

What does it mean to trust Jesus?

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 Gotthold Beck

信頼するとは(マタイ 15 章 21~28 節)

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Matthew

15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

I would like to start with a letter from a Sister who lives here in Vancouver. Our sister, Hiromi Goozee, once wrote me a letter which started by citing Verse 12 of Psalm 19.

Psalm

19:12 Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.

Yesterday, when I read these words, I thought of the weight of my sins and could not stop the tears from running down my face. I was depressed when I thought of the many sins I have committed in the past and the sins I am still committing today. I also remembered my emotional behavior with my children, who are my precious gifts from the Lord. I am worried whether they can walk the road to the Lord growing up with a sinner like me. However, today, after listening to the recorded message and reading the bible, I felt so relieved: relieved because I could confess everything to the lord, and surrender myself to him.

Exodus

15:26 I am the LORD that healeth thee.

Lately, I have been keeping my bible on the table so that I can receive the many words of Jesus. When I sit down at the table, I always open the bible and read the words of God.

Deuteronomy

4:7 The LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for.

2 Corinthians

4:11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

I love Jesus very much.

This was what she wrote to me. Let's read the last verse again.

Matthew

15:28 Then Jesus answered her, "Lady, your faith is great! What you want is granted." That very hour her daughter was healed.

'Blessed are they that mourn', Jesus so promised. Everybody prays when they mourns. For this woman, her daughter, who caused her all her sorrow, eventually became the reason she was saved.

This woman did not belong to the people of Israel. She was Greek. Greeks were heathens and Jews treated them with contempt and disregard. She lived in Tyre, which was outside of Israel. Presumably, her husband had died, and she was alone with her young daughter. However, her daughter caused her deep sorrow and much worry. It was because this daughter not only suffered from a serious illness, but was also severely oppressed by a filthy demon.

Matthew

15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

No doctor could help her. So this mother may have worshiped false idols made by humans. As a consequence, she lost all hope and fell into a desperate situation. She must have lost all the joy of being a mother and may have felt she had nothing to live for. I suppose this mother accepted her fate and lived a life without any hope at all.

However, one day, she heard about Jesus. It was news people were talking about all over. It might have been something like the incident described in Luke 7:22;

Luke

7:22 Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.

She must have heard about the story of the blind who could see, the lame who could walk, the lepers who were cleansed, the deaf who could hear, the dead who were raised. She must have thought that Jesus could cast out the unclean spirits. She must have wanted to go see Jesus so desperately.

However, she lived outside Israel, and it seemed impossible that Jesus comes out of the land of Israel to see her. Furthermore, she could not go out of her house and leave her daughter alone. Because of these reasons, it seemed nearly impossible for her to see Jesus. Nevertheless, Jesus, for the only time in his life, walked out to the border zone. I am not sure why Jesus came to the border.

One possible reason was that he wanted to be free from the multitudes of people and have a time of quiet and undisturbed conversations with his disciples. It was absolutely impossible for Jesus to have his own uninterrupted time inside Israel. Numerous people in agony and suffering came to see Jesus every day, from morning to midnight. All the sick people gathered around Jesus without hesitation, and many other people brought their problems to him. However, it goes without saying that the most important reason was to meet this woman, not to escape the crowds. This woman, because of her daughter, had no joy, no hope and had given up her life. She must have thought that it was her fate, and she wouldn't be able to get away from it.

However, because she had a strong desire to meet Jesus, Jesus traveled all the way to see her. Of course, the same is true for us. Jesus came all the way to meet us, rather than us going to meet Jesus.

One day, she heard that Jesus and his disciples were coming to Tyre, where she lived. I suppose that she reminded herself that it was the one and only chance for her daughter to be healed. If she did not seize this

opportunity, her daughter would never be healed, so she was determined to sacrifice everything for it. 'I have to meet that man at any cost.' This Greek woman must have thought that she would never have a second chance to meet Jesus and speak with him intimately. She knew that it was the only chance in her life. 'I want to see Jesus. I need to meet him. Everything relies on my encounter with Jesus.' She must have thought this way.

