

Approaching Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we just read from a few different stories in Mark 7 and 8. All three of them are fairly strange stories with the spitting and the reference to the dog, the Syrophenician woman.

Jesus at the beginning is in the region of Tyre and Sidon, and he is there because he's trying to be on holiday. So he leaves Galilee and goes north, it's about 50 miles north of his hometown, and he's there to take a break.

He's trying to stay away from everyone. And this woman encounters him. He wanted to get away because he was encountered with hatred everywhere he went in his own home country.

So the government hated him, Herodantipus was against him, and then last week we saw how much the Pharisees hated him. And so he's truly looking for a holiday. He can't find it. He goes north and this woman encounters him.

Now, if Jesus Christ was on Twitter today and he said what he says to her in this passage, he would undoubtedly be canceled very quickly.

[1 : 0 9] You probably saw verse 27, he calls her a dog. And it seems when you read that on the surface, incredibly offensive, she is obviously a different gender from him.

She's a different race. She's very different from religious background. She's very likely widowed. The text doesn't tell us that, but I think it's implied. She is totally other from Jesus.

This is maximum intersectionality. And he calls her a dog. And when you study this text, you start to peel back the layers.

You see something profound, something very important. And you have to do a little work to see what he's really saying to her. And so we need to do that.

To go through all the details and all the details of all three stories, we would need hours, not minutes, but we have minutes, not hours. So let's just take a few minutes and think about two things.

[2 : 1 0] One, how do we approach Jesus? And then secondly, how does he approach us? That's what we learned here. How do we approach Jesus, how he approaches us?

So first, how do you approach Jesus? All right. Jesus is here, the region of Tyre and Sidon. This is a 20-mile stretch of coast right on the Mediterranean in the present-day country of Lebanon.

And it's very important that it says region, so he's not in Tyre. He's not inside him. He's somewhere in between Tyre and Sidon. He's in the region. And in the first century, everybody knew it, Tyre and Sidon in the region, which was formerly called Phoenicia.

That's why she's called the Phoenician. These were some of the most absolute enemies of the Jewish people. So in the century, just prior to Jesus' life, Israel, the Jews were at war with the Phoenicians in this region.

And this goes so far back. In Ezekiel 26, we have Ezekiel saying that the people from Tyre and Sidon are the terror on the seas. That's the phrase he uses.

[3 : 19] I think he's probably talking about piracy. So maybe these were largely pirates in Ezekiel's day. Josephus, one of the first-century historians that we have, he says that Tyre is the most bitter enemy of the Jews.

There's a book called The Psalms of Solomon. This is a book that's not part of the Bible. They were not written by Solomon, but they were written just before Jesus was born a century or so before, attributed to Solomon.

And it gives you a flavor for what people of the time thought. This is what's written there. It says that one day the Messiah would come and cleanse the world of Tyre. And one day the Messiah would come, the Psalms of Solomon sing and cleanse the world of all the Gentiles.

And the Matthew 15 account of this text doesn't just call her a syrophoenician. It says that this woman is Canaanite. So she is a descendant, this region, their descendants of the Canaanites, from all the way back from the book of Joshua.

These are the most, this is the most bitter enemy of Israel all the way to the first century. So Jesus Christ is very clearly here, is having a cross-cultural experience, as we might say today.

[4 : 32] He's in a cross-cultural context, and he wants it to be a secret, verse 24 says. He's trying to rest. It even tells us he goes to a house. So he's not out in public.

He's in a private home. And yet this woman sees him and approaches him. And we're told in verse 24, he could not be hidden.

Now maybe that very simply is the first lesson to learn from this story, is that when people come to understand a little bit, just a little bit about Jesus, he becomes incredibly attractive.

Maybe you've seen this experience or this has happened to you that there are people in your life or you're one of these people where you weren't interested in Christianity at all. And somebody asked you simply to read a little bit of the Gospels.

And you encounter the Gospels for the first time, and you read about Jesus and you say, this is very different than what I expected. And all of a sudden you say something like, you start to feel and you're like, you start to say something like, I cannot help but come to him.

[5 : 44] And here he's in Syro Phoenicia. He's up in this enemy territory, and this woman sees him and understands just a little bit of him, and yet she cannot help but come to him.

Maybe today if you're here and you're wrestling with the Christian faith and asking questions about it, you're curious about it, one of the questions to ask, very simple, is why is Jesus so popular?

