



“The Smell of Culture”

August 15, 2021

Matthew 15:21–28

[21] And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. [22] And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” [23] But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” [24] He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” [25] But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” [26] And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” [27] She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” [28] Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly. (ESV)

1. Fun Question: If there was only one thing you would be able to smell for the rest of your life, what would it be? Why?
2. Read verses 24 -25. Jesus seems to get his own theology wrong as he says that He was sent ONLY to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (when in fact He was sent for the salvation of the entire world), as well as marginalizing the Canaanite woman by calling her a “dog”. We find that Jesus’ words were said in order to expose the hearts of his own disciples who believed that they were more right than everyone else, which leads to a divisive culture.

What are some pitfalls we can fall into in having this attitude or heart posture towards others? What would it look like to focus more on the relationship and how we treat one another versus making sure people know how right we are? In other words: How do you navigate between truth and love?

3. The culture we live in gives us multiple messages. Some of those messages tells us that we are too big so we look down on others through our divisive cultural lenses; other messages tell us we’re too small causing us to feel diminished and even unworthy. In vs 27-28, the woman sees and proclaims that Jesus’ grace is so much greater than her unworthiness. In turn, Jesus doesn’t just toss her some crumbs, he lifts her up and gives her a seat at the table as a true child of God.

How has this culture spoken to you and made you feel throughout your life? How has the grace of God met you amid those messages?

