

COME AND SEE

JESUS TESTS OUR LOVE AND ENDURANCE

Matt VanCleave

May 9, 2021

GROUP ICE BREAKER

Who was your favorite teacher or professor in your education and why?

REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week? How did it go?

- I will look for ways to deepen my current friendships.
- I will take a relational risk and be vulnerable with someone this week.
- I will model appropriate self-disclosure with my small group.
- I will speak truth to friends so they can grow even though it will be difficult.
- I will plan something for a friend to show my appreciation.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

This was one of the most striking and unusual interactions Jesus ever had with a mother, or with anyone for that matter. It's written in Matthew 15:21-28 and it's a story in which Jesus forces the disciples to face themselves.

A woman approaches and is crying out for help for her daughter who is demon-possessed, but the disciples want Jesus to send her away. He tests them with The Love Test, and they fail. Maybe God is testing you with someone today that has been difficult for you to love recently. Maybe God is testing how you will love someone authentically despite that difficulty.

As the disciples are facing their test, the woman is facing The Endurance Test. You might be facing something difficult, and you don't know if you'll ever find relief. You plead with God, but He seems silent. This is one of the most difficult tests as we try to stay faithful to God during times we feel abandoned by Him.

At the end of the story, this woman, who everyone thought was the spiritual bottom, is honored by Jesus. She continues to call on his name, "Lord" and Jesus remains faithful to her. And maybe you need to say to him what the woman said to him. "Lord. Even though I don't understand, still I call you Lord."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would Jesus travel with his disciples into an area where the people were despised by the Jews? What lesson do we learn from his choice of a retreat location?
2. If you were a casual observer, what would you have thought about Jesus's initial response of silence to the Canaanite woman?
3. Discuss a time you felt God was ignoring you or callous towards your requests, needs, and prayers. How did you react or respond? What was the outcome and what did you learn?
4. What is your reaction to the knowledge that Jesus will test you? Is it fair, necessary, unkind? Now read James 1:2-4. How do these verses impact your reaction?
5. Read Mark 12:28-31 and John 13:34. Who are the people that are difficult for you to love and why? Is it a people group, a co-worker, family member, someone sitting next to you in your small group (no names please)? Do you believe God loves them, and if so, can you?
6. What must the Canaanite woman have believed about Jesus that made her continue to cry out to Him as Lord? Discuss the role of persistence in a relationship with God. Is it disrespectful to repeatedly come to God with the same request?
7. What does this story teach us about the Kingdom of God? How can you apply this to your life this week?

NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will live as a student of Jesus and learn from him how to love.
- When facing difficult circumstances I will choose hope.
- I will say, "My Lord," even when His ways are not clear to me.
- I will trust God, persevere and not give up.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 15:21-28
- Matthew 11:20-22