

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

**[Analogy of a Dog]**

In the Gospel reading today we hear about a persistent Canaanite woman and a reluctant withdrawn Jesus. **Jesus, our Master** speaks words to the Canaanite woman that must have felt like a slap to the face. He compares her request to the request of a dog begging for food from its Master's table.

Have you ever seen a dog near food? Whether well behaved (or not) most dogs will NOT shy away from the opportunity to eat as much food as they can get.

I happen to have one of those dogs.

My dog, Kal-El, is a retired gray hound racer. We call him Kal for short.

When we first adopted Kal he was very quick to snatch food from the table.

When we first adopted Kal he was very confused why that was wrong.

You see, being tall and having a long neck, he is just the perfect height for eating food from the table. In fact, it requires much more effort for him to bend down and eat food off the floor than it takes for him to simply lick the surface of the table.

After initially adopting him, we hadn't quite had the time to strengthen his trust in us. Or to instill the faith necessary to let him know that we would feed him.

However, after several weeks (or possibly months) he finally learned that eating off the table was not the right thing to do.

It is kind of like how Jesus says to the Canaanite woman, "**It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs**" (Mt 15:26).

If I allowed Kal to eat my kid's food, then it would be no different than if I had picked up my son's dinner roll and thrown it to the dog.

Part of Kal's exposure to our family was also an exposure to kids at a dinner table. Kal learned that he could eat from the disaster zone (ground zero) surrounding my kid's chairs.

Isaac, my third kid, has developed a very special bond with Kal because of this.

We have repeatedly tried to teach Isaac not to drop handfuls of food for the dog,

We have also repeatedly tried to teach the dog not to start “emergency clean up” until after dinner.

Otherwise, Kal will come forward after the first dropped piece of spaghetti only to end up with hamburger, covered in spaghetti sauce, dropped on his head.

We are to the point now that Kal obeys and trust his Masters and waits until after dinner before coming over to clean up the crumbs. He has faith that the blessings of food given to the children will abundantly overflow to him as well.

**[Analogy of the Canaanite Woman]**

It took time to train Kal-El.

It took time to train a trusting relationship. It took time.

However, it took very little time for the Canaanite woman, to trust Jesus.

She approached Jesus with trust, from the beginning.

Yet **Jesus, our Master**, told the Canaanite woman that he would not be granting her request.

A request that, according to Jesus, was outside of his mission to “**the lost sheep of the house of Israel**” (Mt 15:24).

Instead, he calls her a dog. A dog, but apparently a dog with an unexpected rebuttal.

She could have argued with Jesus. She could have gotten angry. She could have thrown a fit. She could have walked away. But she didn't. Instead, she agrees with Him.

She is a dog. She is a servant. She is submissive to **Jesus, her Master**.

She shows by her words that she doesn't want to steal food from the sons of Israel. Instead, she trusts that the blessings of food given to the sons will abundantly overflow to her as well.

What an amazing and humbling response.

She had every right to contradict Jesus, but she didn't.

Think about it.

Her daughter was “severely oppressed by a demon” (Mt 15:22). She came to Jesus out of love for her daughter.

In fact, in the Greek, it is implied that she had been persistently, repeatedly, and continually crying out to Jesus to have mercy on her daughter.

What strong love this mother had for her child.

Surely, Jesus would see her love for her child and have mercy.

Instead, Jesus does “not answer her a word” (Mt 15:23).

How would you have reacted?

Now don't get me wrong. I doubt many of you know what it is like to have a child who is a demoniac.

I question my own children's actions at times, but I am assured that their faith and their baptism keeps the demons at bay.

We might not know a lot about demon possession, but we do know a lot about long term diseases.

Imagine that your son, daughter, or maybe even a dear friend is deathly sick.

What would you do? You'd first find a doctor.

The one doctor in the world who found a cure.

The one doctor in the world who can heal them.

The one doctor in the world who is the master of their fate.

That one doctor, tells you he can't, because his schedule is full. He is on vacation right now and has a strict no work policy while on vacation.

Besides, you're not even in his insurance network.

How would you have reacted?

Would you have reacted with the humility and faith shown by the Canaanite woman? Or would you have argued, gotten angry, fought, screamed, pleaded, yelled, and cried.

Would you have tried convincing him that your son, your daughter, your friend deserved to be saved?

That one Doctor is the Master in his field of Medicine.

Would you accept his leadership or would you impatiently force your will and judgment on him?

That one is **Jesus, our Master**. God made him our leader to strengthen us.

And strengthen us he does.

[*Analogy of waiting*]

God strengthens by teaching us to trust in Jesus.

God strengthens by teaching us to wait on Jesus.

In a similar manner, but in a much more limited sense, my wife and I strengthened the faith of our dog Kal by teaching him to trust us.

For example, Kal trusts that when we tell him to sit or lie down he gets a treat. However, for both of those commands, he gets the treat immediately.

It takes much more trust & faith on Kal's part to wait for the treat, when he's told to stay.

“Stay” for a dog is like “Wait” for us. God often tells us to “Wait”. The promise of a reward and an answer is out there, but we must wait.

We must trust God to train and teach us according to his divine will.

What has God done to teach you trust?  
What has God done to teach you faith?  
What has God done to teach you his will?

[*Faith*]

God's divine will was to make Jesus our Lord and Master.

The Canaanite woman surely loved her daughter, but that wasn't the reason for Jesus to grant her request. Instead, she trusted in the Gospel message that she had heard about Jesus.

She had faith that this man... this Jesus... was her Master.

She calls him Lord. She submits herself to his will.

If she is to be a dog, then praise be to God. Because "dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" (Mt 15:27).

At this Jesus exclaims, "great is your faith" (Mt 15:28). Jesus, her Master gave her faith. Likewise, **Jesus, our Master** gives us faith.

Faith is the means God uses to give you forgiveness.

Faith is the means God uses to make his blessings apply to you.

Faith is the means God uses to build trust in Jesus.

**Jesus, your Master**, forgives your impatience and arrogance. He overcomes your ignorance by granting you faith.

**Jesus, your Master** creates faith by giving you a promise. He establishes trust in you through that promise. As it says in our Lutheran Confessions, "the promise freely offers to us... reconciliation on account of Christ, which is received not by works, but by faith alone. This faith does not bring to God trust in our own merits, but only trust in... the mercy promised in Christ."<sup>1</sup>

**Jesus is your Master.** Jesus forgives your sins. And Jesus grants you faith to receive that forgiveness. God made Jesus Lord and Master over all things and nothing in heaven or earth can separate you from his love. Thanks be to God, **Jesus is our Master.** Amen.

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Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, ...  
to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,  
for ever and ever! AMEN!

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<sup>1</sup> Kolb, R., Wengert, T. J., & Arand, C. P. (2000). *The Book of Concord: the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (p. 127; Ap: art. iv, par. 44). Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.