

## Message #25

## Mark 7:24-37

There is a state road in Florida called A1A. It is a road that starts down by the keys and runs along the Atlantic coast. While we were on vacation, we said to my sister, let's go drive that road along the coast. We will start in Palm Beach and head north for a while. It was a spectacular drive. On the right was the Atlantic Ocean and on the left were the mansions of the elite rich and famous. In fact, we ended our tour right in front of Trump Towers, a very plush condo place in Palm Beach. When we left my sister's to come home, we took the Florida Turnpike to I-75. We were heading toward Georgia and I needed some gas. So I jumped off the expressway to get it. As I was pumping the gas, we could not help but notice there was an old man, who looked like a derelict, looking through the garbage in a dumpster. He appeared to be looking for cans or bottles that he could turn in for money. What a contrast to the scene on A1A. But here is what kept going through my mind—all people, whether rich or famous or a poor man crawling in a dumpster, need Jesus Christ. They are all sinners in need of a Savior. All people have sin baggage. We may come from different backgrounds and we may have different experiences in life, but we are all sinners and we all need Jesus Christ.

That point is hard to get across to some people. In fact, that point was exactly the point Jesus Christ was trying to communicate to Israel and to the world when He was here on earth and very few got it.

This is a very unique moment in the ministry of Jesus Christ, because not only is He going into Gentile heathen territory, He is going specifically into cities that have a history of mocking Him and His Word. These were pagan people who lived in a pagan land.

Tyre and Sidon are not cities that have a good track record. In fact, one of the illustrations God uses concerning Satan himself is the king of Tyre (Ezek. 28:12ff). These areas are so corrupt that God specifically targets both Tyre and Sidon with horrible judgments because of their evil (Ezek. 26-28). So this is amazing grace that Jesus would even walk into these cities. But this does show that God is a God of amazing grace and any who will believe in Jesus Christ, regardless of how evil or sinful one has been, may be saved.

Now remember Jesus Christ is presenting Himself to Israel as her Messiah and King. He is traveling throughout the land displaying Himself as the God/Savior/Messiah/King. But in this instance, He goes into an area that really has an abundance of non-Jewish people. In fact, this is the only trip Jesus makes into a pure non-Jewish area. It is detestable and sinful. It is an area filled with proud and evil people. It is primarily a Gentile area. Certainly He is interested in reaching the Jews of these areas, but He also shows He will reach Gentiles.

What we see here is that:

**JESUS PERFORMED TWO MIRACLES IN DESPICABLE GENTILE AREAS THAT PROVE HE IS THE GOD/SAVIOR FOR ALL PEOPLE OF ALL ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS AND OF ALL SINS.**

People need to understand this point. There is no other person who can save us from our pathetic wretched sins. There is no other person who can take us to heaven. Only Jesus Christ can do that and regardless of your background of sins, if you will believe on Jesus Christ, He will save you.

Now there are two main miraculous healings that proves this:

**MIRACULOUS HEALING #1** – Jesus heals a demon-possessed little girl. **7:24-30**

**Verse 24** opens by informing us that Jesus got up and went to the region of Tyre. Tyre was located about 30 miles northwest of Capernaum, where Jesus had been headquartered. It sat on the Mediterranean coast. The fact that Jesus would go here would not make the Jewish leaders happy because Tyre was considered to be an unclean, immoral Gentile area, known for wicked people and wicked things. Most Jewish people would not step foot in this land.

Actually both David and Solomon had trade alliances with the King of Tyre; but the two cities came to symbolize the epitome of idolatry and paganism. This area today is known as “modern Lebanon.”

Now we are not sure why Jesus left Galilee for this place. Perhaps He figured He and His disciples could get away from the massive crowds because most Jewish people certainly would not follow Him to this area. **Verse 24** makes it clear that Jesus did not want to be noticed by anyone. He wanted some private time. He wanted a vacation, so He went to someone’s house incognito, but word quickly spread that Jesus was there. But even when He was on vacation, people with problems found Him.

When we go on vacation, my intent is to just quietly enjoy my time. But I have yet to go on any vacation where something did not come up where I either had to defend truth or witness to someone. There is just no escaping people with problems.

