



WEEK 1

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, April 25, 2022

Read: Mark 7:24-37

Scripture Verse: *“Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet.” Mark 7:24-25*

Today's Thought:

Remember that Mark was in Rome when he wrote this Gospel. He wrote an account about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus for the Gentile readers, primarily. Obviously, it extended to everyone. While the Jews saw the Gentiles (person who is not Jewish) as cursed and under divine judgment, and they alone (Jews) were the ones who would receive the great blessings and benefits of salvation. They had become very isolated from the Gentile world and hostile to the Gentiles around them. That was not the promise of God. The Jews should be the light for other nations.

Therefore, Mark 7:24 said that Jesus left Israel and he went into Gentile territory, particularly Tyre and Sidon. So, Jesus went into Gentile territory is a preview of what is to come when the gospel goes to the ends of the earth. This is a personal affirmation from Jesus that salvation belongs to the other nations as well. Jesus demonstrated that the Great Commission has no limit. God's kingdom knows no ethnic, no racial, national or gender barriers. In verses 24 and 25 there are two things that prove that salvation is for all nations. 1) Jesus went to Gentile territory. 2) A Gentile woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came to him for help.

Jesus went into a place where the people were idol worshippers. They probably worshiped Baal and the Roman gods. In these verses, Mark presented Jesus as an example and a model of the Gentile salvation. Jesus going into Gentile territory means that the message that saves the Jews is the same that will save the Gentiles. Gentiles will not have a different message of salvation. They will not receive a different revelation, a separate object of faith, a separate way of believing. This visit shows that Jesus had a saving mission, to proclaim the good news of salvation to all the world, not only to people of Israel, but to all the nations. Jesus

showed that God's love and gift of salvation is not for a few, or for a nation, but it is for the whole world. For all who will accept him.

Mark Akin says: "unfortunately, too many Jews of that day continued to suffer from the **"Jonah complex."** They could not imagine that God would extend his salvation beyond the borders of Israel. Jesus is about to turn all of that on his head. From a socio-religious perspective, Jesus' visit to Tyre universalizes the concept of Messiah in terms of geography, ethnicity, gender and religion in a way entirely unprecedented in Judaism."

Jesus was not for just one nation, he was for all nations, and for the Gentile woman as well. We read this: **"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God" John 1:12.**

Jesus wants to visit you today. No matter how your life is, no matter what you have done, no matter what you are carrying on your back, Jesus wants to visit you and have a personal relationship with you. Don't say you are not good enough to have Jesus as your guest, to have him into your territory. To have Jesus in your territory is not based on your goodness, on your deeds. It is based on infinite love of God and his grace for you. Regardless of what you have done wrong, Jesus still wants a special relationship with you.

He has power to forgive your sins, to deliver from evil and oppression, to heal and to restore your life. His Grace has no limit. So, he brought consolation for a Gentile woman through her faith, he can do the same for you.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your Son Jesus Christ, through his shed blood on the cross I have been saved. I believe he died for me and rose from the grave. I confess that I am a sinner. If there is any arrogance in me, pretense, manipulation, bitterness, discord, selfish ambition, envy, drunkenness, and the like, and a lack of faith in you, forgive and cleanse me, Lord. Visit me, and help me to have a constant personal relationship with you.

- How did the Jews understand the Gentiles?
- What affirmation showed us that salvation was not for Jewish's people alone?
- Find two pieces of evidence clearly showing that Jesus does not reject anyone?
- What does that mean to you "Jesus in a Gentile territory"?
- Are you willing to receive Jesus in your territory?

Further Reading: John 1: 1-12

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Read: Mark 7:24-37

Scripture Verse: *“The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. “First let the children eat all they want”, he told her, “For it is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.””* Mark 7:26-27

Today’s Thought:

Jesus moved with his disciples in a region subject at the time to the Roman peace, one can suppose that Jesus withdrew there to find the calm which the crowds refused him. Therefore, he chose to go to a foreign land, because there he may be left in peace and rest. Instead of resting, a desperate woman came to find help for her sick daughter.

Her situation was very catastrophic. Her daughter was very sick, possessed by a demon, she was desperate. She heard about Jesus; she was not mistaken. She heard about everything Jesus did in Jewish land. So, why not my daughter? As soon as she heard that Jesus was here, she immediately called on him. We don’t know how long she was looking for this opportunity. Finally, she found it. Perhaps she said: “No matter what might happen, I won’t miss this noble opportunity.” She met him for help. Jesus was the only hope for her daughter. He was the only possible Savior for her. She probably knew about the miracles that Jesus performed in Capernaum.