So by far and away, Jesus Christ is the most famous man that's ever lived, the most famous person that's ever lived. And it's an important question to ask yourself, how could a common criminal who was murdered like so many others in the backwaters of the Roman Empire become more famous than the emperor himself within two centuries?

And the simple fact is that when you come to encounter a little bit of Jesus and understand a little bit of him, you cannot help but want to come to him more and more.

And that's what's happening with her. She wants to come to him. He does come to him. Why? Why does she approach him? And that's really the question of the passage.

[6 : 51] And let me tell you two reasons why she approaches him. The first reason we're told is it's because she has a little daughter, verse 25. You see, it says little daughter.

So it's not just that she has a daughter, but she has a wee daughter, very little. And that daughter has an unclean spirit, a demonic force that's possessed her.

Now, we read a little bit, I listed a little bit of her CV, of her resume. And in the eyes of the disciples, she is completely unqualified to approach Jesus or to receive help from God at all.

She is a Gentile. She's a woman. And in the eyes of the culture, it's inappropriate for her to even approach Jesus, especially in a private house. She's a Canaanite.

And if you were with us last week, you saw the previous story of the Pharisees, the Pharisees were saying, I can make myself clean. You know, I wash my hands. I follow all the laws. I am entirely qualified to approach the Messiah.

[7 : 52] I'm entirely qualified to stand before God. And they were pursuing God in that way under their qualifications. Paul will later think about his time as a Pharisee and he'll say, you know, I was a Hebrew among Hebrews.

I was zealous for the law. You know, if it comes to obedience, checkmark, if it comes to the right ethnicity, checkmark, if it comes to zealous for God, zealous for good work, zealous for morality, yes, yes, yes.

And you come to a story like this with this woman. Is she a Canaanite, the ultimate enemy of God's people? Checkmark. Is she from a different religious background? Checkmark. Is she, she's a woman in a public space approaching a man in a public space, which is not allowed in the first century culture.

Is she disturbing Jesus on his holiday? Checkmark. In every single level, she's not qualified. She's unqualified. And we know this very clearly because in Matthew 15, the disciples say to Jesus, send her away, dismiss her, do not speak with her.

And so in the eyes of the disciples, they register very clearly this woman does not deserve to be near you or to come and to approach you. And so when the culture says no, she comes to Jesus, for her it's yes, I will come to him.

[9 : 13] And the reason that we're told first is because you don't try and stop a parent whenever they have a child that they're desperate for. You know, she's a mother and she, she will, she refuses to be stopped.

You know, she, she has no rights, no pedigree, but her little daughter, she's coming to Jesus because she wants help for her child. And you know, maybe one, one simple application to say here is one thing that brings people to Jesus Christ quite often is desperation for the lives of their own children.

And you can even have people in our city today in 2023 that are in their teens and their 20s. Maybe this is an experience you've had or you've seen and they're fully, you're fully, maybe you've been fully, you are, you're fully absorbed into secular humanist philosophy, way of thinking about the world.

And then you have a child, your child's born. And you start to say things like, you know, I'm not, I'm not so sure anymore that people are just matter in motion, that we're just bags of bones.

You look at your child and you say, oh boy, I love this child so much. This creature has to have a soul. And you start to say, I'm more, people, their children start to bring them more open and more close to saying, I'm willing to explore the things of God.

[10 : 33] And this woman here is in utter desperation for her child. J.C. Ryle says it like this. He says, as hopeless as the girl's case may have been, she had a praying mother.

And Ligen Duncan commenting on that, he says, sometimes, sometimes all you can do is bring your children before the Lord and prayer and say, help me.

Now that's the first reason she approaches Jesus. She approaches him as a mother. But the second reason she approaches him is because although she's pagan, she's an enemy of God's people, a Gentile woman, unqualified in the eyes of the culture.

The second reason is because she understands something of him. And this is really the heart of the passage, I think. So here it is. This is the heart of it. In Matthew 15, the parallel passage, she actually is begging Jesus to respond to her.

She lays prostrate. She lays on the floor in front of him. And at first, the text tells us that he does not answer at all. He ignores her.

[11 : 38] Now when you read Matthew 15 and you see that she's laying prostrate, she's begging for the life of her little daughter, and Jesus at first does not speak to her. You say, whoa, where's the Jesus that I follow?

Where's the Jesus that I've been reading about in the Gospel of Mark? And then it doesn't get easier. It gets harder because in verse 27 of our passage, he turns and says to her, let the children be fed first.

It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Now he's using the term children and dog to describe what any first century person in this area would have done.

