

Discussion Guide

Week of February 24, 2013

Mark 7:24–37

Passage Overview:

In Mark 7:1–23, Jesus addresses the Jews' notion of holiness—being set apart from unclean things, whether food, disease, or even people. After explaining that holiness begins in the heart, he then proceeds to the Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon, where he encounters two non-Jewish (therefore, unclean) people. First, a woman approaches Jesus about casting an unclean spirit out of her daughter. Then, Jesus leads a deaf man away from the crowd to restore his hearing. Both accounts develop our understanding of Jesus' compassion toward Gentiles.

Understanding God's Word—Read Mark 7:24–37.

- Consider verses 24–26. How does Mark point out the “unclean-ness” of this new situation Jesus is entering? (Think in terms of religion and social appropriateness.)
- In verses 26–30, what is so unusual and striking about a) the woman's request and about b) Jesus' response to her? How does she react?
- Read verses 31–37. What is unique about this healing in comparison to past healings?

Living and Applying God's Word

- In verse 27, Jesus refers to the Gentiles as “dogs,” a way of distinguishing them from those who hold to Jewish laws and customs. Despite Jesus' (offensive?) rejection of the woman's request, she reasons with him. How is the woman both bold *and* humble in her interaction with Jesus? What if she had responded with despair or pride?
- Why does Jesus go about healing the deaf and mute man as he does in verse 33? What could Jesus' gestures have “spoken” to the man before healing him? How should this guide our interactions with non-believers?
- We're given no indication of whether Jesus left for Tyre *intending* to minister to Gentiles or not, yet he ministers to them without hesitation. Are there certain places where you're “primed” for ministry opportunities and others where you aren't looking for them? How can you be more like Christ in this?

Turning to God in Faith and Repentance

- John 1:14 says Jesus was “full of grace and truth” in his earthly ministry. These encounters with Gentiles certainly show evidence of both. How are we guilty of focusing on one to the exclusion of the other in our interactions with others? How could you be more gracious or more honest?
- First, Jesus declares all *foods* clean (v19), citing the need for inner holiness. Then, Jesus intentionally goes to a Gentile region, likely showing that non-Jewish *people* need (and can have) inner holiness apart from the law. Who do you reject as beyond the Gospel's reach? Why? Meditate on the Gospel.

Prayer:

Pray for a heart to love non-believers, especially those with no “Christian upbringing.” Pray for grace and truth, humility and boldness, in your interactions with them. Pray also for Jeremy & Samantha Orlich as they prepare for missions work in Central Asia.

Announcements

- Midweek Fellowship (Feb. 27 @ 5:45 p.m.) (*RSVP to sigourney@insidecrosspointe.com*)
- “One Another” Member Meeting (March 3)
- Child Dedication (March 10) (*sigourney@insidecrosspointe.com*)
- Baptism (Easter Sunday, March 31) (*wayne@insidecrosspointe.com*)