Have we ever thought this way? She came to think this way because she understood her situation, which was totally desperate and hopeless. Anyone would behave just like her once they realized their situation was absolutely hopeless. However, she did not receive what she wanted right after she met Jesus

Here, let's think about three points. First of all, what was the obstacle which hindered her faith? Secondly, how was the reaction of Jesus to this heathen woman? Thirdly, what is at the foundation of real faith?

Let's think about the obstacle hindering her faith. We can see it in detail in the Chapter 15 of Matthew. She kept screaming, but it was her desperate situation and her love for her daughter that made her scream. And then, Jesus did not respond to her at all, the bible states.

Disciples came to Jesus and prayed some strange prayers. Please Lord, say something quickly to heal her and send her away, because she is becoming a nuisance. This was a stupid prayer by the disciples. After all, they did not want her to be cured, but just wanted to calm her down. However, there was no way for Jesus to heal someone that way. It was just impossible. The disciples tried to heal her just to quiet her down.

Sometimes we act this way, for example, against panhandlers, not out of real love or sympathy, but just to put out of our sights.

Recently, a man came to my house. He looked like a panhandler, but I was not sure. I knew that he was lying. It was awful. However, I gave him 10,000 yen just because I wanted him to leave. A few days later, this man came back. I had no choice but to give him another 10,000 yen again, but he insisted that he deserved to take 20,000 yen this time. What could I do? I gave him what he wanted just to make him go.

The disciples did not care about the woman at all. They had no sympathy and did not want her to be

cured or to cheer her up. They wanted her to go away just because she was becoming annoying.

However, Jesus' attitude towards her was fundamentally different. He clearly explained the reasons why he could not answer her: it was not because he required silence or a comfortable atmosphere. It was because he did not forget the mission he was sent to accomplish in this world, and the mission was for Israel, for the Jews. I suppose that Jesus had an inner conflict over the matter. On the one hand, Jesus was sent for Israel, but on the other hand, he must have felt strong sympathy and love for this woman. Jesus was waiting then, for an order from his Father God, which he could obey, instead of acting on his own accord.

Prayers of Jesus have been always same. It was never his own will, but his father's. Father, what should I do? Not my will but yours be done. As in Verse 23, he didn't answer her at all. It was because he prayed before he answered. Jesus asked his father what to do. He asked his father whether he should heal her soon. In this sense, our attitude is totally different from that of Jesus. When we have to decide something, we always try to act on our own thoughts. We only pray when we hit the wall. Jesus always prayed before started his actions.

As it is written, Jesus did not answer her at all. How disappointed this woman was. Is it worth her waiting to seek help after seeing a reaction like this? Jesus was sent for the people of Israel. However, she was not a Jew. She was Greek. After all, Jesus was not there for Greeks, and in that sense, he had no reason to care about her at all. She might have thought that she may as well have given up and gone home. However, this was not the way she reacted. Nothing could hinder her faith.

This woman was so sure that only Jesus could heal her daughter, who was possessed by evil ghost. And you would never be disappointed if you have faith like this. Nonetheless, another challenge was waiting for her faith. Jesus said to her that the bread was prepared for children, and 'it's not right to throw it to the puppies.'

In those days, Jews despised any kind of heathens, foreigners from any countries. They considered that anyone who wasn't Jewish was unclean, and that these people would never go to heaven.

Because of this contempt of Jews, heathens naturally came to hate Jews. They hated each other. Even Jesus said that he was sent for his children, to serve the people of Israel, but he was never sent for the dogs, which meant heathens.

It is easy to imagine that she was deeply shocked by these words of Jesus. These were actually unkind words, but she must have realized that these words of Jesus did not come from a hatred of her. Her faith was so unshakable. She was firmly convinced that Jesus wanted to and would heal her daughter, and was therefore not affected by these words.