He's talking about the children being the Israelites, Jewish people, so inheritors of the covenant from the Old Testament. When he uses the language of dog, he's talking about Canaanites, Gentiles, people who are outside the covenant.

This was incredibly popular to use this language, very normal. We see it in lots of texts that come just prior to Jesus's life and afterwards.

[12 : 46] Even bro, I've learned over the past we while is a Canaan loving city. A lot of people here are Canaan lovers.

We do a lot of work in our city to make it a good place for dogs to live. In the first century, that was not the case. Dogs generally are not pets.

And dogs, especially in Jewish households, were unwelcome because dogs were largely wild and they would eat the carcasses of dead animal bodies that were left all around the different places.

And so anything that touches an unclean body is unclean. Dogs are unclean. So you don't touch a dog. You don't get near a dog. Dogs are vermin in the eyes of a first century Jew.

And that's exactly why the language of dog gets used to describe a woman like this, a Gentile. This is the language Jesus uses. Now we have to be careful here.

[13 : 41] We have to pull back the layers for just a moment. So let me do that with you and for you. You've got to see a couple things in order to understand exactly why he uses this language in this word.

The first is this. Just a couple of chapters ago in Mark, chapter six, Jesus feeds 5,000 people. He feeds 5,000 people with bread and fish that he miraculously makes into many.

And he does that for a region of Jewish people. He's in a Jewish territory. So he largely feeds 5,000 people that come from the bloodline of Israel in the feeding of the 5,000.

And just a moment. Next week, Hunter's going to preach on the feeding of the 4,000. And when he feeds the 4,000, he does the same thing. He gives them bread. But this time it's largely a Gentile audience.

And in both instances, when he feeds the 5,000 and later when he feeds the 4,000, there's a story about how the disciples don't understand the spiritual meaning of what he had done. So he said something to them like, I'm the bread.

[14 : 43] Like he'll say in John, I'm the bread of life. But the disciples in both instances fail to understand in both cases anything that he's saying, they don't get it. Now last week, if you were here with us, you'll have remembered that the Pharisees completely misunderstand what Jesus is trying to say.

He declares all foods clean. And he declares with that all people's clean. And it says that the Pharisees could not understand it. They could not see it. All right, so review.

The disciples don't understand in the previous few stories or the next story what he means by being the bread from heaven. The Pharisees do not understand and reject him when he says all foods are clean, all peoples are clean.

And then one more layer. In the Old Testament in 1 Kings 17, Elijah, the prophet, was starving to death.

And he needed bread. He was under famine. And he comes to this exact place. He comes to the region of Tyre and Sidon. There's a 20 mile stretch right in the middle.

[15 : 48] There's a little town called Zeraphath. And Elijah comes and he meets a widow there. And this widow in the dead middle of the region of Tyre and Sidon gives him bread to keep him alive.

Now, in this story, Jesus, you see, it didn't say he came to Tyre. I didn't say he came to Sidon. It says he comes to the region. He comes to the middle. See Jesus is very likely here coming to Zeraphath or somewhere very near it, just like the prophet Elijah had.

And when he does that, you see Elijah had asked for bread because he needed help from the woman. But this time, the new Elijah comes and the woman is asking for bread because she needs help from Jesus.

And the whole section of Mark has been about who is this man? Who is this man? Who is this man? Next week, two weeks from now, we're going to see Peter say, Jesus is going to say, who do people say that I am? And Peter is going to say, well, some people say you're Elijah, but I believe you're the Christ.

You see, everybody's saying he's Elijah, but now here he is again, meeting with the widow of Zeraphath all over again. And instead of getting her bread, she's coming and asking him for bread.

[16 : 58] It's saying, you know, is he like Elijah? He's similar, but he's greater. He doesn't get it. He gives it. And now Jesus is here saying this to her and what metaphor does he use?

He said, I came to give bread to the children first. You see, it's bread everywhere. Bread in the stories before us, bread in the stories after us, bread in the saying that Jesus gives right here in the middle of this story.

And here's his point. He's saying, you see, the children, who are the children? The children are the Jews. The children at the table are the disciples.

The children at the table should be the Pharisees. The children at the table are the people who grew up with the covenant promises, the people who had read the whole Testament, who had memorized the Torah, and none of them can see in any of the stories that he is the bread of heaven.

None of them get it. And who are the dogs? The dogs are the Gentiles. The dogs are the Canaanites. The dogs are all the people that should not be able to see Jesus Christ has come to give us bread, the bread of heaven.

