

“WHEN GOD PUTS YOU ON HOLD”

Message for the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

From Pastor Norman Staker

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ISAIAH 56: 1, 6-8 ☸ ROMANS 11: 1-2A, 29-32

MATTHEW 15: (10-20), 21-28

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER AND FROM
OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST. AMEN. HE IS RISEN; HE IS
RISEN INDEED!

Most of us have probably experienced the following: You want to get down the road, but the road is curvy, and you're behind a slow driver. You want to pass but you have to slow down and wait. How about making an important phone call, and all you get is a machine. Leave a message at the beep: then the machine says, "If you live within the U.S. press 1; If you want English press 2; If you have a complaint press 3; If you have bad breath...you can hang up." Finally, you press all those numbers and you get another recording which says...."you're the 15th caller and your wait time will be approximately 12 minutes."

But, after you get to your final destination by phone, you get another recording which says, "I'm not able to take your call right now; if you will leave your name, number, and a brief message, I will return your call." Wait, Wait, Wait, you've got to wait. Do you like to wait? Then there's always that message that says the mailbox is full and you can't leave a message. What do you do then; yes, you probably hang up!

Does this bother you? You take the whole family, and let's say you drive to some place like McDonald's or Burger King, you go through the drive-thru....you order that Value Meal for you; you've got several people in the car; you make all the orders, pay for all the orders, then, you get to the window for pick-up. Everything is there....all except your order..You are then told to pull-up and park and they will bring it out to you. Has that ever happened to you; I know it has happened to me. Wait, Wait, Wait! Do you like to wait?

How about when you are in line at WalMart; you've waited for what seemed to be forever, and someone ahead of you has an item with no price sticker on it so now,

there's a price check, which takes 15 minutes, They've got new employees who are being trained, so you wait for them to pay and they take out a hammer and bust open a piggy bank full of pennies. Ok, I know I'm exaggerating a little, ok a lot, but maybe not; anyway you get the message.

We are constantly waiting whether we are at a traffic light, or stuck in traffic, or waiting at the dentist, or doctor's office....Wait! Wait! Wait!

With the use of Fax machines and email, we have become spoiled on immediate service. Ten minutes without electricity sends us up the wall. This past week I ran into someone who had lost power at their home since 5pm the previous day and this was now 9:30 in the morning.

Whenever an operator puts us on hold, we feel as if we've been deprived. Our time is valuable to us, but not to them.

What about when God is slow in responding to a prayer we've prayed? Has that ever happened to you?

What do you do when you have to wait on God?

Yes, the Bible says 'wait on the Lord' in Psalm 27: 14. That's easy to say. It's easy to preach, especially, if you are not the one waiting.

Tell that to the person who has just lost a loved one. Tell that to a person who has been told by a lifelong spouse, that they are leaving, and do not plan to come back. It's easy to wait, if you are not the one having to wait.

Tell that to the child who has to live in the midst of abuse. Tell that to the person getting bad news from the doctor.

What do you do when you have to wait? I mean, waiting on God? What do you do when God puts you on hold?

Does God actually put us on hold? Are we that unimportant to our Creator that we mean God will put us on hold? In our text from Matthew 15 this morning, we read about a lady who did not immediately get her prayer answered. Jesus was silent and did not immediately respond to her prayer request.

Listen again to some of our text today from Matthew: Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon. But he did not answer her at all." This is our Lord; this is Jesus but he ignores her. His disciples even wanted him to send her away. Jesus said, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

Jesus along with his disciples travel northwest about 50 miles to a town known as Tyre and then to another town called Sidon. It was in this area that they stop at a home probably a relative or friend of one of the disciples. In Mark's gospel, chapter 7 it says they were in a house. They were not in Jewish country. They were in Gentile country. The Jews and Gentiles did not have much to do with each other. Jesus took time to show His love and concern for the Gentiles. For many, many years the only distinction made in the Bible was you were either a Jew or a Gentile. But after Jesus formed the church...He made it clear that salvation is for all people.

Regardless, if they were black, white, Jew, Gentile, man, woman; salvation is to all people.

This home probably was Jewish...with Jewish traditions and customs. They were probably having a meal together.

While in this home, a lady from the area, which Matthew calls a Canaanite, a woman of Canaan, comes begging Jesus to deliver her daughter from a demon. You and I may not really react hearing that she was a woman of Canaan but to Matthew's audience, the Jews, it meant one thing...enemies. The Canaanites were long-standing enemies with the Jews. Here Jesus was with his disciples spending some time in enemy territory. But this woman comes into the very house, and begs for Jesus' help. She addresses Jesus with a title, that only the Jews would understand. She says, "Lord, Son of David" That was a title for the Messiah. Gentile people did not have that kind of belief. This woman grew up in a country where they had beliefs in many gods. They had a god of the sun, a god of the rain, a god of wind...a god

for this, and a god for that. This woman grew up believing that. All of those multiple gods could not help her. She had a daughter severely tormented by a demon. She needed real help. Somewhere along the

way, the name Jesus was brought up. She had to have heard about Jesus from somewhere. She heard the title “Son of David” the Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior, and she took advantage of this moment.

