May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

The Canaanite women in today’s gospel is not one of the chosen people. She’s an outsider that the insiders don’t want to be around. Life for her is neither simple nor easy. She needs help so she comes to Jesus. Yes, Jesus loves her but he ignores her and then calls her a dog. So what we do with that?

Many have tried to explain it away. They offer excuses trying to justify Jesus’ behavior. None are really convincing. Maybe Jesus was teaching his disciples something. Really? At the expense of this woman and her daughter? Others say Jesus was testing her faith; as if her life was not enough of a test. I suspect all the many excuses only highlight how embarrassed we are by this text. Regardless of why Jesus did what he did we don’t like it. It makes us uncomfortable. That’s not the Jesus we want but that’s the Jesus we get in today’s gospel. And sometimes that’s the Jesus we get in life.

There are days that we pray and get no answer. We come before God and offer all that we are and all that we have. We speak our words, express our feelings, make known our needs and nothing happens. We wait. We listen. God is silent. It’s like talking to the walls of our room. If you’ve ever felt that way then you know this Canaanite woman. “*She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter*.” In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus even didn’t answer her at all. Instead he talked about her to the disciples.

What do we do when that happens? Where do we go? Do give up? Get mad? Quit the church? Sometimes people ask me: “Why? Why is God silent? Why am I ignored?” I wish I knew. I don’t have an answer. Even if I did I doubt it would be satisfactory. So I do the only thing I can do. I send them back. “Go pray,” I say. “Just show up. Regardless of what God does or does not do, - you show up. Even if its seems God does not.” That’s what the Canaanite woman did.

When Jesus was silent she could have gone home, argued, or asked, “Why?” But she didn’t. Instead she came closer to Jesus, “*Lord, help me*.” That doesn’t make sense but that’s what she does. This woman who was ignored and seemingly rejected by Jesus moves even closer, entering deeper into his silence, and begs like a dog. She continues to show up trusting that somehow it is enough to just be there before him. At some point he has to act. She doesn’t know when or what he will do. She only knows that she will be there when he does do something.

This time he answers. “*Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs*.” Jesus is naming the reality of the world in which they both live. The reality is that there are children and there are dogs. We see it everyday. Some have while many do not. Some are in and others are out. For some life flourishes. Others struggle to make it another day.

However, that is the world in which we must pray, the world in which we must live our faith, the world in which we must learn to show up. That’s the world in which Jesus and this Canaanite women meet. Life is neither simple nor easy and dogs don’t eat the children’s food in this world. The woman knows this. She even agrees with Jesus. “*Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs*” She has again found a way to show up and be present even when it seems everyone and everything is against her. This time Jesus speaks and acts. “*For saying that – you may go*,” he tells her. That very hour her daughter is healed.

I don’t know why Jesus acted the way he did. Maybe we don’t need to know. Maybe this story is not even about Jesus. It’s about us, our faith, and our world. Life is difficult. Deep abiding faith is a real struggle. The world is broken and divided into children and dogs. In the dog days of life all we can do is continue to show up and that’s enough. God may or may not do what we want. It doesn’t really matter. To not show up is to only deepen the divide. To turn away means that we won’t be there when God does act. We will miss it. We will miss the moment of healing, the words of forgiveness, the acts that transform. We will never know that Jesus really does love us. Regardless of what God does or does not do, - you just show up. Even if its seems God does not. Do what the Canaanite woman did. Amen.