

“JESUS & THE SYROPHONECIAN”

(Text: Mark 7:24-30)

- We saw last week that the HEART of the HUMAN PROBLEM is the PROBLEM of the HUMAN HEART.
 - Evil is an INSIDE job. (**Mark 7:20**, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.”)
- After JESUS had CONFRONTED the false religious system of Judaism and CORRECTED those who taught it, He left ISRAEL and went to GENTILE territory.

WHY WOULD HE DO THAT?

- **Verse 24** says, “From there he arose and went to the region of TYRE and SIDON.
 - About 40 miles from Capernaum.
- To TYRE and SIDON – GENTILE cities. CANAANITE cities.
 - Those cities weren’t far from present day BEIRUT, LEBANON.
- After teaching on the tragedy of TRADITION being elevated ABOVE Scripture and its inability to produce purity ...
 - How it doesn’t help but actually hinders personal holiness ...
 - He takes the disciples on a road trip to illustrate the point He really wants to drive home.

Dr. Ray Stedman: “He is teaching His disciples certain lessons. He was illustrating in terms of race what He had just said in terms of food. All foods are clean and all peoples are clean in the sense of being accepted by God. There are no distinctions among foods, as being defiled or undefiled; there are also no distinctions among people. So He led them to a Gentile city in order that their Jewish scruples might be challenged immediately.”

Remember: MARK is writing from ROME and he’s writing primarily to GENTILE readers.

- Gentiles were viewed as OUTCASTS and ALIENS by the JEWS.

Matthew 11:20-24 helps frame the background for our text this morning.

- Jesus denounced the cities where most of His mighty works had been done, because the people didn’t repent.
- He said if the miracles done in **Chorazin**, **Bethsaida** and **Capernaum** had been done in **Tyre** and **Sidon**, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
- The woman in our text is one of the ladies who would’ve repented because she did repent.
 - Not because of any miracles she saw in **Tyre** and **Sidon**.
 - Rather, because of what she apparently saw in **Capernaum**.
- Matthew tells us she was a CANAANITE.

Mark 3:8 says, “And a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea and from beyond the Jordan and from around **TYRE** and **SIDON**.”

- Apparently, this woman was a part of that crowd.

Luke 6:17-19 says, “And Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of **TYRE** and **SIDON**, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch Him, for power came out from Him and healed them all.”

- That’s beyond remarkable. It’s astounding! And this Syrophenician woman saw all that.

That’s the BACKGROUND for our passage this morning.

READ: MARK 7:24-30 & MATTHEW 15:21-28

Notice, first of all ...

(1) HER DESPERATION (Mark 7:25-26)

- **Verse 24.** “Jesus entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.”
- You can’t hide the presence of JESUS in a CHURCH, in a HOME, in a LIFE.
 - If JESUS is in your LIFE, you can’t hide it.
 - If He’s not in your life you can’t FAKE it, either.
 - Sooner or later, the truth will come out.
- **Verse 25.** “But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.”

THREE OBSERVATIONS:

- 1. He had to know this woman would be there.** (He was fully man. But He was also fully God.)
- 2. She may have been a servant in this house.** (How else could she get inside, especially after He specifically said, “I don’t want anyone to know where I am?”)
- 3. I believe He planned this so it would be just Him and the Syrophenician, and His disciples.**
 - He’s going to use her situation as a classroom to teach His disciples one of the greatest lessons any of them would ever learn.

YOU DO KNOW GOD DOES THAT, RIGHT?

- Every CRISIS is a CLASSROOM, every TRAGEDY a TEACHABLE MOMENT.
- If you’re listening, you’ll learn something. If you’re looking you’ll see something.
- God never WASTES a CRISIS, PASSES on a PROBLEM, or MISSES an OPPORTUNITY to turn a MESS into a MIRACLE.

This woman **FACED FOUR FORMIDABLE FOES:**

- 1. Her NATIONALITY was against her.**
 - She was a GENTILE. Jesus was a JEW.
- 2. Her GENDER was against her.**
 - She was a woman in a society dominated by men.
 - A society that looked down on women.
- 3. SATAN was against her.**
 - One of his demons had taken control of her daughter’s life.
- 4. The DISCIPLES were against her.**
 - They begged Jesus to send her away because they were bothered by her (**Matthew 15:23**).

- So, she's in the house and Mark says she fell down at the feet of Jesus.
 - That's always the smartest thing you can do.
 - Regardless of the problem you're facing, get to Jesus as fast as you can.

Old hymn: "Tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus, tell it to Jesus, alone."

Notice also ...

(2) HER DETERMINATION (Mark 7:27-28)

Verse 26. "She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter."

- Her little daughter had an "unclean spirit" in a moral sense.
 - She probably wasn't even a teenager yet, and the devil had gotten ahold of her.

Parents: the devil is after your kids and my kids; your grandkids and my grandkids.

