

# Mark 7:24-37

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please take out your copy of God's Word. Turn to the Gospel according to Mark chapter 7. Often during an offering there's a choir special at a larger church.

! And I'm a fan of the choir special. I think it's enjoyable to hear large groups of people singing God's praises. But I will take that over a choir special any day.

So thank you, Wes and Liz. I appreciate that. Mark chapter 7, as we continue to work through our preaching of the Gospel of Mark.

Every week when one Sunday sermon closes down, I turn my attention to the next week and begin to prayerfully consider where we should go next.

And as we believe in verse-by-verse exposition as a general habit, of course my mind immediately goes to what's happening next in our text. And how far should we go? And I'm very apt every week to take some time to stop and ask the Lord if this is what He would have us do.

[ 1 : 07 ] I think it's also okay to take a break from our verse-by-verse exposition and do that. And I've got to tell you that this week I had the hardest time finding bearing on this morning's text.

And figuring out what it is exactly that God wanted to communicate to us from it. And so I asked a couple of times, Lord, are you sure this is the text? Mother's Day, should I preach a sermon about women and being mothers?

And was convinced that this was the text for us this day. So I hope that you'll enjoy it as we join together. At least there's a mother in it as we preach through it today.

Let me remind you though, before we read, we're going to look together at verses 24-37 in chapter 7. But before we get there, remember that Jesus has just had this encounter with the scribes and the Pharisees.

The Pharisees, kind of the legalistic Jews of this day, they were apostate in every way. They had really walked away from God and God's ways and His commandments, although they thought they were following Him to the letter.

[ 2 : 13 ] But we see here as He confronts them, He quotes from them this prophecy from Isaiah. And He says, in vain do they worship Me. Speaking of both the Pharisees and the scribes, as well as all of Israel, as He says to us here.

They worshipped Him in vain as hypocrites with their hearts far removed from Him. Placing above the commandment of God the traditions of men.

Giving evidence of their defilement or their uncleanness, their unholiness. By participating in the activities that we saw listed in verses 21 and 22.

And so we see that it is possible to worship the right God, but to worship Him wrongly. And this is a fearful thing. We ought to draw our minds and our hearts to worship Him properly.

Because God desires of us heart worship. Deuteronomy 6.5 God commands, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

[ 3 : 20 ] And hearts that are changed by God are hearts that worship God. And this is what God desires of us. And so as we look at this next text together, it would seem that Mark was inspired to record these events in this order to stress this very point, what Jesus was speaking about defilement.

That it is a matter of the heart that matters mostly. So look in your text and your copy of God's Word as I read to you verses 24 through 37. And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.

Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs.

But she answered him, Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. And he said to her, For this statement you may go your way.

[ 4 : 32 ] The demon has left your daughter. And she went home and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone. Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis.

And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting, touched his tongue and looked up to heaven.

He sighed and said to him, Ephphathah, that is, be opened. And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. And Jesus charged them to tell no one.

But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.

This is God's word to us, written for his glory and our good. We would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

[ 5 : 36 ] Let's pray together. Father God, we do thank you for your word to us. And Father, we recognize this morning that while this is an ancient book, written in ancient pen, that it was inspired by your spirit, that Mark was carried along by him as he recorded the life of Jesus for us.

It has meaning and it has bearing on us this day. And we believe that you brought us here together with purpose and meaning.

And so I pray, Father, we are all making ourselves available to what you would say to us by your word. This is accomplished by the power of your spirit, so we ask for a great deal of blessing in the preaching of your word and the hearing of it as well, to the great end of your glory.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So we see here that Jesus has concluded his time in Galilee. His Galilean ministry has wound down.

And he leaves the region altogether and departs to go to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Now, if you're not familiar with the geography of this day, these two cities were located on the coast of the Mediterranean.

[ 6 : 52 ] And this was far outside of any Jewish dwelling. Now, to be clear, the Jews were interspersed in a number of places. So there's not an area that Jesus travels that there were no Jews.

But by and large, this is now a Gentile region, right? Which is a generic term for people who are not of Jewish descent, which I would assume includes all of us in this room. Maybe not, but most of us in this room would be counted in that number.