The disciples were not happy about this woman at all, and their attitudes were cold. Jesus gave her not a word in response. Nevertheless, she did not think of leaving. She never said 'That is enough. I am giving up.' Her faith was still so strong that it was not affected by any of these words or attitude of the Savior. She said, 'Yes, Lord. But...'. It is okay to say 'but' to the Lord just like she did? 'You are right, Lord, but...' she said these words. 'I am a heathen woman who is as filthy as dogs and I do not belong to the people of Israel.'

As we can see from these words, she still trusted Jesus. She understood Jesus' words and accepted them. Her conviction that Jesus would save and heal her daughter remained the same. She understood so clearly what was going on. She accepted that she was not qualified to see Jesus because she was a heathen. She modestly asked Jesus for the crumbs, just like puppies waiting under their masters' tables.

This woman, knowing that she was not entitled or qualified to accept the blessing of God, could only ask for the compassion of Jesus. Isn't it that the most certain and the best foundation of life?

Let's read few verses from Isaiah:

Isaiah

49:13 Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.

60:10 And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in

my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

We can find a handful of similar descriptions in the New Testament. For example,

Matthew

9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

They were healed.

Matthew

17:15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

This prayer was also accepted and his son was healed.

Mark

10:47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

The prayer of Bartimaeus the blind beggar was granted when he cried out like this, and he was healed. It is stated in Luke 17:13:

Luke

17:13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

Jesus heeded the prayers of the ten lepers and healed them. Let us again take a look at the verses starting from Matthew 15:21. This heathen woman kept screaming 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed!' and the Lord granted her prayer. Jesus answered her, 'Lady, Your faith is great. What you want is granted.' That very hour her daughter was healed. It is so written.

Let's summarize what we have learned so far. We learned that Jesus could not help but accept all the voices asking for his blessing and mercy. If you want to meet Jesus like this and want to have experiences to be certain of your salvation, and have the joy and appreciation of the liberation from all sins, the best way is to beg Jesus sincerely for his blessing and mercy from the bottom of your heart.

So here, now we want to think about the second question: why Jesus adopted such an attitude towards this woman. I suppose that everybody is surprised at his apathetic rejection of the woman. This time, the woman had to realize that Jesus was sent just for the people of Israel, and he belonged to the Jews. However, the words of Jesus did never disappoint her. Instead, this conversation actually encouraged her, and she was filled with hope by the power of Jesus' words. Jesus must have been so glad and rejoiced to see her.

What makes Jesus most happy is real faith without self-justification, to which you devote everything and fall on your knees. Jesus was so glad, and said to the woman, 'Your faith is great. What you want shall be granted.' Why did he remain silent but later say these kind words? Jesus must have felt deep sympathy when he saw her and wanted to lovingly help her. However, she first had to pray. She was not well-prepared for it. The time had not yet come. Then, she screamed to Jesus, 'Lord, I am a heathen woman. I am a filthy puppy and I have no privileges! Please have mercy on me.' This confession was not made by her, but came out the grace of the spirit of God: the Holy Ghost.

The Lord will have mercy on anyone when he or she adopts such an attitude. A time will eventually come for everyone. When you stop hiding your worries or pains, and surrender yourself to the control of the Lord as you are, the Lord will have mercy on you and give you his blessings. Did you think that Jesus' attitude to her was really difficult? The words of Jesus were true when he compared the heathen woman to a filthy dog and said that she did not deserve to be in the kingdom of God. However, there is only one way left for us to avoid this truth, only one possibility to belong to the kingdom of God. It is the great blessing of Jesus, which is so generous that we are undeserving.

However, the Lord talks to each one of us with the same kind of harsh and strong words. For example, it is written in Romans, Chapter 3,

Romans

3:9 We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

3:12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

We can find similar things, practically the same thing in the Old Testament. Shall we take a quick look? It starts from the latter part of Isaiah, Verse 5, Chapter 1.

Isaiah

1:5 The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

1:6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

It is the same story for us. The only chance left for us lies in the great blessing of the Lord. We actually do not even deserve to accept it. This is the reason why Paul wrote in Romans,

Romans

4:24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

4:25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Jesus became human to save each one of us. He threw away all of his glory. He actually threw aside everything he had and made himself totally valueless. He came down to the land of sinners, the kingdom dominated by Satan, which is this world we live. Even if Jesus did not die on the cross as we know, still it was such an unthinkable sacrifice that he became such a worthless being, a human.