- We need to be vigilant and militant in protecting them from every vile demon and every form and fashion of evil that would try to take and destroy their young lives.
 - You need to have your kids in church on Sunday and in youth group and a part of every activity they have for kids around here.
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- Someone said, "Being a parent is one of those jobs that when you learn how to do it well, you no longer have the job."

She knew three things:

#1 – Her daughter had a demon

#2 – Jesus had cast demons out of others

#3 – He was her only hope

- So she begged him. (The words suggests continuously, persistently, relentlessly.)
 - Some people might give up after awhile. Not a **MOTHER!**

Why did she have to keep asking?

- Was He busy? Did He not hear what she said? Was He ignoring her?

Matthew 15:22-23 fills in the blanks.

One commentator said: "I think the reason He didn't answer her was to demonstrate to her and everybody else what saving faith looks like. It is penitent, 'have mercy on me.' It is reverent, 'O Lord, Son of David.' And it is persistent, it is relentless."

John 6:37, "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out."

JESUS wasn't rejecting her. He was doing something else.

- **Matthew 15:24,** "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."
 - She had heard that Jesus was the JEWISH MESSIAH.
 - So, as a GENTILE, she was approaching Him on Jewish grounds, "son of David."
- What right would a GENTILE have to ask for help from a JEWISH MESSIAH? None.
 - Jews would have nothing to do with Gentiles. They considered them to be no better than dogs.
 - If that's all JESUS was, a Messiah for the Jews, she would've had no right whatsoever.

Remember the vision Peter had in Acts 10:10-14?

- He was told by the Lord to get up, kill and eat.
- “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean” (**vs. 14**).
- “Don’t call anything unclean or common that the Lord has made clean” (**vs. 15**).

- The same principle that applied to food, applied to people.
 - Jesus did come for the lost sheep of Israel (**Matthew 15:24**).
 - Paul said in **Romans 1:16**, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Gentile).”

- The historical order was the **JEW** first, then the **GREEK** (Gentile).
 - One of the first battles in the early church was over that very issue.
 - Did Gentiles have to become Jews to be saved?

Dr. Jerry Vines: “We do not come to Jesus through a Jewish door. We do not come to Jesus through a Baptist door. We do not come to Jesus through a Methodist door. We don’t come to Jesus through a Pentecostal door. We come to Jesus through the sinner’s door. That’s the only way we get to Jesus.”

Verse 27. “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 the dogs.’”

- Jews sometimes called Gentiles dogs. But that’s not what Jesus calls us.
- Jesus was actually taking an insulting designation and turning it into a term of endearment.

- He actually used a word that could be translated puppies – the kind of dearly loved pets that would be right there in the living room with the people.

She was DETERMINED.

- **Verse 28**, “ But she answered him, ‘Yes, Lord; (that ought to be our response all the time!!) yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”
 - “I’ll take some crumbs, Lord! I don’t need much. I just need your touch on my daughter!”

- I’d rather have the crumbs from the Lord’s table than have the finest feast the devil can deliver.

Verse 27. When Jesus said, “Let the children be fed first ...” He was opening the door of hope.

- He was declaring what was yet to come.
- He was proclaiming the fabulous future that was awaiting anyone who would call on the name of the Lord.

Look what happened after Jesus died on the cross. READ: Romans 10:11-13.

- Remember: Every CRISIS is a CLASSROOM, every TRAGEDY a TEACHABLE MOMENT?
 - Jesus used this situation to teach His disciples that He wasn’t just a Savior for the JEWS.
 - In **John 3:16**, Jesus said, “God so loved the world, He sent His only begotten Son!”

- I’m so glad JESUS isn’t just a Savior for the JEWS but HE’s MY SAVIOR, too! Aren’t you?
 - I’m so glad when the Bible says, “For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (**Romans 10:13**), that INCLUDES ME, and it INCLUDES you.

- We need to learn what the disciples learned that day: “The invitation is extended to EVERYONE!”

One more thing. Notice ...

(3) HIS DEMONSTRATION (Mark 7:29-30)

- “And He said to her, ‘For this statement (her statement of belief) you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.’”
- **Matthew’s** account adds “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.”

Dr. Warren Wiersbe: “I think it’s significant that the TWO TIMES in the Gospel record when Jesus commended ‘great faith,’ He was responding to the faith of GENTILES and not JEWS: this Syrophenician woman and the Roman centurion (**Mark 8:5-13**).

Ephesians 2:11-13, “Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called ‘the uncircumcision’ by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands – remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

- Jesus’ death on the cross brought life and light to the lives of every man, woman, boy and girl.

Galatians 3:28, so that now, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 30. “And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.”

Talk about good news! The DEMON was gone and her DAUGHTER was back.

- The devil’s got some of our kids this morning.
 - He’s got some parents, this morning, too.
- Our ONLY HOPE, like the Syrophenician woman, is JESUS!
 - Why don’t you say, “**YES**” to JESUS this morning?
- Get the devil out of your heart and your home and get your life, your family and your future back on track.