

Sermon for The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 25)

Sunday, 23rd, October 2025

Prince George Winyah Parish World

Prince George Winyah Parish Church does not have a mission; God's mission has Prince George Winyah. "It starts with Him, moves through us, and reaches the world."

Family, it is a privilege and honour to be with you this mission weekend. I am Fr. Raliville Christian from Antigua and Barbuda, the only vineyard of God with 365 beaches, one for each day of the year. So, I bring you sunshine greetings from your brothers and sisters in Christ from the Parish of St. Paul with St. Barnabas, and from my family, especially my beloved wife, Francine, who was unable to accompany me. She has asked that I share the following with you:

Dear Friends,

I want to express my profound gratitude to the Priests and members of Prince George Winyah Church for your continued love and support. Through this love and the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, you extended your loving arms to us across the ocean. In today's world, this act demonstrates God's goodness, transcending the divisions fueled by hate and prejudice. Through this Love, a flower of hope, courage, and renewed faith blossoms within me. May God continue to bless your mission. Thank you! Love Francine

Let us pray... Father, may these spoken words be faithful to the written Word, and lead us to the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the gospel narrative of Matthew 15:21-28, we are confronted with an unusual or even troubling conversation between Jesus and a woman. Before this conversation, Jesus had an encounter with the authorities of the temple, which mushroomed into a conflict with the Pharisees because of his teaching. So, he thought it was best for him to leave to defuse the tense situation. This sets the scene for his discovery of greater faith in God, outside of the Jews, the chosen people of God. Are there lessons we can learn from this periscope of Matthew's Gospel?

The story of the faith of this doubly marginalized woman: a woman alone in a man's world; a Gentile and hence unclean, is told in Matthew 15:21-28 and Mark 7:24-30. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus traveled to the region of Tyre and Sidon, a Gentile area north of Galilee. He entered a house, seeking rest and privacy, but his presence was discovered.

A woman from the area, described as a Canaanite by Matthew and a Syrophenician by Mark, heard about Jesus. She came to him, crying out for help for her young daughter, who was possessed by a demon. At first, Jesus did not respond to her plea. The disciples urged him to send her away because she was bothering them. When the woman persisted, Jesus told her, "It is not right to take

the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." This remark refers to the Jewish people as the children, to whom his mission was first directed.

Like many lost. Desperate and hopeless persons in this world, the woman, with humility and cleverness, replied, " Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. Friends, the Canaanite woman, is quick to pick up the metaphors of Jesus' reply and twist them to her advantage, yet without arrogance. Her bold humility beats him in debate. She acknowledged her place as an outsider while still appealing for a small portion of God's grace.

Obviously, the historical Jesus realized he had lost the debate. Impressed by her bold and persistent faith, Jesus praised her, saying, " O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire. He then healed her daughter from a distance, without even meeting her.

Missionaries of the Kingdom of God, this moment foreshadows the Great Commission in Matthew 28:16-20. It reveals that God's redemptive love is not confined to one people, one culture, or one nation. The Gospel is for all, Jew and Gentile, near and far, known and unknown.

As you gather for Mission Weekend, I am sure that this story resonates

deeply. Just as Jesus ventured into Tyre and Sidon, regions outside his cultural and religious comfort zone, your PGY has stepped into unknown territories, both geographically and spiritually. From Latin America to the Caribbean, from Africa to Egypt, you are carrying the light of Christ into places where hope is needed, where dignity is restored, and where the Kingdom is made visible through service.

For instance, you have touched and changed many lives through your ‘Dress a Girl Around the World’, ‘Teach My People’, ‘Anglican Relief and Development Fund, and the various international missionaries. Your generosity and love reflect the same compassion Jesus showed the Canaanite woman. You are not waiting for people to come to you. Like Christ, you are going to them.

The Canaanite woman crossed borders, geographic, ethnic, and social, to plead for her daughter. In the same way, Prince George Winyah is crossing borders to serve. Whether it is a school built in a rural village, a dress sewn for a girl in need, or a volunteer teaching literacy in an underserved community, these acts are not mere **charity**. They are expressions of faith in action, echoing the persistence and love of the woman at Jesus’ feet.

And just as Jesus praised her faith, know this: God is smiling upon your work. He sees every prayer offered, every mile travelled, every gift given. He honours the courage it takes to step into unfamiliar places, to engage with different

cultures, and to serve without guarantee of recognition.

I challenge you to continue in faith and boldness. Let this Mission Weekend be a time of renewed vision. Let the Canaanite woman's example stir boldness in your congregation. Let her persistence inspire your prayers. Let her faith remind you that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace, and no mission field is too distant. You are not only doing God's work, you are becoming part of His unfolding story, where the Gospel continues to break through barriers, one act of faithful love at a time.

Let us pray: O God, you have made of one blood all the people of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your spirit upon all flesh, and hasten the coming of your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**