability to know right from wrong, we can say that evil thoughts have taken over their minds. Evil thoughts which can lead to evil actions such as violence and murder and it is such evil thoughts that Jesus cast out and brought relief and healing.

Jesus heard the Canaanite woman's cries for help, and knew from what she said that she truly believed he could heal her daughter. Jesus through his love and compassion heals her daughter by releasing the evil thoughts and actions which had overcome her mind and body. We pray Lord for a faith like that woman in what you can bring about for those that suffer in our world today. **Amen**

Closing prayer

Loving God I pray that you will release me from any evil thoughts which may come into my mind. Help me to concentrate my focus and my life on your way and your will. Through Jesus Christ my guide. **Amen**