This whole universe was created by Jesus just for himself. And yet, Jesus turned himself into a worthless human being like us. It was necessary to save each one of us. Jesus did not only become human, but according to the gospels, he acted like a slave. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, which was the job of slaves in those days. However, Jesus did this voluntarily for them. Jesus, the one even the army of heaven fears and worships, acted like a slave for each one of us.

However, this was not all he has done. Jesus was treated like a dog. It can be seen from the description in this part of the bible that, in those days, heathens were despised as filthy dogs. But it is also stated in the bible that Jesus shed his precious blood for these heathens, and even sacrifice himself for them. Jesus would not have called her a dog unless he had very important reason or purpose to do so.

It was to show us how lowly he became to save us. Some dogs do not have a place to live. They are not loved at all but are always chased away everywhere they go. Jesus too did not have a place to feel at home. He did not even have a place to sleep undisturbed. Jesus was also despised everywhere he went, cursed and finally killed on the cross like a criminal.

However, Jesus accomplished even greater things to save us. He actually became human, acted like a slave and was treated like a filthy dog; but moreover, he became sin itself. It is so stated in the bible. 5:21 of Second Corinthians is cited very often, and this is the verse we should try to recall every day.

2 Corinthians

5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

On the cross, Jesus was treated as the embodiment of sin, instead of the loved and only child of God. Jesus, who was born by the intention of his Father, God, was crucified one who totally failed to do the will of his Father. Punishment of the Lord God against the human race was inflicted upon Jesus. And it was done for the sake of each one of us. You will be blessed, if you can pray in desperation, 'Jesus, please have mercy on me. Please forgive my sins. Please redeem me.'

Finally we come to the last point: what is the foundation of true salvation? What is the foundation of the faith which leads us to salvation? If you try to maintain your faith by your own efforts, your faith will actually be weakened, instead of being strengthened. The foundation of faith cannot be seen by the eyes, and it never lies in the efforts to understand, analyze or consider. The foundation of true faith is in nothing but Jesus himself and his words. It is faithfully described as such in the bible.

The word of the Lord is an absolute truth, which at any occasions never ever changes. For those who truthfully confess their worries, pains or problems, forgiveness is granted for their sins, as stated in the bible. Just humble yourself and all will turn out fine. Because Jesus died for you, all your debts are paid by the blood of his death. Jesus said, 'What you want is granted. Your sins are forgiven. I will never remember your sins.'

Foundation of your faith and confidence cannot be built on your knowledge or personal feelings. It can only be built on the sincere and genuine words of the Lord. Faith should be kept just by the words of God, and if we just have such true faith, we will see the miracles done inside our hearts and in the hearts of other people. The woman of Canaan must have realized afterwards that she was right to keep screaming. If she had remained silent, if she had just given up and went home with a broken heart, she would have regretted it so badly. If she did not talk, these miracles would not have been done, and no one would have been healed.

She did not rely on her own knowledge, thoughts or emotions. She also did not listen to the disciples or any other people. She only respected Jesus. This is exactly what the foundation of faith should be. Jesus said to us, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' The Lord promises that it will be given. Needless to say, it shall be given to our family, relatives and friends. Are we screaming for our family, relatives and friends just like this woman did? Do we keep praying for them? If we keep asking and praying sincerely just like this woman, Jesus will answer us today. He will save us and make us free.

After all, the most important thing is to believe, to trust. 'To trust' is to be convinced of the existence of the Lord near you, even though you cannot see him. 'To trust' is to experience the voice of the Lord talking to you, even though you cannot hear it. 'To trust' is to perceive the love of the Lord, even though you cannot feel it. 'To trust' is to realize that the Lord does the best for you and his guidance is always flawless, even though you cannot understand anything. 'To trust' is to be convinced of the truthfulness of the words of the Lord and that these words will never perish, even though you may be in complete darkness.

If you believe, if you trust Jesus, you will experience miracles.

End