She said, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”

But Jesus, answered her not a word. Jesus put this lady, for the moment, ON HOLD! Can you just imagine the length of the silence? I believe the woman repeatedly makes this request, and repeatedly begs for the help of Jesus. The next verse says one of the disciples urges Jesus to “send the woman away, for she cries after us.” There is silence from Jesus. Not a word is spoken!

What do you do when God puts you on hold? Everyone else has received an answer, but now you’ve been placed on hold! What do you do?

First, Keep on trusting in Jesus. You’ve got to keep on trusting in the God Who has always been faithful in the past. I’ve never known of a case that was too difficult for Jesus. With God nothing is impossible!

This woman only gets the silent treatment. Does that mean Jesus is uncaring, and unconcerned? Absolutely, not! The woman of Canaan did not walk away. She kept on trusting in Jesus. She believed Jesus will eventually speak. That’s what we have got to do. We must keep on trusting in Jesus because He’s been faithful in the past, and because He will eventually speak to our need. When God puts You on hold, just remember He has a word for you.

Hang on...stay on the line...You may not get that word immediately, but eventually, He will speak to your very need. Keep on praying. God will speak to you. Keep on reading the Bible, Jesus has a message just for you.

Don’t think you’re the only one. Many Bible characters wondered when God would speak. Job lost his family, He lost his health, he lost the confidence of his wife, He lost all of his wealth. God allowed Satan to touch his life and all those bad things came upon Job. God never told Job the reason why. Job wondered why. Why doesn’t God speak to me?

There was Abraham. He was 100 years old before his first son was born. For many years Abraham wondered not why, but when? When will my son come? When will

my wife Sarah give birth? For many years Abraham kept on believing God, even when God placed Abraham on hold. Even the

prophets wondered “how long?” When will the Messiah come? After the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, there is a period of time that’s been called the “silent years.” For 400 years nothing new was brought up.

No new revelation. From the last book of the Old Testament to the first book of the New Testament, Matthew, a 400 year span of silence. It is as if God put the entire world on hold.

So, you keep on trusting Jesus, because He will eventually speak. God will eventually speak but there was one time, one time when God did not speak. When Jesus hung on the cross, Jesus cried out “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.” Jesus did not get a response at that present moment. But Jesus was committed to the Heavenly Father. Jesus said after that, “Father into thy hands I commit my spirit...”

So far, we’ve heard two voices: the voice of the mother, “Lord have mercy on me.” And then that of the disciple, “Send her away..”

But Jesus will not send her away. Jesus has said, “all that come to me, I will in no wise cast out.” Jesus now speaks: “I was sent to the lost sheep of Israel.” Jesus was not saying the blessings of God are only for Israel. Jesus was not saying that salvation was only for the Jews. He was saying that God had sent Him to offer salvation to the Jewish people first.

When God puts you on hold, keep on trusting Jesus.

When God puts you on hold, take inventory of where you stand with God. Where do you stand with God? Where did Israel stand with God? Jesus said they were lost. Someone might argue, “Yeah, but wait,

I’m a Jew.” So, what difference does that make. Someone might say,

“Wait a minute, I’m a church member,” So, what difference does that make with God. Without Jesus, we are all lost in our sins.

This woman’s approach to Jesus was like this....

Don't miss this...it's very easy to miss this. Look at verse 22 she says, "Lord, Son of David." She came with a Jewish approach. His disciples besought him, Send her away..." The disciples were saying..."Lord, she's not one of us....she's trying to be, but she's not Jewish.....Jesus said, "I've come only to the lost sheep of Israel."

The next thing the woman says...."Lord, help me" She got down on her knees and worshiped him. She dropped the title, "Son of David" She dropped her Jewish approach.....She got on her knees in a helpless and humble way and said, 'Lord, help me.'

When God puts you on hold, take inventory of where you stand before God. What are you holding up to the Lord for his approval? Jesus did not meet her need based on her nice, kind words, and her gracious way of greeting the Lord with that title, "Son of David." Remember, folks, we don't come to Jesus through a Baptist door or through a Methodist door or even a Lutheran door; we come to Jesus through the sinner's door. That's the only way anyone can get to Jesus."

Jesus was not being disrespectful when he said, "it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." Jesus was not calling her a dog but Gentiles were often called dogs. The woman said, "I know I'm called a dog, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." I know we got a nickname, but that should not stop me from getting a blessing from the Lord. This woman, she did not care what others may call her. She was willing to even have the Lord use that name, that embarrassing name, that degrading name of a dog. Even if that is the position the Lord wants her to be, that's okay with her, because she has a desperate need. She has a daughter who is desperately hurting. She is praying for her daughter to be delivered from those tormenting demons in her life. This woman was confessing her total dependence upon God. With this lady, There were no strings attached. Lord, you can call me what you want. You can place me anywhere at the table you please. You can put me on the table, or under the table with the dogs. I'm hanging on for a blessing. I'll take the crumbs if necessary. I'm depending on you.

Based on the Word of God, if you will commit your all to Jesus, He will speak to your personal need. He will speak peace to your Heart. He will give you strength for your trying days. He will give you wisdom in what to do in a given situation. He will give you His presence in the time of loneliness. Jesus said, "Woman, great is your faith; let it be done for you as you wish. And her daughter was healed from that moment.

When you have to wait for the answer, keep your eyes on Jesus. Keep your faith in God.

AMEN!!