

The Quality of Great Faith

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Matthew 15:20-28.
- B. Jesus noted that a woman had "mega faith."
- C. Jesus said the same of a Centurion. (Matthew 8:8)
- D. Both subjects were Gentiles.
- E. This is a picture of saving faith.
- F. Jesus left Palestine on this occasion out of a desire for time alone with His disciples. (Mark 7:24, 31)

II. Jesus did not go into Gentile land to minister primarily. Jesus had to reach Israel before He would reach out to the world. (Mark 7:24, I Kings 17, Matthew 4:24, Mark 3, Matthew 11:21, Mark 7:31, John 4, Matthew 28)

III. The healing of the woman was surprising because it was a woman, a Canaanite by race, a Syro-Phoenician by district and a Greek by religion. (Deuteronomy 7)

IV. Qualities of great faith.

- A. It is properly directed.
 - 1. The woman directs her faith toward Jesus.
 - 2. Wishful thinking is not faith.
 - 3. The woman repented from idols. (I Thessalonians 1:9, Acts 4:12, 3:16, 20:21, Hebrews 12:2)
- B. Great faith is repentant.
 - 1. Mercy acknowledges that one is here even though he or she is unworthy.
 - 2. Saving faith is penitent. (Psalm 51, Exodus 34, Romans 2:4)
- C. Great faith is reverent.
 - 1. She is saying more than "sir" when she says "Lord."

2. The woman acknowledges His sovereign deity and supernatural power.

D. Great faith is persistent.

1. Jesus put up a series of barriers for this woman.

2. Jesus resists shallow faith, and therefore puts up the barriers so that genuine faith would exist. (Matthew 17, Luke 24)

E. Great faith is humble.

1. She worshipped Jesus.

2. She did not come to Him with a sense of status.

Application questions:

1. Why do you think that the great faith of Gentiles was highlighted over against Israelites in Jesus' ministry?

2. Which aspect of great faith do you think is most important? Explain.

3. What is your plan—both practical and measurable—to grow in one of the qualities listed above? Explain.