According to **verse 25**, some woman, who had a demon-possessed little daughter, learned that Jesus was at this house and she went to see Him. The Greek word “daughter” was a word that came to be used as a term of endearment concerning a little daughter (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 209).

Now the woman is identified in **verse 26** as being a Gentile of the Syrophenician race. She is a Greek-speaking woman who was a Canaanite (Matt. 15:22), a Phoenician from Syria. The term Phoenician is a Greek term for someone who was a heathen Canaanite in the Mediterranean port city areas. So we may understand this to refer to some Gentile woman who had some connection to Syria.

This is so timely because tens of thousands of Syrians are trying to flee to Turkey and Greece because they have been murdered, tortured and raped by Russians. One Syrian said there is no hope. That is the way this Syrian woman felt, there is no hope for my daughter except Jesus.

She was not an upstanding Israelite woman, she did not have a good religious background or upbringing, but she knew Jesus could help her.

Now the woman's daughter was demon-possessed. The word "unclean" refers to any demon. No demon is a clean spirit; but is classified as unclean. This certainly shows us that there can be children who are demon-possessed. When the woman learned that Jesus was at some home in the area, she immediately took three actions:

**Action #1** - She went to the home where Jesus was. **7:25a**

This woman just imposes herself upon Jesus. She is somewhat of a pushy and mouthy woman. In fact, she has many things against her: 1) She is not Jewish; 2) She is not invited into this home; 3) She is not invited to speak; 4) Disciples ask Jesus to tell her to leave, because she is bothering them (Matt. 15:23).

**Action #2** - She fell down at Jesus feet. **7:25b**

She may have been a heathen Gentile, but she had more sense as to the identity of Jesus Christ than His own disciples. She realizes this is God. She realized Jesus was the Jewish Messiah and that He was God (Matt. 15:22).

**Action #3** - She continually asked Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter. **7:26**

She did not sugar coat this; she admitted that her daughter was demon-possessed and she kept asking Him to cast out the demon. She knew that Jesus Christ was the only Person on earth who could do this. She knew He was the only Person who can make one who is unclean, clean. **We will never regret continually asking God anything. Persistent prayer is a key to answered prayer.**

Now Matthew says that initially Jesus did not respond to her (Matt. 15:23). But In **verse 27**, He ultimately responds to her in two ways:

**(Jesus Response #1)** - The children must be satisfied first. **7:27a**

Matthew clearly informs us that Jesus means the program of God was first sent to Israel (Matt. 15:24). God's program is a Jew first program. The fact that He uses the word "first" means there is a time for non-Jews, but the initial program is Jew first.

This is a clear statement that He came to present Himself to Israel. In other words, the program of God while He was here on earth the first time was primarily aimed at Israel.

**(Jesus Response #2)** - The children's bread should not be thrown to dogs. **7:27b**

The noun "dogs" refers to Gentiles. The Jews did not view dogs as wonderful pets. They viewed them as wild scavengers, which is the way they viewed Gentiles.

Now the response of the woman in **verse 28** is amazing. She says, "Yes, Lord." She does not say, "Look, I came here asking you for help and you call me a dog." This woman had no problems with Christ's assessment. What we see here is that she is an honest and humble woman. She does not try to deny the fact that she is viewed as a dog and so is her daughter; but she says, "even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." In other words, I may be a dog but even sinful dogs need help.

Now carefully notice how she identifies Jesus "Lord." This woman has figured out who Jesus Christ is. He is God; the Lord of all. This is the only place in Mark where this noun "Lord" is used. This sinful Syrian woman is one who has truly come to terms with Jesus' identity.

She understands there is a priority in the program of God with Israel, but she also knows that Gentiles can get some of the crumbs of that program. She does not deny that she is a Gentile dog, but she knows that God will save Israel as a nation, but there will be individual Gentiles that His grace will also save.

Now by virtue of the fact that she says that the dogs are under the table feeding on the crumbs of the children, we know that the meal does not have to be complete for the dogs to get something. **So the program of God for Israel does not have to be completed in order for a Gentile to experience the grace of God.**

God's program is for the Jews first, but also it includes Gentiles. The program for Israel is not complete and Gentiles are right now experiencing some of the crumbs of being grafted into that program.

In **verse 29**, Jesus said because of this answer and Matthew adds because of her **great faith** (Matt. 15:28), Jesus said you can go home; the demon has left your daughter.

