



## Nothing to the Table

The Bible doesn't tell us her name. The Bible tells us next to nothing about her... except that she *knew* that she brought nothing to the table.

Her daughter was possessed by a demon. Every day she saw her daughter struggle. Her daughter suffered.

And there is nothing that shows you how helpless you are as when your child hurts.

She ran to the marketplace to find a priest, grabbed him, dragged him back to her house. "Help me! Help me! Anything! Help me!"

And the priest looked at her daughter and said, "Yes. I will call on the name of all the gods, and they will come, and they will release your daughter."

And he did! He called on the names of all the gods, so many that she had never even heard of them before!

But they didn't help her daughter.

She went, and she found a priestess. "Help my daughter!"

And the priestess said, "Pray underneath the light of a full moon, and you will have what you need."

And she did. She prayed underneath the light of a full moon, but it did not help her daughter.

She found another priest who said, "Ah! You need a sacrifice."

And so she went and she sacrificed the animal just as he had commanded, but it did not help her daughter.

Her daughter writhed in pain, saying things that should never come out of a girl's mouth, saying things that she had no right to know. She was a woman of some means, but none of that mattered to the demon. She was a woman of good morals, but that didn't matter to the demon. She was a woman who had done so much... but it didn't matter.

She didn't bring anything to the table.

Desperate people do desperate things. She searched for a miracle-worker, any healer. The problem was... all the miracle-workers were fakes. All the stories of people who could actually heal? They were always far away or long ago.

All except one.

She lived in Tyre – just north of the armpit of the world. That's Israel, by the way. But Israel had something interesting. They had a healer. He did things that no one else had ever heard of – healing a man born blind? Feeding five thousand people with only a few handfuls of food? Raising the dead? And... and he cast out demons. They had a wretched religion – only one God! What kind of people were so poor they could only afford to worship one God? – but she was desperate. Anything for her daughter. So she went to the local synagogue, where they gathered to worship this strange God. And she learned.

She had to sit in the back of synagogue. She wasn't allowed to speak. It didn't matter how much money she had. It didn't matter what she'd done for the community. She was to sit and listen. She learned that the Jews worshiped someone called "The LORD." They didn't even say his name, but called him "LORD." There was a Promised One coming, a descendant of their great, ancient king named David. And this King would be great. And he would be rejected, despised, and by his wounds, we would be healed. She listened... and she knew that this Jesus, that must be him. The one these Jews had been waiting for. And he was the only one who would be able to save her daughter. This LORD wasn't like her gods. She couldn't bribe him with sacrifices or specially-worded prayers. She couldn't get his attention with her behavior. And even who she was – she wasn't Jewish. What could she bring to the table? How could she get him to do what she wanted?

She brought nothing to the table.

She returned home. She saw her daughter, spit dribbling from the corner of her mouth, bloody cuts all up and down her arms from the demon. And she broke. She wept. She couldn't do anything for her daughter. She brought nothing to the table.

A servant found her crumpled on the ground. "Mistress? Have you heard? There's a healer in town. A Jewish man. Named Jesus."

He was here? She ran to the market. She found him – well, a crowd of people with Jewish accents, anyway. He had to be one of them. And she called out, at the top of her lungs, "Lord! Son of David!" That was him! That Jesus was the one the Jews were waiting for!

And as she called out, people in the market turned to stare at her. Imagine, a woman of standing chasing after some Jewish healer!

She didn't care what they thought. It didn't matter. She needed Jesus. "Lord! Son of David! Have mercy on me!" She brought nothing to the table. She didn't offer to pay him. She didn't bribe him by telling him of all the good things she had done. She didn't try to share her story. It didn't matter. She didn't bring anything to the table. All she begged was for him to have mercy. To give her not what she deserved. "My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession!" Through her tears, she pleaded, she called out, anything – she knew he had no reason to help her. She was a stranger. A woman. A foreigner. She didn't even know his face. She brought nothing to the table... but she called out for help anyway.

And Jesus didn't answer. And why would he? She had nothing of worth to him.

But she kept begging, calling out, screaming at him at the top of her lungs, so that everyone in the market was staring at her, at this pathetic mass of hair and tears, and they knew that she had nothing to offer.

His disciples, his students, were embarrassed by her! "Send her away, for she keeps crying after us!"

And the teacher responded, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

Just like that. She didn't matter. She finally found his face, but she didn't matter. She threw herself down in front of him. "Lord, help me." That's all. She had no reason for him to help her. She had no way to convince him to help. She just... begged. "Lord, help me."

And his harsh voice answered, “It isn’t right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

No. It wasn’t. She had no right. But she would take whatever he would give. Crumbs from Jesus were better than a feast from anywhere else. “Yes, Lord. But even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

She brought nothing. She had nothing to offer. And she admitted it... but she asked for help anyway. And Jesus answered her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.”

She bolted. She sprinted to her house, her heart full, not seeing for the tears and the hair in her eyes, the only sound in her ears his promise: “Your request is granted.” Would her daughter be back? Was she ok? And she skidded into the house... and there was her daughter standing, with clear eyes. Her daughter ran to her, and the two clung to each other, and they wept and they laughed and they cried and they thanked God – the one true God, they thanked Jesus, that though they had nothing to offer... he had healed them anyway.

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Brothers. Sisters.

You bring nothing to the table. You offer no reason why Jesus should love you, much less forgive you.

But he chose to die for you anyway, to cleanse you and make you his own.

And this story is true.

Matthew 15:21-28  
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