I do appreciate the courage, the audacity and the determination of the woman. She was humble, she bowed down at Jesus’ feet to ask help for her daughter. She forgot that she was a “Gentile”. Do not let anyone, anything stop you to approach Jesus, because he is the solution to your problems. The woman knocked at the right door to get help for her daughter. She believed that Jesus would not reject her. She approached Jesus with great confidence to receive mercy and grace for her daughter. She put Jesus on the spot by pleading for his mercy on her daughter who was possessed by an unclean spirit. This Gentile woman showed her faith in Jesus. She made the suffering of her daughter her own and she was willing to accept rejection, humiliation in order to obtain healing for her child. She also had an indescribable persistence, patience and perseverance. She began her request with a worship (felt at Jesus’ feet), and ended it with a prayer (she begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter). She brought the matter of her child to Jesus’ feet.

If you are in a condition almost like this woman or have someone who needs your intervention, you can bring the case before Jesus through prayer. Jesus can solve any problem, heal disease and repair any complicated case that you bring to him by faith in prayer.

Father, thank you for your word. Those who are reading this study guide who have never had this wonderful experience of faith, help them Lord to come and fall at your feet. May they trust you always and pursue you with determination, persistence, patience and humility as this woman did. Increase their faith in your saving power and deliver them for all evil and danger.

- How do you seek Jesus?
- Quote at least four (4) words that describe the good behavior of the woman?
- Do you trust and pursue Jesus with persistence as this woman did?
- Are you willing to patiently wait for Jesus to do something for you?

Further Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Read: Mark 7:24–37

Scripture Verse: *“Lord, she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he told her, “for such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.”*
Mark 7:28–39

Today’s Thought:

In this story we have seen that Jesus left the Jewish territory for a pagan area trying to find a place to rest. Jesus wanted to increase his ministry to the Gentiles, because ministry to Gentiles was God’s plan in view of Israel’s final rejection of Jesus. We have seen a desperate woman who heard about Jesus, came, fell at his feet, and begged help for her daughter. We have seen her humility, her wisdom, persistence, perseverance, and her faith.

Now, we are going to see the result of her faith and persistence. Verse 26b shows that she begged Jesus’ help, Jesus answered her not a word. She kept crying for mercy. Sometimes when you are in need, you don’t care about what people will think you just ask and don’t give up easily. The woman didn’t care what answer she would receive but she wisely kept asking. Finally, Jesus said to her, **“I have been sent to the lost sheep of Israel.”** Meaning: my mission is the Jews. Why take the food of children and throw it to dogs? Perhaps the word “dogs” may appear to you Jesus was not being kind to the woman. Jesus wanted to say to the lady: **“my first priority was the Jewish people.”** The woman was not upset with Jesus; she understood the point Jesus was making. We can see the capacity of the woman to understand the analogy that Jesus used. She was not offended at all. She knew well she was not Jewish; she was not at that table.

Therefore, she was bold to come to Jesus, she was humble in her approach, a good pattern for all of us who seek God’s help for our needs. She had a reverential attitude toward Jesus. She was determined to get what she wanted for her daughter. She replied to Jesus **“even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs” v.28**

What fascinates me is the perseverance, the humility, wisdom, persistence, and faith of this woman. The good news is that your life won’t stay the same, you can find your way out if you stay strong and persist. The woman was smart enough to understand Jesus’s approach to get

what she wanted. **“For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.” v.29.** The word faith is not mentioned in this verse as it is in Matthew 15:28, but the woman’s reply showed the kind of faith that Jesus so greatly appreciated and He gave what she asked of him. Immediately her daughter was healed, not by direct contact but from a distance.

Perhaps she had gone through whatever ceremonies her idol gods required. Perhaps she had tried to appeal to whatever deities she knew. No result to her daughter. She lost confidence in them. She heard about Jesus and went to him. She boldly persisted in her plea until she found the final victory. If the woman’s response was “Who are you calling dogs?” she would not have received healing from Jesus for her daughter.

Dear God, thank you for your love and compassion for me. Help me to be humble, patient, persistent, fervent, persevering, respectful toward you. Help me to live in faith filled submission to your son Jesus. I don’t deserve a place at the table, but I believe through Jesus I am partaker, you have enough for me at the table.

- Why did the woman not take offense at Jesus’ response?
- What do you think of the term “dogs”?
- How does Jesus respond to our faith? our persistence, humility?
- What lesson do you draw from this woman’s behavior?
- How do you intend to apply this lesson to grow your relationship with God?

Further Reading: 1 Samuel 1:8-19

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Read: Mark 7:24–37

Scripture Verse: *“after he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sign said to him, “Ephphatha!” (Which means “Be opened!”). at this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.”*
Mark 7:33–35

Today’s Thought:

We have talked about Jesus’ mission for all nations, we have seen that Jesus didn’t show favoritism. The promise of God is for whoever believes in Jesus receives eternal life as God’s gift, not based on our merit. Jesus broke down all prejudices on the matter of salvation. He opened the gate until this persistent Gentile woman found what she wanted for her daughter. We have seen the perseverance, persistence, faith and wisdom of this Gentile woman. So, the result of all these things brought healing for her sick daughter.

Have you ever experienced a big problem and you have no one to help you with it? Then when you finally ask God for help He answered you?

