

FIGHTING AGAINST FAILURE

1. Text: Matthew 15:21-28
2. I want to tell you about a woman I have admired from afar for a long time. She has many fine qualities and many of you know her.
3. Years ago Dorothea Brande wrote *Wake Up And Live* and pointed out that most folks have a “will to fail” a desire to do less than they can, settle for it, justify and live with it, and even exert efforts to fail when we could succeed.
4. The woman in our text could have been satisfied with failure. But she was not. She rather willed to succeed. Let’s track her story: (See also Mark 7:24-30)

I. Good Reasons For Her Failure.

1. Suppose we are her friends and we hear she is about to go to Jesus for help. Would we slip up to her and tell her she’s doomed to failure for good reasons?
2. Because of what she is. Was Canaanite (an old race the Israelites didn’t conquer). Was a Greek or Gentile (not Jewish). Was a Syro-phenician. Phenicia was a pagan area Jews had much trouble with. Syria was geographical area often opposed to Israel. Jesus as a Jewish Rabbi was very opposite of all these.
3. Because of wrong time, place, circumstances. Mark says Christ didn’t want anyone to know where He was. The woman was intruding, disturbing things. Not ideal time.
4. Because of the people around Jesus. The disciples (15:23) asked the Lord to send her away, get rid of her. So people often cause us to fail.
5. Because of Jesus’ plan. Verse 24: I was sent only to Israel (not to you Gentiles). Often we fail because we see things all laid out against us.

II. Better Reasons For Her Success

1. Brande said to act as if it is impossible to fail. That seems to be the case here. Why would she not fail?
2. Association. Verse 22: Have mercy on me, then my daughter is demon-possessed. She tied herself to her cause. “Psychological ownership.” Acts 9:4 Why are you persecuting me? When the church’s concerns are my concerns. Church: they or we? Player after the game: “Our opponents found a big hole in our line, and that hole was me.”
3. Glorious exceptions. Yes, He came for Israel but there were exceptions. (See Matthew 8:10) Based in faith. No license to change doctrinal truth, to be lukewarm or outside Christ. Prayer centered here. Faith changed the general pattern. (Verse 28)
4. Obstacles open to opportunities. The dialogue here is our clue. Lord: it’s not right to give the children’s food to dogs (you). Greek word for little domestic dogs who sat around master’s table, not the vicious, wild scavenger dogs. All she wanted was the crumbs! I Corinthians 16:9 Great door open.
5. Grit. Meaning persistence, stubborn tenacity, backbone, resolve, determination. Through it all she had this. Revelation 2:10 Be faithful to death.

Conclusion:

**A Sermon preached by Monte Ginnings
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