[18 : 05] And this woman is the only one who sees it. She's the only one in the entire Gospel of Mark so far that sees who he really is. She's literally the very first one, the Syrophenician, the Canaanite, the woman who shouldn't have approached him.

She's the only one. And you've got to see what he truly says to her to understand. You see, he takes a phrase from the culture of the time. Canaanites are dogs.

And he adopts it into his own language to mimic what the culture is saying about her. Not to cast her away, not to be offensive, but to say, this is what people say about you.

You know, don't you woman understand that you're just a Canaanite? You can't come and approach me? This is what everybody, this is what the disciples think. This is what the Pharisees think about you, but he changes two little things.

And if you miss it, you think he's being offensive. Here's the two words that he changes from the saying of the culture. You see it in verse 27. He says, let the children be fed first.

[19 : 07] In the Psalms of Solomon, it says that no one from Tyre and Sidon will ever have the grace of the Messiah. The Messiah would come and cleanse the world of the Gentiles.

But here Jesus says, let the children be fed first, and then the dogs can eat from the table. That's the first thing. Now, the second thing that you can't see in our English text, but is really important, is that when he uses the word dogs, he does not use the common word for dog.

So there's a very typical term we see in the first century for dog in the Greek. And it refers to dog as a nasty vermin canine.

But Jesus uses the very rare positive term for dog here. He uses the, back to our early grammar. He uses the diminutive form, which is like little dog.

And this is the rare word that would be used for a house pet. It's actually, one commentator says the best way to translate it would be simply to say puppy. So what he actually says is, I've got bread for the children first, and then the puppies get to eat the extra bread that falls from the table.

[20 : 13] So he doesn't call her a dog. He actually calls her a puppy, a house pet. He changes it. He twists it just a little bit. And you can see that she understands that and how she responds.

And this is what she said. She answered him, yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Now here it is. She heard him when he said, children first, but then the puppies.

She heard him say something different than the culture. She heard him say first, because she responds by saying, yes, even the puppies. Even the puppies will get the scraps from the table.

She realizes it. She knows exactly who she is. She says, I know I'm not a Jew. I know that before you, I don't deserve the covenant promises. I know that I don't deserve your mercy.

I know I don't deserve the healing that you offer, but I come to you anyway because I know something of the Old Testament, that the Old Testament had said he's coming for the Jews first, and then he will become the light of all the nations.

[21 : 16] And you say, the reason she approaches him is because she's a desperate mother and because she knew the Old Testament when the Pharisees and the disciples didn't.

She's the first one in all the Gospels to truly understand. This is what one commentator James Edwards says about her. He says, she truly hears him.

She answers from within the parable. How is this possible? The answer is that the woman is the first person in all of the Gospels to hear and to understand a parable of Jesus Christ.

She's the first to hear the word of God as he meant it to be heard. And then he says this, in verse 26, it reads like a crescendo of demerit. She's a woman. She's a Greek.

She's a Gentile. She's from an infamous pagan background of Syria, Phoenicia. Even Levi the tax collector must have raised his eyebrows at her. This woman who has the pluck to beg Jesus to drive a demon out of her daughter.

[22 : 15] Despite her notorious credentials, she does not apologize. She does not cower. This woman can claim none of the credits that a good Jew might bring to the prophet of Nazareth. Her only cover letter is her desperate need.

And immediately you realize she's the only one in the Gospels who understands that you come to Jesus Christ not standing on your rights, but standing in desperate need.

And if you do that, Jesus Christ will see need, not status. She's the only one so far who gets it. She's the only one so far who understands it. In other words, she has eyes to see and ears to hear that when you come before Jesus without rights, Jesus treats you like a child, not a dog.

Now we live in 2023 in a rights respecting city. Edinburgh is registered as one of the great rights respecting cities of Europe.

And we constantly are talked to and talked about and we know that we have rights. People are oriented at every level in our culture to say things like I deserve.

[23 : 26] And so we talk about the right to healthcare and the right to education and the right to respect and the right to vote and the right to be heard publicly and the right to an opinion and the right to define our own identities even.

The right we're told by the culture to use our sexuality in any way that we want to as long as we don't hurt somebody else. The right to define exactly who we want to be and the truth of the matter is that Christianity actually established many of those rights.

Rights talk is like looking at a volcano from the outside, like looking at Arthur's seed, that old volcano from the outside. You look at it and all you see is dried rock, what used to be magma, but underneath, deep underneath is the truth, the truth, the layer that actually created it.

