

Focus Text: Mark 7

The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

²⁴From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre.^[a] He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered him, "Sir,^[b] even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

I. Introduction

1. The Setting: Tyre

- This is a Gentile region outside of the borders of Ancient Israel
- Jesus went to Tyre to get rest. (**We will discuss later how the literary context takes this deeper**)
- **MINISTRY WORKERS NEED REST!!**
- This is the only time Jesus went to this region.
- The woman is a Hellenist
- Hellenist- of or relating to the Greeks or their language; Greeks = Gentiles

II. Comparison between children and dogs: 2 separate distinctions

1. Jews = Children; Gentiles = Dogs

- "Let the Children eat first" would refer to God's election and what he said about the Gospel.
- "To the Jew first (THEN) to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16; Rom 2:9f; Acts.3:26; Acts. 13:46)

2. The domestic scene

- In Hellenistic households when the family is gathered at the table it is inappropriate to interrupt the meal and let the household dogs leave with the children's bread.
- The Woman likely understood this metaphor on the practical level (non-theological) level.

3. The hidden agenda

- This metaphor Jesus gave had a secret agenda
- Jesus' reluctance to heal the woman's daughter appears to be insensitive and harsh.
- In the Hellenistic world in the first century there were a lot of "miracle workers" who had followings. Jesus was referred to as one of these divine men, but the power of God is released in response to FAITH not in the context SUPERSTITION AND MAGIC.
- This statement Jesus made was a test of faith; Jesus why do you believe I can do this?

III. The house in Tyre

- Represents two things: Rest and confidence
- Jesus went to rest
- People who came to see Jesus in houses are presented as having full confidence in the Lord (**Ch. 2:1-5; 3:20; 7:24-30**)
 - (We will go deeper later)

Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus^uordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

I. The account

- Notice the text says “speech impediment” which would suggest he was not born deaf or with the inability to speak. This happened later in his life because if he was born with the inability to hear or speak, he would have no concept of language.
- Jesus does this amazing healing that the crowd was not expecting (notice their reaction)

II. Method of healing

- Fingers in ears
- Spat and touched tongue
- Made Contact

Let's Go Deeper: Points of emphasis

1. The healings

- The syrophenician woman had her daughter healed from a distance because of her faith
- The man was cured by the touch of Jesus
- This suggests that healing does not always have to be the same.
- Faith does not always look the same (The woman came on behalf of her daughter; the crowd brought the man to Jesus)

2. The literary context

- Why was Jesus in Tyre in the first place?
- Why was Jesus Tired?

3. JESUS WAS TIRED OF FOLKS NOT GETTING IT!

- William Lane puts it this way “While the scribes and Pharisees forget the reality life in their attachment to casuistry and the disciples remain dull and hard hearted (Ch. 7:1-23), a Hellenistic woman shows a profound confidence in Jesus and is not disappointed in her expectations.”
- Casuistry- the use of clever but unsound reasoning, especially in relation to moral questions

The Question: “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

The Response: v. ¹⁴“Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

Response to the Sermon from Sunday: Let's Talk