

Here I am again.

Imagine that.

Hopefully with the many many children's sermons under my belt my hands will be less sweaty than the last time I was up here.

So here goes

Who here likes a sassy woman?

Anyone???

Its perfectly ok to say that you do. It's perfectly ok to say that you don't.

The person next to you may be judging you but I am not.

I personally love sassy women. Why? well probably because I am a sassy woman... I am even raising a sassy woman.

When I think of sassy women, I can't help but think of the Sicilian spitfire Sophia Petrillo the elderly mother on the hit series the Golden Girls.

She is known for her witty and sometimes vulgar comebacks.

A particular funny one comes to mind. One day Rose one of her roommates brings her a nice big cup of Jello she walks in the room and sets the Jello down and says Here you go, Sophia, the perfect after dinner treat, a nice dish of Jello.

Sophia replies

I hate Jello, if God wanted peaches suspended in mid-air, He would've filled them with helium.

And if you're a fan of the show "Let me tell you a story..... Sicily.... 1912 Picture this" that quote will absolutely bring a smile to your face.

Today's gospel reading is about a sassy woman.

Jesus was face to face with a Canaanite woman, she was a pagan therefore seen to be unclean and impure.

She was shouting for mercy and healing for her daughter. Her daughter was seen to have been tormented by a devil.

In these times devils were blamed for both physical and mental illness.

But because they use the word torment, I think they are most likely referring to a mental illness.

And because she is a mother, she will relentlessly do whatever it takes to help her child be well. Even if it means getting sassy with Jesus.

Because the woman wouldn't back down, I think the disciples were really annoyed and wanted Jesus to just get rid of this woman. In fact, they specifically ask Jesus to "Send her away for she keeps shouting after us".

Jesus was known for exorcising demons in gentile territory as well as in Galilee but here he just meets her request with silence. After all he was on a mission to turn all of Israel wholeheartedly to God.

So, he really didn't have time for this.

The woman then kneels down before him saying "Lord Help me"

to which He answered "It is not fair to take the children's food and feed it to the dogs.

Jesus is telling this woman that her request for healing is inappropriate.

This is Most likely the part of the story where I would get totally offended. Like seriously Jesus. Silence that all you got ?

So, this woman turns it up a notch and basically becomes a super hero by saying to Jesus. She states and I quote "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters table."

The Canaanite woman basically just served Jesus a piece of humble pie.

Jesus then comments on her great faith, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish and her daughter was healed instantly."

This reading hits home to me and makes me think of my grandmother.

My Nanny Cartwright wasn't sassy at all.

Although we did make her give us money when she would let a curse word slip out. Which came in handy when we would need to get penny candys down at Burgers Store that was across the street from her house.

She reminds me of the Canaanite women because of her strong faith and her tenacity and love for her children. Mostly for my aunt Janice who much like the daughter in the story was also tormented.

My aunt is mentally handicap and my grandmother who took care of her wholeheartedly her entire life would have done anything for her.

She may have even given Jesus a little lip if need be, nothing could stand in the way of her love for her children especially the most vulnerable my aunt Janice.

Much like the Canaanite woman my Nanny emulated courage, Faith and Strength.

Yesterday was her 100th Birthday and due to the Pandemic, we were not able to be with her to celebrate.

We did as a family gather many generations and congregate outside of Seton Manner where they brought my Nanny to the window to see us all. I was truly a wonderful day one that we will never forget.

For me personally after reading this text I came to love it.

And had I not read it 100 times over the last couple of weeks or analyzed it 11tebillion times. I would of thought man this text is really hard to understand.

I can see how people can get caught up thinking that Jesus was being a total jerk here.

But you see the beauty of this story is that this basic, unclean, unworthy woman understood the very simple idea that even the disciples didn't understand.

God's Grace,

Gods Mercy and his healing are not just for Pharisees and disciples.

His love and grace and mercy is for the lowly, the unclean and basically the people who are considered Dogs.

This woman is the true hero of the story because she is setting the tone to say that if she was pure and clean and perfect and smooth around her edges then she wouldn't even need Jesus.

I want to be really frank here for a moment and acknowledge that fact that this woman, her begging for healing and mercy at the foot of Jesus is not because she

has low self-esteem. She is simply admitting the truth and being vulnerable and being both truthful and vulnerable are always acts of faithfulness.

So, I am going to speak some truth in a true act of faithfulness.

Somedays it's hard not to be foul mouthed and sassy.

Somedays it's hard to be a good Christian with a good heart.

There are a lot of terrible things going on in the world today.

Pandemics, Riots, explosions, racism, homelessness, addiction, untreated mental health, and even death.

Somedays it's hard to be everything we think Jesus wants us to be.

It's hard to have high self-esteem,

it's hard to be truthful and vulnerable.

Its really hard to write a sermon that doesn't miss the mark.

But if you only take one thing away from what I am trying to say today I hope you can at least take away this.

Jesus came to save the sinners.

He came to heal the sick and help the blind to see.

He ate with tax collectors and prostitutes and he granted healing to a sassy mouthed Canaanite woman.

Jesus was crucified, died and was raised so that we can have eternal life.

Jesus came to take all our broken crap and trade it for his own righteousness.

There is a place in God's Kingdom for the least,

the last and the lost and there is always a place for you and me!

No one is ever beyond God's grasp.

Amen