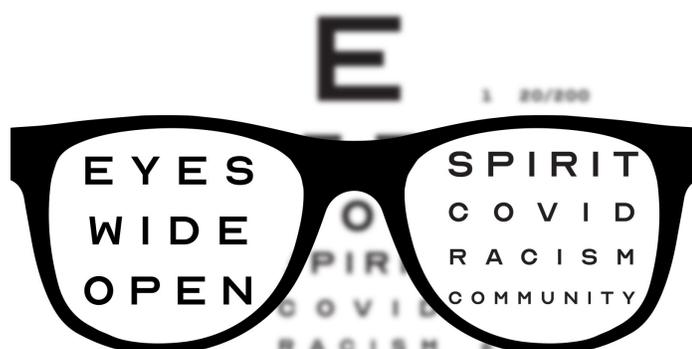


SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Seeing Jesus

August 16, 2020

There are moments in our lives when we feel the kind of desperation that drives us to our knees. Today's story about Jesus's encounter with a woman whose level of desperation seems remarkably familiar to us. We begin to see ourselves in her – our story in her story – a story that ultimately reminds us that there's never, ever a place too far that Jesus won't go to show love and mercy, grace and compassion.

SCRIPTURE TEXT: MATTHEW 15:21-28

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

This woman from the region of Tyre and Sidon had her eyes wide open to Jesus; she was actively waiting for him. Matthew calls her a "Canaanite" woman which is a little strange because by the time of Jesus, people were no longer called "Canaanites." It was an old, outdated word, kind of like calling present day New York New Amsterdam. But Matthew purposely chooses the word "Canaanite" because his first century listeners would have understood her as an "outsider." Of all the Gentile nationalities, those of Canaanite descent would have been among the most hated by the Jews. She's from a place well off the map. She's well outside the center, she's part of the fringe. But here's the point of the story: there's never a place too far that Jesus won't go to show love and mercy, grace and compassion. Jesus is willing and able to go to Tyre and Sidon.

While Jesus was in the center of the religious world trying to convince the Hometown Crowd – his Jewish brethren in and around Galilee that the Kingdom of Heaven really was emerging all around them all of the time, this Canaanite woman didn't need any more convincing. Even as an outsider - especially as an outsider she knew that Jesus was who he said he was. So she was focused on Jesus the teacher, the healer, the Savior and she meets him at the intersection of her heart that's breaking for her daughter and his ability to heal.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced the level of desperation described in this part of Matthew?
- How did God meet you during that time? Who else was there to support you?
- What does the Canaanite woman teach us in this story?
- How do you look for God at work in the most difficult places in your life?

APPLICATION: There's never a place too far that Jesus won't go to show love and mercy, grace and compassion. With your eyes wide open, lean into that truth this week. Pray for someone you know in need.