Sunday 16 August 2026

For further Contemplation

Rev Salomo Bangun has shared a message of hope for ***'God never rejects those who come to him'***. In this message of hope Salomo has unpacked the scriptures of Romans 11:1,2, 29-32 and Matthew 15:21-28.

Rev Salomo shows us how the understanding expounded in Romans 11 is affirmed in Jesus words and action with the Canaanite Woman in Matthew 15.

It will be helpful to read all of Romans chapter 11 because Paul in the section before us builds on what has gone before which is underpinned by the promises of God to the Patriarchs. Do you recall God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph which we've read about in recent months? Verse 29 of the passage reminds us that the promises of God and God's call, God's enabling cannot be revoked.

Can you see the reversal of the situation between the people of Israel, God's chosen people and the Gentiles? The important hope-filled truth is found in verse 32 – God's mercy is shown to all!

This brings us to the account of the Canaanite Woman. You will be helped by reading Mark's account of the same interaction (7:24-30). Mark refers to the Syrophoenician Woman i.e., a Syrian from Phoenicia. Look up a search engine to see the history of Tyre (formerly Phoenicia), a Gentile region which is the setting for this encounter, known for its paganism. Read 1Kings 17:7-24, Elijah and the Syrophoenician.

The story we have in Matthew and Mark confirms God's mercy through Jesus upon all. Don't be put off by Jesus' use of the word 'dogs' to describe the woman and all Gentiles. Do a search to see what word in Greek is used by Jesus and what most scholars believe about this. It's not a harsh, rude or offensive naming as a dog rather it is the word for household pet. Sitting under the table, loved and enjoying the scraps. Some of you may identify.

Jesus turns the accepted understanding of the day on its head. God's promises are in Jesus for all, and God never rejects those who seek God's grace and love. God's mercy is for you.

Blessings,
Stuart