

Perseverance in Faith

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Bishop Robert Barron is possibly the Catholic Church's most vocal evangelizer. He writes about it, he preaches about it, our faith in relation to our culture. One of the things that he consistently repeats is that we need to understand that we cannot interpret our Catholic faith through the lens of secular ideologies. I think our gospel today is an extraordinary way to show how this is true.

And so, in hearing the gospel, let's apply a secular ideology from DEI, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and interpret the gospel through that lens. So, first of all, this Canaanite woman who is a pagan approaches Jesus and addresses Him as Lord and the son of David.

So, she is giving expression to some level of faith, and she wants Jesus to help in expelling a demon from her daughter. How does Jesus respond?

He doesn't say a word. Basically, he ignores this poor woman.

Because Jesus ignores this poor woman, now we have to label our Jesus as a racist and sexist. Jesus is a racist, because Jesus is Jewish, and the poor woman is a Canaanite, and He doesn't help her.

So, Jesus is also a sexist, because He's a man, but she's a woman, and Jesus does not help a woman in distress. So, Jesus is already a racist and a sexist.

But the woman doesn't give up. She has strong faith, and she continues to plead with Jesus to help. And what does Jesus say? He says, I have come only from the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That makes Jesus a bigot.

First He's a racist and a sexist, and now Jesus is a bigot. Because Jesus is Jewish, and she is pagan. And the Jew is not helping the pagan. So now, He's a bigot on religious grounds.

But the woman, because of her faith continues to press Jesus to help her.

And what does Jesus say? He says it's not right to take the food of the children and throw it to the dogs.

Now he has called this woman a dog. Now he is engaging in hate speech. How can this possibly be? Jesus, a racist a sexist, a bigot and a hater?

Well, Jesus is God and God is love so Jesus is love incarnate walking around on earth. Jesus is not a hater. Jesus is love.

Jesus is none of those labels that a secularist, ideological description would label him. He is none of those things. He is love incarnate, and so what He is doing is, He is loving this woman and drawing faith out of her to the point where this woman gives such an exceptional response. She continues the metaphor, Jesus called her a dog, fine.

Even the dog eat the scraps that fall from their master's table. Wow.

Such wit and wisdom, such faith. And Jesus loves it, and he says that this woman has great faith. The theological meaning of all this is, you know, she is a Canaanite, and a pagan, but she has shown great faith. So this is Jesus' extending salvation, the offer of salvation, beyond the boundaries of Judaism.

That's the big theological picture of this gospel. But I think this speaks to us about perseverance in the faith.

Sometimes Jesus is going to push us. Sometimes Jesus is going to make us work for it.

And we don't want to roll over and play dead just yet.

Jesus gives us the grace and the faith and the help to stand strong in the face of opposition. Even when it seems to be coming from Jesus himself.

I think also this clearly shows that Bishop Barron is absolutely correct. That we cannot interpret our faith or our spiritual lives through the lens of secular ideologies because they just don't work.

On the other hand, we as Catholics should be using our faith to interpret secular ideologies, to understand why they do not always work. So today we have this great gospel.

And we have this great advice from Bishop Robert Barron to use the correct tools at our disposal. To understand our faith.

And to practice our faith.

And to interpret our faith and the gospel and the entire Bible through the lens of the Catholic faith. Let us remember that that faith teaches us that it is God's will that all be saved. God has a will for universal salvation.

And that salvation comes through Jesus Christ. Let us remember that it comes on His terms not ours.