

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for February 26, 2017

Hitting The Road
Mark 7:24-30

I. Jesus' retreat (7:24)

And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.

- In verses 1-23, Jesus completely blew people's minds regarding the topic of defilement (eg. hand washing, bathing, food preparation, etc.)
 - First, Jesus exposed the Pharisees' commitment to the tradition of the elders over against the Word of God (vv. 1-13)
 - Second, Jesus taught the true intent of the Law by exposing the wickedness of the heart (vv. 14-23)
- All those things took place in Galilee presumably
- Now we find Jesus leaving Galilee and the land of Israel
 - Retreated to desolate place on Galilee with disciples leading to feeding of 5,000 in Mark 6:30-32
 - Retreated with His disciples to the Sea of Galilee in Mark 3:7
- Jesus retreated this region of Tyre and Sidon
 - Located Northwest of Galilee on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea
 - In the region of Syria
 - Gentile (Non-Jewish) area
- Jesus attempted to be undercover and enter a house
- "yet he could not be hidden"
 - Remember Jesus' popularity brought crowds with people from Tyre and Sidon back in Mark 3:8
 - What was the point of this retreat?
 - Time with disciples uninterrupted? People would still recognize Him here
 - Do ministry in Tyre and Sidon? Jesus did not want anyone to know He was there
 - Perhaps this would be another intentional withdrawal to teach His disciples through events that would take place

II. The woman's request (7:25-26)

25 But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, a

Syrophoenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

- “Immediately” Mark draws our attention to another character
- Needy woman
 - Little daughter (age uncertain) had an unclean spirit
- She had heard of Jesus, which is no surprise based upon Mark 3:8
 - Notice that she had not necessarily seen Jesus for herself
 - She responded to Jesus in worshipful faith
- We’ve seen lots of people falling down before Jesus
 - People with unclean spirits in Mark 3
 - Jairus the synagogue ruler in Mark 5
 - Now this Gentile woman
- “Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth”
 - First, to be clear, we find that this woman was not Jewish
 - She did not grow up with people expecting the Messiah to come and save their nation or people
 - Second, we learn that she is actually a Gentile native of that area
 - Tyre and Sidon weren’t really friends with the Jewish people
 - Matthew says that she was a Canaanite, which reminds us of the hostile relationship between Israel and the Canaanites
- Jews believed the Gentiles were another major source of defilement
 - The Jews did not enter the governor’s headquarters during Jesus’ trials because they would be defiled and unable to eat Passover (John 18:28)
 - Tyre, Sidon and region of Phoenicia not a great region morally based on the Old Testament because King Ahab married Jezebel (daughter of Phoenician king) who brought Baal worship into Israel
 - Josephus maintained a negative view of Tyre and Sidon?
 - Acts 10:28 “And he said to them, ‘You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean.’”
- Think about the manifestation of this woman’s faith
 - She had not seen Jesus only heard about Him (poor knowledge barrier)
 - Jesus was trying to be low key, yet she sought Him out! (convenience barrier)
 - Jesus was a man and she was a woman (cultural barrier)
 - Jesus was Jewish and she was a Gentile (religious barrier)

III. Jesus’ refusal (7:27)

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."

- Jesus' response is harsh and basically refuses to help this woman!
 - Jesus sets up metaphor with household meal of bread with children and dogs
 - Clearly, the children ought to be fed first, leftover scraps can go to dogs
 - Although, this might not be so clear based upon the care our current culture gives to our pets
- Children = Israel, Dogs = Gentiles
 - How do we know this?
 - Israel referred to as God's children in Old Testament and Jewish writings
 - Deuteronomy 14:1 "You are the sons of the LORD your God..."
 - Jeremiah 31:9 "With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back, I will make them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble, for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn."
 - Talmud (m. 'Abot. 3:15) "Beloved are Israel, for they were called children of God; still greater was the love in that it was made known to them that they were called children of God, as it is written: Ye are the children of the Lord your God [Deut. 14:1]."
 - Gentiles referred to as dogs
 - "Dog" was used as an insult throughout Old Testament and still today
 - "Dog" in this text is a word for a household puppy, not wild and dangerous wolf like dogs
 - Talmud (Pirque R. El. 29) "Whoever eats together with an idol worshiper [Gentile] is like one who eats together with a dog; as the dog is uncircumcised, so also is the idol worshiper uncircumcised."
- Jesus is stating that there is an order to how the promises of God unfold on this earth
 - Based upon the Abrahamic Covenant, God will bless His people (Israel) who will in turn be a blessing to the nations
 - Genesis 12:2-3 "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
 - Isaiah 49:6 "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
 - Salvation plan always included the nations (Gentiles)

- 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.”
- Book of Acts
- This woman is breaking cultural norms and practices in hunting down and requesting of Jesus (as a woman)
 - The disciples in Matthew’s account tell Jesus to send her away!
- This woman is requesting attention in a way that is out of order for God’s plan of salvation (as a Gentile)
- What will Jesus do?
 - Justified to send her away as a Jewish male
 - Justified to heal her according to His pleasure
- Jesus treats this woman like the woman with the internal bleeding in Mark 5:25-34 when He asked, “Who touched me?”
 - Jesus knew what had happened but Jesus’ question allowed the opportunity for this woman to display her faith in the midst of that crowd
- In a similar way, Jesus is provoking this woman to show her persistent faith
- This example of the woman’s faith would hopefully remind the Apostles about God’s salvation plan unto the nations (Acts)

IV. The woman’s reward (7:28-30)

28 But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." 30 And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

- She embraces the metaphor and identification as a dog at the table (amazing!)
- She persists using the same metaphor that Jesus had just set up
- Somehow, with this information, she understood it to be better to be a dog at the right table than anywhere else
- She already understood the theology of how God’s plan worked without Christ explaining it to her
 - She apparently understood children as Israel and dogs as Gentiles
 - She understood that Israel was to receive priority in the sequence of God’s plan unfolding
 - She embraced her position as a Gentile dog that would receive some of the crumbs from the table of God’s blessings to Israel
 - Perfect time to make an excuse for not coming to Christ
 - Think of all the different excuses that people make:
 - I need more historical evidence that the bible is accurate

- If God showed Himself to me, then I would believe
- If God exists, then why is there so much evil in the world?
- Doesn't the bible have contradictions?
- