As follows in Jesus' name:

And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And **behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon**."

But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and begged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."

He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

But she came and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, help me."

And He answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly. (ESV)

This is Your Word, heavenly Father; ***sanctify us in the truth, Your Word is Truth****. Amen.* (John 17:17)

In Jesus' name. **Amen**.

Dear Fellow Redeemed,

We are told that Jesus **went away… and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon**.

These two port cities to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee were of Phoenician origin, not Jewish.

So what was Jesus doing there, if He **was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel**?

In chapter 15, we read that John the Baptist His relative and the "**messenger sent before Him**" had been beheaded by [Tetrarch] Herod Antipas on the whim of a rash vow.

Jesus then sought a desolate place to be alone with His disciples, but the crowds followed them. Matthew 14:13

In His compassion, in His mercy, He taught and fed 5,000 men (+ families) that day. Matthew 14:13-21

Then He spent the night in prayer while the disciples fought against the storm on the sea. Matthew 14:23

Then Jesus was thronged by the Jewish crowds again, seeking Him to heal their sick. Matthew 14:34-36

Then Jewish leaders came to question Him on His dismissal of their legalistic traditions. Matthew 15:1-20

Jesus needed a respite.

He needed some time to meditate and pray, to be alone with His disciples and to teach them.

And so He withdrew to a place where it was likely not to have crowds who knew Him.

The disciples are aware of all this.

So when the woman comes crying out after Jesus with a loud voice, they want her quieted.

Jesus, "**Send her away, for she is crying out after us**."

Now this is not to say that the disciples were demanding Jesus not help her.

Otherwise, Jesus statement about being sent only to Israel wouldn't make sense.

Instead, it would seem they wanted Him to fix the issue quickly, before she "blows His cover."

But still Jesus feigns disinterest, as if He does not desire to have mercy on the woman or her daughter, as if He just wants to just relax and not work on His vacation.

The woman comes, kneeling and pleading, "**Lord, have mercy… help me**."

Have you ever wondered how it was that she learned of Jesus?

Or that she knew to cry out to Him as the Messiah?

That she believed He was the Lord, powerful to save from such things as wicked demons?

Or that she knew the simple prayer that calls to God's heart?

St. Mark records in chapter 3 of his Gospel how **Jesus withdrew with His disciples**
… and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea
and from beyond the Jordan AND <u>from around Tyre and Sidon</u>….
And whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they fell down before Him and cried out,
"You are the Son of God." Mark 3:7-8, 11
Perhaps she herself had made the trip down to Galilee previously and been witness to these things
and saw how He could help her daughter.
Regardless, her prayer is right. It is spot on.

This is the common and constant cry of the Church.
We hear it throughout the Psalms, like the penitential Psalm 51:1,
Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.
And how often do we hear the prayer, "**Lord, have mercy,**" in Jesus' ministry.
The 2 blind men from Matthew 9.
The father whose son was thrown into fires by the demons. Matt. 17:15ff
The 10 lepers. Luke 17:13
& 2 more blind men in Jericho (one of them being blind Bartemaus). Matthew 20:30ff

And do you remember the Introit we sang just moments ago from Psalm 25 verse 6,
we plea, **Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and loving kindnesses,**
for they have been from of old.
This is the prayer of the Church.
Not just that the Lord remember the mercies He has shown previously,
but it is really a prayer that He would act according to His merciful nature now,
that He remember His promises to be merciful to us and to act mercifully today.

This was the prayer of this Canaanite woman.
Her plea was not only for herself, for relief from watching her daughter suffer and being tormented,
but really it was for her daughter who was **severely oppressed by a demon**.
…But Jesus did not sound merciful when He spoke of not throwing the children's food to the dogs.
Yet, her faith looked beyond what she could see at that one moment,
it looked to the promises God had made, not only to the children of Israel,
but even to her, a daughter of Adam and Eve.
And she listened for an opportunity to use His own words for her advantage.
She knew it was better to be a dog under the Lord's table
than to be a friend sitting at the table of the demons,
for **even the Lord's dogs get the crumbs from their merciful Master**.

But while she was willing to take the crumbs of His mercy, He was not willing to give them.
He gave her a full plate, commending her faith in Him and His mercy… and healing her daughter.
He was never disinterested in helping her, but drawing out from her a bold and faithful confession.

Dear Fellow Redeemed, fellow beggars of God's mercy and recipients of the same,
Our Lord is a merciful God and **He remembers His tender mercies and loving kindnesses,**
even if we forget His mercy at times,
or doubt it, trusting instead only what we can see though our sin corrupted and short-sighted eyes.
He did not forget His merciful promise made of old, to send one to crush the serpent's head.
It was in remembrance of His mercy that He sent His Son to take on our human flesh,
and so unite Himself to us forever.
It was in mercy that He heard the prayers of His people and reversed the ravages of sin,
of the blind men, the lepers, and the demon oppressed children of that father and this mother.
It was in mercy that Jesus Christ bore our sorrows, our doubts, our guilt upon Himself to the cross
so that He might shed His holy precious blood upon the mercy seat before the Father's throne.

"**Lord, have mercy**" is the prayer of the Church; it is our constant, incessant prayer,
asking Him to act today, not on account of our goodness, but on account of His love for us in Jesus.
Like the Canaanite woman, we cry for His mercy because the evil in this world is too great for us.
We cannot deliver ourselves from the devil or his demons. Nor can we deliver others from it.
Like the woman, we recognize our sin and our status as unclean dogs before our holy God,
yet He raises us up from under the table and, through your baptism, has made you His holy child.
In mercy He *forgives you and all believers all our sins*. 3rd Art. Explanation
And as His child, He loves to hear your prayers and to answer them according to His mercy,
even while sometime drawing out a bold and faithful confession from you in patient endurance.

So learn to pray this prayer. It is your right and privilege as a child of your heavenly Father,
and as the bride of Christ, the Church.
Continue to pray for mercy, as we learn to do each week in the *Kyrie, Eleison*.
Continue to pray for it in the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, and in the Prayer of the Church.
Let this prayer flow easily from your lips when doubts and other shameful sins and vice beset you.
Feel free to make the sign of the cross as you pray, **Lord, have mercy,** Psalm 25:22
as a reminder for you that it was by the cross that Jesus has **redeems you from all your troubles**.
Pray for His mercy when evil befalls you or others in this world.
Speak it, not only in your heart, but with your mouth, out loud,
that the demons may know from whence comes your help and their destruction.
Pray boldly for His mercy in the *Agnus Dei* before you receive His Holy Supper,
that you may receive it in faith, not as mere bread crumbs falling from His table,
but as it is, a truly heavenly food, the very body and blood of Jesus Christ,
given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins
and for strength to endure and prevail against the evil in the week ahead.
Pray for His mercy, that He might also be merciful to others through you,
that His mercy might also be remembered, shown and given by you
to those beset by sin and fallen into evil hands.
Pray that in His mercy, they might see their Savior through you
and join you in praying for and receiving His mercy every day & every week through Jesus Christ.

In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Soli Deo Gloria