And this is the place that he travels to. And it appears that he travels there to rest. If you look at the second half of verse 24, he goes and he hides himself away in a house, but he is found out just the same.

So it seems that he's withdrawing. And as is always the case, the crowds seem to follow him. His reputation precedes him. And there's a request that's made of him.

After this encounter with a Syrophenician woman, he makes a journey to the Decapolis, which he's been in before. But this time to get there, rather than crossing the Sea of Galilee, he goes through Sidon, which is on the northern area of this region that he's in, and makes, it seems, we don't know this for sure, but it seems that he makes a rather circuitous route to get to the Decapolis, going all the way around Galilee.

[ 8 : 10 ] So he is done with Galilee. He has laid out his ministry. He has preached the gospel there. He has healed countless numbers. And he's now going to go all the way around it to get to this region called the Decapolis.

Now remember the last time he was there, he crossed over the Sea of Galilee, and he was encountered by a man as soon as he lands that was possessed by a legion of demons. And he casts him out into a bunch of pigs who run off and are drowned into the sea.

And after this, the man wants to follow him. He asks that he can get back in the boat with him and go with him. But Jesus doesn't permit him to do that. And in chapter 5, verse 19, he says to the

man, go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.

And then Mark accounts that this man went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And everyone marveled. So it would seem that the man traveled far and wide in this region that was east of the Sea of Galilee and shared what Jesus had done for him. And he was apparently successful in telling his friends what the Lord had done because now we see this crowd gathered. You see the mention of that in verse 33 that's gathered to him.

[ 9 : 24 ] And then we note at the summation of all of this, in verse 36, that Jesus charged them, those who were his friends, those who witnessed the healing of this man who was deaf and had some form of blockage in his speech, to not tell anyone.

But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. So he had entered into a region where he had no fame. He cast out a legion of demons out of a man and now he's suddenly famous.

And he's in a region now where this fame is growing and it's growing. And as seemed to always be the case, as Jesus is led along by the Father, he's trying to keep his popularity down a bit, I believe to waylay his crucifixion, that he might complete his time on earth before it is that he's crucified.

So here's kind of the background of where we see him moving as these events take place. And I'd like for us to notice two things, two primary things from our text this morning.

Number one, Jesus' compassion to non-Jewish peoples. Number one, Jesus' compassion to non-Jewish peoples. Praise God were the recipients of that.

[ 10 : 34 ] And number two, the faith of the Syrophenician woman and the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. So these are kind of the larger things that we want to notice together today as we talk through these stories together.

So when he goes to this region of Tyre and Sidon, he's encountered by a woman and she's called here a Gentile, verse 26, now the one was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth.

Another way to say that would have been a Syrian Phoenician, which speaks to her ethnicity being Syrian, as well as the region in which she lived.

A larger area of the region of Tyre and Sidon would have been known as Phoenicia. And that is to say she was not of Jewish descent. She was of a different ethnicity, a Syrian ethnicity.

These were people that were enemies of the Jewish people. These were people that had carried them off hundreds of years earlier into captivity and they had later been released. Much calamity had come upon the people of Israel as a result of a Syrian attacks.

[ 11 : 39 ] So she was of that descent. That was her ethnicity. And she didn't live in what was considered the Holy Land. She lived outside of that realm in the region of Phoenicia. And that's why this is being established for us.

Because the Jews thought that the blessings of God just came to them because they were of a blood descent from Abraham. That the promises to Abraham, the Abrahamic covenant, was just theirs because of their bloodline.

And this was some of the arrogance that the Pharisees, the scribes, and the people at large possessed in their worship of God. So remember that. We're coming just off the heels of this confrontation and we're going to see many more as we progress through the Gospel of Mark. But they were basing their merit before God on something that was exterior and that is their blood lineage, which I get doesn't feel exterior. But just the same. It was a thing that was tangible, not an issue of their heart.

So Mark establishes that for us, right? Both by ethnicity and region, that she was not Jewish. In addition to that, she was a woman who would have been very much more lowly thought of in this very patriarchal society.

