

Tenacious Faith

Tenacious faith can play an important role through tough times.

Being tenacious is keeping firm hold of something – never giving up and never stop trying, someone who does whatever is required to accomplish a goal

Robert Schuller said, “*Tough times never last, but tough people do.*”

But are we tough enough to go through time of sufferings in our life?

One thing is for sure, afflictions, trials, sufferings never last, they are temporary. But a tough people of God with resolute (unwavering), unyielding, unbending faith, they would last.

Text: Matthew 15:21-28 – The Canaanite woman

She was a mother who was willing to take on Jesus in order to get the needed healing for her daughter.

Jesus was tired. He'd been dealing with the religious leaders in Jerusalem and needed a break. So He and His disciples went to the region of Tyre and Sidon, which was an enemy territory for the Jews. They thought they could escape from notice and get some much needed rest, but as they got there, they were approached by a

Canaanite woman begging for Jesus to heal her daughter.

When the woman found out that Jesus was there, she sought Him out. She shouted out to Him, calling Him “*Lord, Son of David*”, and begging Him to heal her daughter. Instead of acknowledging her, Jesus ignored her.

His disciples urged Him to send her away because she was annoying. Instead, He said, “*I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*”

Undeterred, she came closer, falling to His feet, worshipping Him, saying, “*Lord, Help me.*”

He answered, “*It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.*”

Again, not discouraged, she counters. “*Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.*”

He responds, “*O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.*” And from that moment, her daughter was healed.

What a daring amount of courage and tenacious faith it must have taken this woman to reach out to Jesus. There was literally no reason for her to believe He would honour her request.

- **She was a Gentile.** Jesus was a Jew. Everyone knew He was there for the Jews. She wasn't a Jew. Jews didn't go out of their way for Gentiles. In fact, they went out of their way to avoid them. God is not a respecter of person regardless of who we are and where we are from. God always responds to our faith – *for without faith it is impossible to please God! For he who comes to God must believe...* When we come to God, we need to know what we believe because God always responds, honours and rewards our faith.
- **She was a Canaanite.** The feud between Israelites and Canaanites had been going on since the days of Abraham. The Canaanites were known to be idolatrous people scorned by the religious Jews.
- **She was a woman.** Women knew their place. They knew that it was unacceptable to call out to a man in public.
- **Also, this woman was above all, a mother.** And this mother couldn't sit around and do nothing. She had to do whatever it took to get the help her daughter needed.

Her persistence paid off. He recognised her sincere faith. Though she was a Gentile, she knew who Jesus was and confessed Him as Lord and Saviour.

Lesson learnt:

- **That times of suffering should lead us toward God, not away from Him**

Instead of doubting God, we must trust in Him that He will not withhold anything good from us. Psalm 84:11 says, *"For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless."*

- **That it pays to stand firm**

Let our faith be firm and unwavering.

- **That being patient matters**

It wasn't until the Canaanite woman confronted Him and demonstrated her tenacious faith that He granted her request.

When it seems that He's silent, it doesn't mean He doesn't care or He is not there. His response may or may not be the answer we want, but when He responds, we will know. We will have that peace that comes from knowing that He hears us and loves us and is watching out for us.

- **That Jesus answers our prayers according to His ways and in His perfect time**

A person who truly trusts God also trusts His timing. Because of the tenacious faith and perseverance of the Canaanite woman, she was praised by Jesus. Her daughter was immediately healed at that very moment (verse 28). You see, if the Canaanite woman expected

the reward at the beginning, she would not have continued anymore.

Have you ever felt unworthy to call out for help? Perhaps you're caught up in your past or feelings of insecurity. If so, you can find comfort in this story of the Canaanite woman.

Example in Habakkuk

In the life of Habakkuk, after he accepts his present situation, there is an absolute trust that God will take care of things in the future. He closes with what may be the most beautiful expression of faith in the whole of the Bible.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NCV)

"Fig trees may not grow figs, and there may be no grapes on the vines. There may be no olives growing and no food growing in the field. There may be no sheep in the pens and no cattle in the barns. But I will still be glad in the Lord; I will rejoice in God my Savior."

What a beautiful statement that is. Habakkuk says, *"No matter what may go wrong in my life, even if I lose everything I own, God, I will still trust You and I will still serve You because I believe that in the end, you will make everything work out well."*

Faith chooses to believe when it would be easier to stop believing. Habakkuk said, "I will wait patiently" and "I will rejoice."