Our focus today is a man who was deaf and could hardly talk. That means it was impossible for this man to communicate with others. It seems that this man’s problems are very severe. Some people brought him to Jesus, and they begged Jesus to heal him. So, Jesus took him away from the crowd to a private place where he healed him. The man had no capacity to come alone to Jesus.

The deaf and mute man is like us, people who wish to meet Jesus for a special purpose. We are like this man who wants to hear and to speak but is unable to. We need Jesus to put his fingers into our ears in order to hear his word and understand his call. We need Jesus to spit and touch our tongue to go and talk for him. We need Jesus to do a miracle in our lives. It is not easy for everyone to understand the word of God but like this deaf man, we need someone’s help.

Whatever the problem you are going through, Jesus does not forget your situation. Jesus knows about your spiritual condition. If you are experiencing some spiritual deafness and you feel speechless, if you don’t

understand God's word and you struggle to talk to God or talk to others about God, ask Jesus to touch your ears and ask him to spit and touch your tongue. Jesus can open your ears and give you the capacity to hear and obey his word, giving you the ability to accomplish his mission in the world. Jesus can restore you as he restored this deaf man's life.

Lord thank you for your love. Restore me for your glory as you restore this man. Open my eyes, my ears, my lips, that I might see and tell the story of your love to everyone. Lord I am deaf and dumb, please take me away from the crowd and have me hear this Aramaic word "Eph-phratha = be opened" in my heart in order to be a light for you everywhere I go. Use me as an instrument in your hand to reach the unbelievers for your glory.

- What prevents you from speaking for Jesus?
- What is in your spiritual life that you wish Jesus to heal?
- What do you believe would make you whole?
- Do you have the desire to bring your special need to Christ?
- What would you do if Jesus had healed you from your sickness?

Further Reading: Isaiah 6: 1-8

Friday, April 29, 2022

Read: Mark 7:24–37

Scripture Verse: *“People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” v37*

Today’s Thought:

Throughout the past 6 months, I have experienced the most profound darkest time in my life. My hometown, Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti, where I have my ministry, was under siege. Gang members rape men and women. They kidnap and ask for a large amount of money that no one in my social class can pay. They give a deadline to the parents of the hostages to bring them the money. If you can’t afford the ransom, they kill you. Because of that my family and I couldn’t sleep. We didn’t know what would happen to us since the bandits don’t spare anyone. The worst, in July and September I received two phone calls from an unknown person saying: “...We tried several times to kidnap you, but we can’t. We will not give up, next time we will get you!” and he hung up. They even described my car, my house, my church, my elementary school.

Our lives were in great danger. Since we had US visas, we fled Haiti to come here to the USA, particularly Orlando. It was really complicated for us. As you may know, being in America with a tourist visa guarantees neither work nor residency. It was horrible for us. Three months later, my wife broke her leg, had multiple fractures in fibula, tibia and ankle. During this time, I felt as if I was done. I was sick of the late-night tears that wouldn’t let me sleep. I wanted someone to tell me that it was going to be okay. I said to my wife, let us bring our case to the Lord.

In times of adversity, we often lose hope, but when we lift up our eyes to the Lord His intervention can help us be strong. I didn’t think I would have a job, a nice place to live with my family, but God used pastors David Clark and Erik Henry to intervene in my case.

Now, my family and I are healed from our bitterness. God took my darkest days and gave me the brightest days. I stopped focusing on everything that was going wrong in my life, God created in me a new mindset and a new outlook.

If you have reached your breaking point, trust that Jesus can make it well. Jesus can make you feel better than you have ever felt before. Per-

haps now it is dark, lonely, and suffocating, but there is a light, Jesus can make it well. I know that there are a lot of things that we sadly don't have much control over. Sometimes we focus hard on the problems, we become frustrated because we want a change to the situation. No matter how hard we try, it remains the same. We forget to cast all our anxiety on Jesus to take care of us.

If you are dismayed that your prayers have not been answered yet, remember that "Jesus has done everything well." If you feel left behind or forgotten, don't forget "Jesus has done everything well." Jesus does not forget you in your situation, just trust him alone. He knows how to bring you out of your darkest days. When Jesus brings you out of your situation, you will say like the people of Decapolis: "He has done everything well." So, instead of focusing on what you can't control, focus on Jesus who can make the deaf hear and the mute speak. Because he is the only one who can do everything wonderfully!

Dear God, thank you so much for who you are and what you have done and doing for me. Help me humbly rely on you for everything. I believe in your perfect timing and your total unlimited power to accomplish your will. I know that you love me, you care about me. I am certain you will take appropriate actions toward me. So, keep me close to you all day of my life. Help me to focus on you forever because you always do everything well.

- Are you going through turbulent times in your life?
- In your darkest times, to whom you reach out?
- What in your life is the result of God's intervention?
- Do you believe that Jesus can make you feel better than you have ever felt before?
- Do you have something or a special case you would like to share with Jesus right now?

Further Reading: Psalm 27:1-7

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