Christianity is the magma deep down inside the volcano and all you see is the eruption of right speech, but it's the doctrine of the image of God that gave us this to modern Edinburgh.

Now, we have to be very careful as 20, 23 people, 21st century people, because we are inundated with right speech all the time, all around us. We're told all the time about our rights and in a lot of ways that's very good.

[24 : 35] But we have to be careful because when you come to Jesus Christ and you come to the living God, you've got to know you don't have rights. Yeah, you have rights in this nation, in this country, next to other people, to healthcare and education and to vote.

These are all good things, but you do not have rights when you stand before the living God and this woman is the only person in the gospel so far who understood that.

She didn't come and say, but I'm a citizen, I have rights. You have to listen to me. How can you call me this? No, she knew exactly who she was.

And so she said, I don't come standing on my rights. I come only looking for mercy. And her daughter was healed. The Pharisees had said, I deserve, I deserve.

You know, I wash my hands before every meal. I deserve God. I deserve things before God. We are creatures, not the Creator. And so the first reason that we don't have rights is because God made us from nothing and we didn't need to be made.

[25 : 39] We're completely contingent. We're not necessary beings. We don't have to exist. God doesn't need us. He makes us, everything we have from Him is a gift. The second reason we don't have rights before God is because even in that great gift He gave us of life itself, we rejected Him and we shook our fists before Him and we became morally corrupt before Him.

And so the only right that we have before God, the only thing we deserve actually is His justice. We can't stand on our rights when it comes to God. And she said to Jesus Christ, I don't have rights.

My sins, they are many. Your mercy is more. And He said, you've got it. You're the only one that's gotten it so far. She is the teacher of the disciples.

She is the teacher of the Pharisees. Now let me close with this, secondly, and very briefly. We approach Him standing not on rights, but in need.

How does He approach us? You know, actually, we approach Him in this way only because He has first approached us. And let me just list for you two ways very quickly that He approaches us as we close.

[26 : 49] And the first is actually the reason all these stories that I've mentioned, the feeding of the 5,000, the Pharisees and the disciples' confusion and the story of this woman. And then we read the story of the deaf man and the blind man and Jesus spitting on the tongue and the ears, the eyes very strangely.

Why are all these stories put together at this point in Mark? And it's because until you see your need of Him, that you don't have any rights before them, the text is trying to say the Pharisees, the disciples, everybody but this woman, they don't have eyes to see, they don't have ears to hear.

Now why is the story of a deaf man come right after this? And it's saying because Jesus, you know, you don't have eyes to see, you don't have ears to hear until Jesus comes and gives you eyes to see and ears to hear.

This woman got it and then Jesus turns around and heals the deaf man, makes him hear. Because a blind man and the disciples say, you see what he can do? He can make the deaf hear.

He can make the blind see. And the whole point is to say, only Jesus Christ can give you the eyes to see. You know, you can't stay away from Him. Why is He so popular? Why is He the most famous man who's ever lived?

[28 : 06] And it's because He's given so many people across the centuries eyes to see, ears to hear. Maybe this has happened to you in your life or maybe it's happening right now.

You've sat like me for years and years in church, in a church like St. Columbus, and you've heard the gospel. You've heard it preached. You've heard it taught.

You've read the scriptures. You've prayed. And most of the time you were pretty bored during the sermon. Some of you are right there right now. I know.

I feel that too. But then all of a sudden, at some point in your life, just one Sunday or a series of weeks, you were overwhelmed and you started to see the stories and you started to say, whoa, this is serious.

This is real. It started to actually grip you. And you say, you know, I've sat here for so many years, year after year after year, and not really, to be honest, cared at all. And then all of a sudden, it's like I can't get enough of Him.

[29 : 08] You know what's happening in that moment? Jesus Christ is giving you eyes to see, ears to hear. He makes the deaf here and the blind to see. That's what He had done for this woman.

And you've got to know that these three stories together, we can't go through the second two obviously in any detail. But the second two, they teach us something very important. That's that Jesus knows how to come to every single one of us in exactly the way we need.

He knows how to come to us and give us exactly what we need. You know, He noted. He knew. He knew. He knew. He knew. The one word He needed to say to that woman, and it was the word first, that one little attachment first, and she got it.

He tested her. He knew he could draw her faith out with that, just adding that one word to a cultural phrase, that if he just said puppy, she would see. She would get it.

But when he comes to the deaf man, the blind man, you know, he takes this deaf man who's been unable to hear and unable to speak his whole life, and the crowds are saying, you know, heal him, heal him.

