

Thoughts on the Daily Word

18th Week of Year. Wednesday 5th August. Readings: Jeremiah 31:1-7; Psalm Jeremiah 31:10-12,13; Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28.

There is an irony in speaking truth to power here. Jesus is focused on his mission to the lost sheep of Israel. This is probably why he is now in gentile territory. But we need to remember that populations were mixed in the border regions, especially as a result of the various empires that had ruled the region for centuries. A Canaanite woman comes to him in need and in this strange and almost humorous interchange Jesus recognises her need and responds. This is at the heart of the prophetic story of God's relationship with his people. It is hard sometimes for us to take in. A God who responds to our need and wants to engage with us in our struggles. For whom a love relationship is dominant not blind obedience. Jeremiah is responding with what is known as the Book of Consolation to the needs of the people. He speaks also in the psalm that Zion will be rebuilt, and that young girls and men will sing and dance again. Those now in exile need to hear that God has not abandoned them despite their sin and failure. The Canaanite woman speaks truth to Jesus, and he responds. Human need comes first in God's love for humanity. He sees, as he saw at the wedding at Cana, the basic human need, even if he needs to be reminded by a woman each time!