

What Dogs Eat

Mark 7:24-37

September 6, 2009 ~ Diane Wendorf

Our dog eats well
She may not get gourmet dog food
She gets the store brand...we buy the giant bag, dry food only
Keep it in a big black bin in our mudroom...

Our dog is a Labrador retriever...she will eat anything...
Except onions
Her favorite foods are ... anything else

Besides her daily 2 cups of dry food with a splash of water...
We often give her carrots...leftover broccoli
The occasional pancake.
She always gets to lick the bowl after we've had ice cream...
And she has been known to help herself
(much to our dismay),
to entire loaves of bread...
that we carelessly leave on the counter.

Our dog is stealth-like...a snitch...who can stretch up to the counters with no
sound...
And she can wrestle a plastic bag and devour its contents
...before we know anything has happened...

Our dog eats well...
So don't believe her if you meet her and she gives you that look that says...
"These people starve me"
Her weight indicates otherwise...

There are hungry dogs in the world...
many hungry dogs...
and there are, we know...too many hungry people too...
What dogs eat in this country
could feed entire nations...
and yet there are entire nations full of people...starving...

I don't know if there were pampered pets in Jesus day...
I'm guessing there were...
There were mongrels and strays too...
Dogs and people
Who wandered the streets and countryside...
Looking for a bite of food
A kindness shared

The Syrophenecian woman could have been wealthy
Some who study those ancient cultures more thoroughly than I do...
Believe that may be so...
But wealthy or not...
She was a woman...
And women did not speak to strange men

And Gentiles like Syrophenicians--- did not speak
To Jews...and Jews didn't speak to them...

This was a desperate woman...
Willing to disregard everything she knew as the norm
In order to save her child...

She had heard there was A holy man in town..
A Jew, yes,
But a Jew who seemed to have a different way of interpreting
The faith of his fathers..
A man who was willing
To disregard
What he knew as the rule of tradition...

Maybe the syrophenecian woman had heard
That Jesus had
challenged the common practice of his faith
In order to help someone... when he healed on the Sabbath

So the woman came and begged Jesus' pardon and asked for his help...

Jesus lost his cool
He was not exactly polite to the woman...
In fact he called her a dog...not a pet...a dog..
And from all I've read...
Calling someone a dog back then
Was just like calling someone a dog today...
It was not a compliment...
But the syrophoenician woman ignored Jesus' rude comment...
She stooped to it...
While challenging Jesus to a broader understanding of his purpose

And Jesus had a change of heart...
The woman's daughter was healed

And then a blind man
Brought by his friends came seeking Jesus help..
Another Gentile..another foreigner...

What was a friendly face on the nurse...turned into a different face...
As if she were facing a dirty dog...

She turned away and looked out the window...

John took a deep breath...perhaps inhaling as much

Grace of God as he could muster...

much like the syrophonician woman I would say...
before she swallowed what Jesus said...to challenge him...

“Just stay with it” John told the nurse...“give yourself some time”

After a while...the nurse turned back to look at John...

She had taken the time to remember the man she knew spent

most nights awake at the bedside of a woman...

He called his mother-in-law...

“It looks like;” she said...“there’s going to be a change in the weather...”

She was getting ready...to open a window...

“Be opened” Jesus said...to the blind man...and to himself...

Be opened...to how the world keeps changing...

Jews and Gentiles...learning from and living together...

Those who are blind...being able to see...

Women speaking truth...and daring to correct a man from God...

Be opened...

And this is what God says to us today...

As we grow into the church of this season and this generation of life...

“Be opened...”

To new words, new ways, new people in our midst...

For that dog, barking outside our window...scratching at our door

Is hungry...

That dog...very well could be

Our new best friend...