[ 12 : 54 ] And she had not a son that had a demon possession, but she had a daughter with an unclean spirit. So as far as the Jews were concerned, the odds would have been really stacked up against there being any blessing of any kind given to this woman.

Jesus had no reason in their thinking to show her any compassion whatsoever. And we see that she comes to Jesus and she begs him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

She knew, probably because she had heard of the work that he had done, she had probably heard of the many exorcisms he had already done, that he had the power to do this very thing.

But it's interesting that she thought that that was something that he would do for her, a woman with a daughter who was not found to be part of Israel. And so I wonder why, and we don't know for sure, but maybe, maybe she knew the Old Testament Scriptures.

Maybe they had been taught to her at some point. A scripture like Isaiah 5, 26, which says, He, being God, will raise a signal for nations far away and whistle for them from the ends of the earth and behold, quickly, speedily, they come.

[14:10] Maybe she was like the Sumerian woman that Jesus met at the well found in John chapter 4. The woman says to him, Jesus, Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

Remember, Sumerian people were an interbred people. They were a people that existed apart from the pure bloodline of Israel because these were people that were the result of intermarriages between Babylonians and the Israelites.

Verse 23, But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such people to worship Him, worship Him from the heart.

God is spirit and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to Him, so here's where we are, maybe this Syrophenician woman was like the Samaritan in this way.

[15:21] The woman said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming, He who is called Christ. When He comes, He will tell us all things. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am He.

And so she knew, the Samaritan woman knew, that the blessings of God could come to her in Christ. Maybe the Syrophenician woman thought so as well.

Maybe she was familiar with Psalm 145, 8-13, which says, The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

The Lord is good to all, and His mercy is over all that He has made. All your work shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your saints shall bless you. They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom and tell of your power to make known to the children of man your mighty deeds and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

Maybe she was aware of the mercy that God had shown the Ninevites by the message of Jonah.

[16:31] She saw that God has always been about the work of making Himself known among the nations. Israel used to be the vehicle by which that happened.

This was the way that God displayed His majesty in a people. Now the church is that vehicle. Praise God. Which includes Gentiles.

And this is why, as a church, we have a vision statement that includes peoples. We even use this language to draw our minds simply beyond the people that we encounter day to day, but peoples, meaning people groups, people of different ethnicities and backgrounds, nationalities.

So Christ Family Church exists to glorify God by experiencing, proclaiming, and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things to all peoples. Because God wants to be known amongst all peoples to the ends of the earth.

He is a global God who deserves global glory. I would say to you this is likely what she knew to be true of Jesus because of the way she approaches Him.

[17:44] She probably knew that she wasn't excluded from the blessing of God in Christ because of her ethnicity or nationality. The only thing that can possibly exclude anyone from the blessings of God in Christ is their own unbelief.

Let's get that straight in our minds. The only thing that can possibly exclude anyone from the blessings of God in Christ is their own unbelief. There's nothing that we have done. There's no part of who we are except for our unbelief that excludes us from the blessings of God in Christ.

Now as a side lesson for mothers today, if your child has some spiritual malady and the problems that our children experience are only either physical or they are spiritual, they have some spiritual malady, Jesus is the one you should go to for the remedy.

Our children need doctors and Christ. We don't need child psychologists. It's only valuable psychology if it points people to Jesus Christ.

So let's go to Christ for the spiritual maladies of our kids. I'm sure this week, mothers, you have felt like your children might be demon-possessed. It's a high likelihood of that.

[19:01] Now Jesus responds to her, verse 27, and it seems so harsh, doesn't it? It seems so very harsh. Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

And this was, on the surface, pretty harsh. This would have been the appropriate ethnic response. This is the type of thing that a Jew would have said to a Gentile who was asking for some blessing from God.

They would have seen themselves as special and set apart and called, in derision, called people dogs. Now Jesus was not without compassion at this point, but this was rather, he said this as a testing of her faith.

So he gave to her a harsh statement, a statement that may have caused her to turn away altogether, to say this couldn't possibly be the man that could do this thing for my daughter, but instead, she gives to him this beautifully humble response.

