

Mark 7:24-37 9th September 2018

This week, I have been thinking a lot about crumbs: crumbs that fall from the tray of a child's highchair, crumbs that are scattered for birds and wildlife to eat, crumbs that are a nuisance and need to be swept up off the floor.

I have marveled, yet again... at the faith of the Syrophenician Woman who knew that even the leftover scraps of God's love would be enough. I have puzzled over Jesus' interaction with her, an interaction that seems not very Christ-like at first glance. And I have wondered what a story about a woman who was called a dog – a woman who was willing to beg for crumbs – might have to teach us.

Why would she be content with crumbs? Why shouldn't she be given a place at the table? Why should she have to argue her way to that table and be satisfied with what is carelessly dropped by the children who get to eat first?

When Jesus tells her that the children need to be fed first, she does not disagree. Perhaps she knows that the disciples and those of Jesus's own kin, have much yet to learn about God's plan, for the whole of his creation.

And so she pushes further and tells Jesus that she believes there is enough for her and her kin too. She does not buy into the mentality that the love of God is limited. She knows it is boundless, and that even the crumbs that fall from the table would be enough.

At some point, perhaps we too have been that woman, looking in from the outside and longing for just a piece of the love of God. We too have come from a place of brokenness, heartache, struggle, and suffering, and even though there were those who looked at us and thought, there is no help to be found... we found what we needed in the grace of God. We received the crumbs, and found that they filled us to overflowing.

At the communion for the Mother's Union, before their annual lunch, this week – we ran out of wafers... 4 people came up at the end, after I had consumed the left overs... all that was left was

crumbs... left over from the breaking of the wafers. So those 4 people received crumbs. It was an incredibly moving moment in our service... as we considered how even this was enough to receive the body of Christ...to feed us, with the love of God and for us to be thankful...

One of the most satisfying parts of sharing bread and wine, for me, are those occasions when we gather at the Lord's table...with fresh bread and begin a new season. Harvest time is upon us...

We take the bread and break it... We take the bread and hold it in our hands, and the crumbs fall on the floor. These crumbs, the leftovers... rather than a nuisance, are a reminder to us that what we are given is more than enough.

The bread that we eat compels us to feed the world and reassure us that God will provide all we need to continue his work in the world, and in our communities too... Hard sometimes, for us to imagine, in our churches today... As hard as it was for the disciples to imagine... so very much more than they could see, before their eyes.

But perhaps like the Syrophenician Woman...we too need to wrestle out our crumbs and conversation with God, to be more honest about our needs, and to be more expectant of His purpose and plans for us all.

Do we struggle with the wideness and vastness of God's love? If we do...There's room at the table for us, for both crumbs and conversation.

Are we messed up, mistake-makers, who feel unworthy of God's love...There's room at the table for us, for both crumbs and conversation!

Who are the outcasts, in our communities, on the fringe, longing for even a crumb of God's love to fall from the table for them?

There's room at the table for them too!

There's room. More than enough...for us all!

Even for the prideful, the lowly, the perfectionist, the woefully imperfect, those of us who have the faith to ask for crumbs, and those of us who can't even find the words to speak.

Amen