

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

Foreigners included. Is 56:1-8  
Paul: I have been sent to the pagans. Rom 11:13-32  
Woman, you have great faith. Mt 15:21-28

## Next week:

Who do people say I am?  
Isaiah 51:1-6; Romans 11:33-36;  
Matthew 16:13-20

## In a nutshell

The Canaanite woman who persistently called out to Jesus was an outsider to the Jewish community and an object of 'anti-pagan' sentiment. As the story unfolds so does the 'surprise' factor of God's saving work. God's grace can break through every barrier of prejudice and exceed all human expectations.



*Today's stories focus on God's grace at work in situations all too often marked by prejudice and division.*

## Under Pressure

Today I saw a Christ's presence on a Melbourne tram. It was peak hour traffic and there was that 'pressure cooker' feel about the whole city. A passenger boarded who clearly had a mental disability as he struggled to communicate with the conductor. 'I'm sorry, sir, I'm having difficulty understanding. What ticket do you require?'

The passenger continued to speak and gesture, but he wasn't getting through.

Helpfully, the conductor held open his folder of tickets. 'Can you point to the ticket you need, sir?'

The dialogue struggled along until the conductor worked out that the man required a certain kind of weekly pass.

'Sir, we don't sell those on this tram. You have to purchase it at another place. But don't worry - how about you take a seat now and you can pick up that pass another time?'

The man gratefully sat down and the journey continued.

As I got off the tram, I made a point of affirming the conductor: 'You know, you were very kind and respectful towards that man,' I said.

It's true. He could easily have boiled over with impatience and ordered him off. But in front of a tramful of passengers and under the pressure of his timetable he displayed patience and empathy. (Jill)

## Breakthrough!

It is difficult to comprehend the obstacles facing unemployed youth. For many the barrier to work involves not just lack of a job but lack of self-esteem. But hope and help do exist. Commenting on one program for the unemployed, a youth said, 'Skillshare has been a place of hope for me. I was at the bottom of the barrel. It has taken 5-6 years to get to this stage of even wanting a job. It was like being in a big, black hole; a battle to even keep going. I had constant doubts about the future and about myself. Skillshare has given me a lot of hope.'

## Think...Talk

- Am I prone to judging others too quickly? How does this tendency get in the way of God's work?
- Describe a scene where gospel values overcame what could have been a prejudiced response.
- For the times when we have judged others, not listening to the voice of the Spirit... Christ have mercy.



## The wise man

When I was working on a community service project, I met an elderly Aboriginal Christian, a man I found to be very much at peace with himself and always willing to love.

One of my regrets is not taking up his invitation to 'take me bush' to teach me his wisdom. At the time I thought I knew what I needed out of life and his own recipe didn't quite 'fit' with my plans. Not long afterwards, he returned home to be among his own people. It was only when he died that I realised I had chosen wrongly. I had ignored his gift and instead gone for something more immediate, but less sustaining. He had said to me: 'I will wait for you to come to me'. There was no pressure, just a gentle hope that I would accept his gift. (MG)



**RealPeople** offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

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