And beloved, humility is the beginning of our faith when we realize that we are, in fact, broken. That having once been image bearers of God, that has been destroyed.

[20:13] Not made a little worse, but destroyed by sin. That we have no capacity for that whatsoever apart from Christ. And so we come to him humbly.

And look what she does. She answers him, verse 28, yes, Lord. Yes, she is in agreement with him. It would be wrong to do this thing. I am a dog, is what she's saying.

I am the very thing you have accused me of being. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs, which is so clever of her. But it is her faith that elicits Jesus' response.

It's not the cleverness of her argument. She didn't get him. He didn't go, oh, you got me. You got me. You tricked me into it. Now I must heal your daughter. But it was this response of faith.

For this statement, you may go your way. The demon has left your daughter. You see, faith is what brings to us the blessings of God.

[21:16] I think she understood this. If she didn't get it, this is the thing that Mark is trying to communicate to us. Now remember Abraham. Remember the Abrahamic covenant that God said to Abraham, I will make you the father of many nations.

And he was very old when this happened. If you would turn with me to Romans chapter 4. Let me show you a bit of this before we move on in our text. Romans 4 beginning in verse 18.

Paul writing here is speaking of Abraham in hope he, Abraham, believed against hope that he should become the father of many nations as he had been told so shall your offspring be.

He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body which was as good as dead since he was about 100 years old. Those of you who are approaching that, I'm sorry for the offense. Or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

Sarah had not born children in many, many, many years. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. Fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

[22:39] That is why his faith was counted to him as righteousness. Now here's the key for us. But the words it was counted to him were not written for his sake alone but for ours also.

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. So if we believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead we believe in that reality it will also be counted to us as righteousness. It is by our faith that we are saved. That is the great treatise of Romans. Right? Salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Right? So Jesus' response in verse 29 is because her statement evidenced her faith and therefore he exercised he cast the demon out of the daughter and we get the affirmation of that in verse 30. She goes home and yes indeed Mark records for us it happened. Jesus spoke it and it did in fact happen. What a beautiful beautiful response of humility and faith.

[23:50] He then leaves the region making the circuitous route and going to the region of the Decapolis and we see the man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. Some of your texts might say that he was mute.

I looked a little bit just for interest into that this week and the Greek really seems to be more properly rendered speech impediment. Couldn't speak clearly. A stutter.

Something of that type. It doesn't really matter though. He couldn't hear and something was wrong with the way he spoke. This region of the Decapolis was a region containing ten prominent Gentile cities.

It was made up of many more cities. It's a big region if you get curious and you want to flip to the back of your Bible. It's the region that's primarily the whole region to the east of the Sea of Galilee. And we see again some evidence of faith. We see in verse 32 at least likely I think he's got a group that bring him to Jesus.

[ 24 : 51 ] Now I got in a conversation with this text with my father this morning and he made a really really great point to me and I just would like to bring it up for you. We see constantly throughout the Gospels we see it here in the Gospel of Mark this encounter with the scribes and the Pharisees and it seems to be a thing that increases.

You see because Jesus was coming and he was destroying the religion that they had set up. And this was not simply a religion that was something they did just in devotion to God but it gained for them a great deal of power a great deal of wealth.

There was a structure that was in place that was very beneficial to them on this side of heaven and that's not something that they wanted to find destroyed and so we see there's constantly a little group of these guys following around looking for occasion to step in and interject ask questions to try to get him to falter and to fail at some point so they could accuse him of not being who he said that he is.

