

16th August

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

- Is there a walk, or a place that you do not enjoy going? (You do not have to walk here.)
- What is it about the walk that you do not enjoy? Is it too long or difficult? Does it take you passed a place that has uncomfortable memories? Do you feel conspicuous being there?

Read Matthew 15:21-28

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴ He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶ He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷ She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

On the surface this is an uncomfortable story. Jesus and the disciples have left Jewish territory and are being shouted at by a local woman, who is an outcast and labelled as unclean. Jesus begins by suggesting that he is only there for those from the house of Israel, something that his disciples seem to believe. Yet this Canaanite woman seems to recognise that Jesus is not a roaming healer but someone greater- here she addresses him as Lord. She seems prepared to be seen as a dog picking up the scraps under the table and yet Jesus sees that she is seeking the crumbs from the master's table. The good food.

- Can you identify with anyone in the story? Why?
- What is Jesus doing by recognising that her faith is strong?
- How might the disciples be challenged by this action?
- What questions are you left with?

Take some time to express to God the places, actions and words that make you feel uncomfortable.

Allow God to take the time to show you the great love that is hidden in these things. Find yourself a symbol that gives can remind you of this when times are not always pleasant.

Activity

**Jesus could see that the Canaanite woman had a strong faith.
She thought herself to be the lowest of the low and yet**

understood that even on the floor, you can still find rich crumbs.

Are there people in your life that feel like this woman? Try and find a way to encourage them to see that even at their lowest point, there are crumbs of hope.

Maybe write them a special message or leave a little box of surprises, share a story from your life with them.