[30 : 14] And he pulls the man away into a wilderness space by himself. This man has been a spectacle his whole life, made fun of, no doubt.

And Jesus has no interest in performing this miraculous deed in front of anybody else. He pulls him away by himself. And what does he do? He touches his ears, and he spits on his hand and touches his tongue.

Is this magic? Is this incantation? You know, Jesus didn't want anybody to be confused, so he draws him away by himself. And you see what he's saying? This man can't hear what Jesus is going to say. So he touches his ears to say, I'm about to give you life right here.

And then he spits a symbol of life, the saliva, and he touches his tongue. And he says, I'm about to bring this healing to this part. And then he looks up to heaven in size.

And he's saying, I'm going to heal your ears. I'm going to heal your tongue. And he looks up to heaven, and I'm going to pray to God, and God the Father is going to give this to you. He knew exactly how to come to the deaf man.

[31 : 13] He knew exactly how to come to the blind man. He knows exactly how to come to you. For me, I had wandered away from the Lord in years past, in an earlier life. And God knew how to bring me back.

He brought me back through the consequences of my own sin. He knew what I needed. He knew I needed a test. I needed to be pushed and disciplined. And he knows. He knows what every...

Jesus Christ knows how to come to you. And to give you what you need. Now the second thing, the final thing, and we'll close with this last word. Perhaps the second way to say that he approaches us is this simple message.

It may be the most simple message of the passage. Clearly the passage is saying one thing. Jesus Christ came for every type of person. He came for the Syrophenician woman.

He came for the disciple, the Pharisee. He comes for the prodigals. He comes to the religious elite. He comes to the Gentile Canaanite woman who shouldn't be able to approach him in the eyes of the culture, but becomes the teacher of even the disciples themselves.

[32 : 14] He comes for your enemy. He comes to bring grace to whoever it is in your life that is indeed your enemy. He comes to the people you love. He comes for everybody to offer grace to anybody and everybody.

But the last word, why did he come? He comes for them. But why? Why did he come for them? And the last thing is this. On the one hand, the very fact of Jesus Christ's incarnation that he came into the world and took on flesh says to us, you don't have rights before God.

You know, Jesus Christ taking on flesh is a simple statement. You are judged. Jesus Christ came from heaven to earth precisely because we're judged. He came to do something because we can't do it ourselves, because we don't deserve to be in the presence of God.

He came for us. And the first statement of the incarnation is you don't have rights. You're judged before the living God. But the second statement of the incarnation, why did he come?

He came because you're judged. He came because you don't have rights. And so he came to say to you today, I will give you mine. That's what he came to say. He came, you don't have rights before the Lord, so I will give you my rights.

[33 : 30] And you see, Jesus came and let go of all of his rights. He had the right to not become human. Jesus had the right to equality with God in heaven, Philippians 2.

Yet, he made himself nothing. He had the right not to suffer. He had the right not to be humiliated. He had the right not to be poor. He had the right to be loved and not hated by the elite.

He had the right not to die a criminal's death. He had the right not to bear our sins and our defilement. He had the right to merely administer the justice we deserve to us.

That was the right he had. And when you come to the Lord and say, I know I don't have rights before you, I only have needs, then Jesus Christ says I will give you my rights.

And John 1 says that in the middle of history, Jesus Christ came to give you the right to not be a puppy, but to be the child of God.

[34 : 29] He gifts that right to us. He sits you as a son or daughter down at his table. And the way he could do that is because he put away his rights and the most horrible death of all of history so that he could gift to you exactly what God the Father owes to him.

In his resurrection, he was justified because he deserved it. And when we did it, he said, you can have my part, you can have my justice.

And that's what the cross and resurrection was all about. He got what we deserved so that you today could have what he deserves. Let's pray together. Father, we give thanks for this word and ask, Lord, that you would help us to see today that we're not necessary creatures yet you love us.

We're not, you don't need us yet you call us the image of God. You love us even when we rejected you. You said yes to us even after we said no to you.

Lord, help us today in our hearts right now, each of us to not stand on our rights, but to stand before you as a child before a father, as a one who has received a gift before the gift of giver.

[35 : 44] So I pray, Lord, for each of us today, wherever we are in life and in our souls and our hearts, to experience this morning the fact of God's, your great gift, the gift of Christ, the gift of the rights of the King himself given to us.

So we pray that we ask for it. Give us that experience this morning. Oh, Lord. And we pray in Christ's name. Amen.