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An rfour.org Children's Time Message

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Written for August 16, 2026

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Year A

Scripture: [Matthew 15:21-28](#) [**Summary:** *Jesus and the Syrophoenician Woman*]

Supplies Needed: No supplies needed.

ASK (a.k.a. [The On-Ramp](#))

- Good morning!
- I have a question for you: Have you ever heard the word, "Unexpected?"
- In case you haven't, something that is *unexpected* is something that is a surprise.
- For example, let's say I came to the church building today and promptly locked my keys in the car -- that would be an unexpected moment (and thankfully didn't happen).
- Or, maybe you might be planning to do something outside on this sunny day, but if it rained once you got outside, that would be unexpected.

TELL (a.k.a. [The Freeway](#))

- I wanted to share this word of "unexpected" with you because in today's scripture story, Jesus does some things I think most of us find to be unexpected.
- The story begins with a woman asking Jesus to heal her daughter.
- Instead of saying "Yes" or "No," Jesus ignores her, which is the first unexpected thing that he does. Jesus doesn't usually ignore people.
- Then, when she keeps asking him for help, he tells her that he can't be bothered with her request because there are other people he is supposed to help instead. And – he doesn't even say that very nicely.
- What Jesus says and how he says it to this woman are not what we would expect of Jesus. And, most likely, the woman did not expect this response from Jesus, either.

- But, the woman does not give up after Jesus' unexpected words. Instead, she gives Jesus reasons why he should help her.
- And did you hear what happened? Jesus decides he *does* want to help the woman. He changes his mind and heals the woman's daughter.

SHARE the Good News (a.k.a. *The Destination*)

- What I appreciate about this story is that the woman doesn't give up.
- It doesn't matter what unexpected things happen, she just keeps asking for help.
- And eventually that help is offered to her.
- As unexpected as this story is, I think this story is told because it helps us think about what happens when we ask God for help.
- We might expect certain things to happen when we ask for help in prayer.
- But, instead, unexpected things might happen instead.
- Those unexpected things might make us feel like we shouldn't have asked for help and that we should just quit asking God for help.
- But what we see in today's story is a reminder that when unexpected things happen after asking for help, that we should *keep* asking for help, *keep* praying to God.
- When we do that, when we keep asking for help, just like the woman kept asking for help, then we are more likely to receive the help we're asking for.
- And that's the good news for today. Let's pray.
- This is a repeat-after-me prayer.

CLOSING Prayer

Dear God,

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus...

Thank you for Jesus...

...and the Syrophoenician woman...

...and the Syrophoenician woman...

...who teach us...

...who teach us...

...to keep asking you for help...

...to keep asking you for help...

...even when unexpected things happen.

...even when unexpected things happen.

Thank you and Amen