

Listen and understand

Notes on the Bible readings

- The Pharisees sometimes define themselves by what they're not rather than what they are – drawing lines around who's 'in' and who's 'out'. Their offence at Jesus' words stops them from learning and growing spiritually. The story of the Canaanite woman can be tricky to interpret but it shares the thematic link of food and belonging with the other half of the passage.

- When Jesus talks about throwing food to the dogs, he may be offering the woman half of a parabolic saying and inviting her to complete it: a common rabbinic practice. When the woman responds, Jesus is impressed by her answer, commends her faith and heals her daughter, overturning expectations as he responds in this way to a Gentile woman. While the Pharisees are blinded by their offence over trivial things, a Gentile woman sees clearly who Jesus is, and Jesus wants the disciples to learn from her.

- Who may be speaking into your community from a new perspective? How can we make sure we hear and value the voice of the 'outsider'?

Listen carefully

Do an internet search for 'Stormzy Glastonbury knife crime 2019' and find out about Stormzy's performance wearing a stab-proof vest. What message does this convey to you? Is it hard to hear this? Watch a video presentation of Stormzy's song 'Blinded by your grace'. Did you find it moving? Did you miss the message of the song because of the language? What did you learn?

FREE [worship at home](https://www.rootsontheweb.com) resources, including up-to-the-minute reflection on this week's Bible reading, available at: www.rootsontheweb.com

Questions for reflection

- ▶ When have you ever experienced life from the viewpoint of an outsider?
- ▶ How can we be better at listening to those who are 'outsiders'?
- ▶ What new understandings might we gain from listening to them?



A prayer for others

The Canaanite woman sought your help. She loved her daughter so much, she was so desperately in need, that she wouldn't give up till she had her answer.

Lord, may we learn from this woman, to wait on you expectantly, patiently, persistently, doggedly. Grant us the courage of our convictions when we truly believe we are doing your will.

We pray today for those who feel excluded, whatever their situation, whatever the reason: for prisoners, refugees, the homeless; for the sick, the mentally unstable; for any who feel that they are outsiders.

*We pray for ourselves when our faith is weak, or we feel that we don't belong.
Amen.*

A personal prayer

*Lord, the Pharisees were offended by your words. You could have been offended by the Canaanite woman's words. I ask that, as I go about my business, I will take the time to consider each person I meet as unique, special to you, and worthy of my listening ear. May I not be offended just because something is out of my comfort zone.
Amen.*

Live your faith

Do something that gives you another perspective this week: e.g. listen to a new style of music or watch an informative TV programme that you do not normally watch. Talk with a friend about the experience.