And my dad proposed that it's possible and I have to mull this over a bit more it's very possible that the people who brought this man being the they we find at the beginning of verse 32 may have in fact been a group of Pharisees and the reason that that could be possible is because they asked they begged him to lay his hand on him and this would have been a Jewish thing to do I don't know it's possible that this is the case it also could be just a group of friends maybe they were even Jewish living in the Decapolis region and they brought to him their friend and begged him that word is a challenging one in that view but they begged him to do this so we see possibly that they had faith in this regard maybe not maybe they were coming looking for a sign looking to do something to bring an accusation we see in chapter 8 Jesus is going to feed 4,000 and the very next thing we see is Pharisees demanding a sign from him so questionably his friends had faith but we do see that he does the man that they bring to him this man who is deaf and has some type of speech impediment does in fact have faith the beginning of verse 33 we record that he went with Jesus right Jesus takes him aside he takes him aside from the crowd privately the man goes with him the man was capable of not going with him and walking away but he does go in fact with him and he has faith that this man can do something for him now the interesting question in this text and this miracle by the way is only recorded in the gospel of mark the interesting question is why did Jesus pull the man aside from the crowd we know that Jesus performed miracles not as the primary purpose of his ministry but he performed miracles to give evidence to to give power to give credence to the message that he was preaching it was constantly a way to draw people to the very thing he was trying to say to them and that was the gospel of the kingdom of God so why does he pull this man aside and it actually says he pulls him aside privately which I would presume!

[ 27 : 53 ] means it was just this man and Jesus maybe some of the disciples were around him but he gets them away from the crowd so people aren't witnessing this thing that he's about to do why did he do this well the clue is in what he did the last part of 33 verse 34 he puts his fingers in his ears after he spits he touches his tongue he looks up to heaven he sighs says to him which is so he goes through this interesting thing now this is the Jesus that people have been touching his garment and he's been healing them he has simply spoken he cast a demon just previously he cast a demon out of a little girl from a distance we don't know how far but he said the demon is gone he could have done this without going through this practice of it seems some!

incantation that he's doing here but think about the man that he's doing this for this man can't hear anything that he would say there may have been some form of sign language in this day but I don't think Jesus knew it so he did the thing some version of sign language to show the man what it was he was healing him from how it was that he was going commonly connected to healing and medicinal things I did way too much study on that this week and none of the details are important for you at all but there would have been an understanding of spitting and saliva we'll see later in Mark Jesus spits in some mud and puts it on a blind man's eyes for the same reason right so he does this thing physically for him so that the man understands what he is doing he looks up to

heaven so that the man knows that it's God who's going to heal him and then he commands that he be made well right so why did he pull the man aside from the crowd and I believe the reason is because he didn't want anybody in the crowd to think that it was this! magic incantation this thing he did that caused the man to be healed that God himself is the one who healed and he didn't want anybody to think otherwise he wanted glory placed in the proper location I think that's why so he so he touches the man he commands and interestingly as he gives his command in Aramaic which would be open he's actually giving the command to the ears which I just find so fascinating and to the tongue who commands even your ears and my tongue be opened and they obey what he said to do and then note that he sighs he looks up to heaven he sighs and I think this speaks to the compassion of Christ as he has pulled this man off to the side and he is about to!

heal them as he and felt a sorrow for the effects of sin on the world and I believe that's why he sighs that as he looks up to heaven he gives another one another one another created being another child that is being punished because of the effects of sin in this world and so we see this great outflow of compassion for this man verse 35 his tongue was released and he spoke plainly whatever was the issue with his tongue he can now speak very plainly and all of this and I believe the reason that Mark was led by the spirit to record this is a fulfillment of a prophecy he did a thing that only God could do Isaiah chapter 35 verse 5 and 6 then the ears of the deaf unstopped then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy for waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert so he had done a thing that only he could do and it was fitting that one of the gospel accounts that one of the writers was inspired to record this thing that we might see it take place and the response of the people when he goes back there was a man that they knew he goes back now he can hear now he can speak verse 37 they were astonished beyond measure they were incredibly astonished more astonishment took place than we could possibly measure and this is their phrase this is the thing they say

He has done all things well he has done all things well! He even makes He had done so many things right He had cast a legion of demons out of a man they knew about this this news had traveled around the area He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak I think we can hear in this statement the echoes of Genesis 131 and God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good Jesus is God incarnate and he proves that to us once again as he expresses compassion for non-Jewish people and works in them a responsive faith beloved we are now given to the very same task and I hope as we've been looking through mark as we will continue to do so as we peer at the life of

[ 33 : 42 ] Christ we will desire to be more like him compassionately pouring out our lives for the sake of the glory of God and the advancing of his kingdom let's pray together God