



Table Talk II

By Rev. Timothy J. Swenson • I.L.T. Dean of Chapel

The Second Sunday in Lent | February 25, 2024



MATTHEW 15:21-28

"...great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." Vs. 28

Now there's a reason to believe! Jesus rewards the greatness of the Canaanite woman's faith with the fulfillment of her desire. Surely, fulfillment of our desire provides more than sufficient motivation for us humans to grow our faith to greatness. The reality, though, as the disciples had revealed to them when they prayed to the Lord, "Increase our faith..." their faith proved non-existent... not even as much as a mustard seed—the smallest of all seeds. Jesus announces that even that tiniest amount of faith could uproot mulberry bushes and cast them in the sea (Lk. 17:5-6). Having our faith, or lack thereof, revealed to us takes divine intervention.

Since the Fall in Eden's Garden, our desires fail us. That original sin has corrupted the affections of our hearts to the point that we can no longer know them, let alone trust them. Luther teaches this as he gives us the explanation to the Lord's Prayer in his Small Catechism. Luther understood that the Lord's Prayer makes theologians of the cross out of us, especially the first three petitions which expose our bondage to our sinful self, the world, and the devil. In the first petition, "Hallowed be thy name," we pray against the "hallowing" or honoring or respecting of our name and for God to cause his name to be

honored. In the second petition, "Thy kingdom come," we are praying against the elevation of all earthly kingdoms and institutions—even against the institution we know as church—so that God will bring in his kingdom, hidden, mysterious, and growing. In the third petition, "Thy will be done," we are praying against our wills which desire to have what we desire and call it God's will rather than suffering God's will to be done upon us. Faith is not something for us to grow or increase. The Holy Spirit gives faith, or it does not. You have faith in its entirety... its wholeness... its greatness... or you do not. This sharp distinction marks the divide between a faith you possess as a human virtue and the faith which possesses you as a gift from God.

Table Talk: Discuss the humility of having your faith revealed to you.

Pray: Heavenly Father grant me a faith that possesses me. Amen



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MATTHEW 4:1-11

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21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon. 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying out 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 And he answered, It is not right to take the children's bread 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, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly...



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