Now I don't know where this woman's house was; but Jesus, who is sitting in another house, could see what was happening in the demonic world and He knew that the demon had left the daughter because this mother had asked Jesus to do that. Jesus is the Lord. He sees and knows things at a distance.

In **verse 30**, when the woman got home, the child was lying on the bed and the demon was gone. What this woman could not have known is that her Gentile faith impressed the God/Savior/Messiah/King.

We have said over and over again that the best thing a person can do for one demon-possessed is to go directly to the Lord and ask Him to take care of the problem.

If you suspect that you are under some attack from the unseen world, go to the Lord and ask Him to take care of it. That is what this woman did.

Now you may be here today and you have lived your life as a dog. Perhaps you have been involved in evil demonic stuff. You have been immoral. You have been drunk. You have had an abortion or you have done and said bad things. You go to Jesus Christ and ask Him to save you. He will do for you what He did for this woman and her daughter.

**MIRACULOUS HEALING #2 – Jesus heals a deaf and mute man. 7:31-37**

Now we come to another miraculous event that takes place in the Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon. So Jesus leaves Tyre and travels about 22 miles north of Tyre to Sidon and then loops back south east toward the Sea of Galilee in the Decapolis region. This region was like a state that was comprised of ten major cities located east and southeast of Galilee. It seems that the Lord is staying out of the Galilean and Capernaum area.

According to **verse 32**, some people brought Jesus a man who could not hear or speak. We don't know who brought him this man; but we certainly may assume that they are friends or family of the man.

Now when they brought this man to Jesus, they begged Him or implored Him to lay His hands on the man and heal him. Now Jesus heals this man in a completely different way than He did the demon-possessed girl. We know He could have just healed him by speaking to Him; but He did not do that.

Now in **verse 33**, we learn that Jesus did six personal things to and for this man. The one thing this shows us is that God takes a very personal interest in us:

**Personal Action #1 - He took him away privately. 33a**

Jesus is not doing this for public notoriety.

**Personal Action #2 - He put His fingers in the man's ears. 33b**

Now Jesus can heal people by speaking to them; but in this case, He desired people to realize that it is His personal touch that brings this healing.

**Personal Action #3 - He touched the man's tongue. 33c**

Jesus used His own saliva or spit to again show that He is the One bringing personal healing to this individual. Now, if you or I did this, it would be gross and would not accomplish anything, but this is the God/man who designed the body and the tongue and the moisture. Saliva is needed in order for the tongue to function properly.

**Personal Action #4** - He looked up into the heaven. **34a**

By looking up into “the” heaven, Jesus is showing that everything He is doing is in fact sanctioned by His Father who is in heaven on His Throne.

**Personal Action #5** - He deeply sighed. **34b**

This was a deep sigh in which Jesus is expressing this heart-driven desire to heal.

**Personal Action #6** - He said “ephphatha” which means “be opened.” **34c**

It has been debated whether or not the word “ephphatha” was Hebrew or Aramaic. There are scholars on both sides of the debate. But what we cannot debate is that Mark gives us the Greek meaning of the word; it means “be opened.”

As soon as Jesus had completed doing these things, there were three results:

**(Result #1)** - The man’s ears were opened. **7:35a** - he could hear for the first time.

**(Result #2)** - The speech impediment was removed. **7:35b**

**(Result #3)** - The man began to speak plainly. **7:35c**

In **verse 36**, Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone. In all reality, the fact that the guy could hear and speak would show he had been healed. But Jesus was not here the first time to be known as some miracle worker. He was in a Gentile area and He was the God/Savior/Messiah/King. He came the first time to save people from their sins and not to physically heal everyone from their physical problems.

We know that there was already a movement ready to make Him King and if all these people in all these regions got behind this movement, they could easily overthrow the government and declare Him King.

But in spite of the fact that He told them not to tell anyone, they kept telling everyone. They were so astonished by His power that they went and told multitudes of people what Jesus had done.

What exactly does this text prove? This text proves that you as an individual can be saved by Jesus Christ. No matter what your background, your quirks or hang-ups. If you will by faith reach out to Jesus Christ, you will be saved.

He will save you. He will cleanse you. He will open your eyes and your ears to God’s Word and God’s will. Believe in Him and you will be saved.