

God Is Our 911

✠ **He hears our call.** (vv.21-25)

✠ **He helps our need.** (vv.26-28)

In the name of Jesus, the Savior of all, dear loved ones of God:

Terrible tragedy often brings out the best in people. Memories of that dreadful Tuesday, September 11, 2001, are treasured and recounted on this 10th Anniversary of 9/11 because heroic deeds stand out in sharp contrast to deadly evil. Flight 93 passengers knew their plane would be used as a bomb, like the other planes that hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Instead of cowering in their seats, the passengers revolted and forced a crash that cost them their lives, but saved many others. People said it before, but after 9/11, Todd Beamer's call to action became a battle cry: "Let's roll!"

Among these memories are stories of people trapped, then rescued in miraculous ways. One man was literally pulled through a sheetrock wall by a stranger who helped him down 48 floors past flames and smoke to safety. The rescued man keeps saying he is the angel the Lord provided. Giving glory to God is the greatest blessing that comes from tragedies, learning to see clearly: **God Is Our 911....**

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In most things we don't like contrast. We tend to prefer blending, even bland. For instance, when our church was built eleven years before 9/11, I was thinking like Jesus' disciples in today's text. I thought stone behind the altar would only be for decoration. Matching stain on wood behind the altar would make everything blend in. Likewise, Jesus' disciples did not like all that noise coming from the Canaanite woman. They asked Jesus to get rid of her. Peace and quiet would help them blend in.

But quiet was the last thing on her mind. Tragedy had come to her family, and Jesus was the only one who could help. The worst of times impress us more than ever that **God Is Our 911** – God and God alone. And this woman's background makes that realization a miracle by itself.

Until I read Dr. John Brug's new book, *Digging for Insights*¹, I did not put this together with this woman. Dr. Brug says that most of the archaeological evidence for child sacrifice comes from the Phoenicians, the Greek name for Canaanites. Their hideous practice of burning their children to their gods and playing their drums louder to drown out the cries of infants and children as old as five, is legendary in the human annals of evil.

Now here in Matthew's Gospel we see a Canaanite woman who will not be quiet, will not blend in, will not give up. She's come to God's own Son for help. Somewhere she heard how He could heal the sick, drive out demons and even raise the dead. She's determined to bump up the volume.

Is that how you pray? Why is it that our first reaction to a challenge is almost always, "What am I going to do?" "How will I pay for my medicine?" "How can I help my marriage?" "How will I raise my children?" We get the god of self in between us and the God of help. And what do you do if God seems not to hear? If silence is all the answer you get? If years go by and help still seems far away? We often lapse into silence, depression and misery of our own making. And let there be some fellow Christian who makes a bad comment, and we may stop worshiping and Communing altogether.

She was a non-Jew, a Gentile from the hideous Canaanites, as unchurched as any in America today. But she had heard the Gospel of God's goodness in Jesus Christ and she knew Him as He is:

¹ Order from Northwestern Publishing House – *Bible Discovery Series* – 1-800-662-6022.

“Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me!” she cried. ***“My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession.”*** “Send her away,” said the disciples, “She keeps crying out after us.”

Did you notice? Jesus did not send her away. He did not tell her to be quiet. He is about to say some harsh things, but something’s going on here that keeps drawing her closer to Him. ***“He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”*** At first Jesus did not answer her a word. How strange when the Word of God Incarnate says not a word. Silence may be all you hear unless you keep coming to Jesus. Rebuke and condemnation may be what other Christians throw at you. But when you trust God’s Word, you keep coming until Jesus shows again that **God Is Our 911 – He hears our call.**

But will you like what He says? What the Canaanite woman hears is as if you called 911, and the dispatcher said, “What’s your name?...Oh, no! Your family is on the ‘Do-not-help’ list. We’re busy with more important people.” ***“I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”*** What is a Gentile to do? The God of Israel is the one, true God. He is the Creator. He is the Savior. He is the Sanctifier. We have to answer with Peter’s question: ***“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”*** (John 6:68f NIV) Or as the woman said more simply, ***“Lord, help me!”*** **God Is Our 911.** He cannot turn away. **He hears our call....**

† **He helps our need.** (vv.26-28)

“What kind of help is this? God, how can you do this to me? How can you leave me in such pain? How can you let me get so sick? How can you give me so much to do that I can barely sleep at night? How can you let me go on in anguish of heart when I keep praying?”

What this woman heard was awful. Jesus actually said to her, ***“It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.”*** Jews looked down on Canaanites as dogs. How do you react to insults? What if insult comes from God? Are you willing to let Him tell you how your sins deserve eternal wrath and punishment? Are you willing to keep coming when He points to things in your life that need changing? Are you willing to confess that God is right in everything He says about us sinners?

This woman did not argue. She did not leave. She stayed and agreed with Jesus. Only a believing heart could say, ***“Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”*** Give wealth and honor to others; crumbs of mercy and grace are all I need from you, O God.

That’s all the Lord wants to hear. Faith-filled prayer shows this woman to be a member of God’s family. The true Israel of God trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior. In spite of her background and family tragedy, she trusts in Christ alone. It was not some decision she made. This was a gift of God. Faith is ***“great”*** when it rests on the great and awesome Son of God. That’s why Jesus said, ***“Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.”*** ***And her daughter was healed in that very hour.***

Can you follow a Lord like that? If your prayers seem to fall on deaf ears? Or you find answers that seem harsh and unbending? Can you follow Him to His garden of prayer where bloody sweat and tears poured out for you? Silence from His heavenly Father! But, ***“surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*** (Isaiah 53:4–6 TPA)

God Is Our 911. Your marriage may seem like a desert, but keep coming, keep calling. **He hears our call.** He is the One who makes streams flow in the desert. Your challenges may look overwhelming, but God **helps our need.** He give us more grace to overcome. Like a sparkling diamond in a black velvet case, His love shines brightest against the worst tragedies. And when all is said and done, we always find that our loving Lord is polishing the diamond, tightening the setting, showing us how He put His ring on our finger. I am His and He is mine, what can I want beside? Amen.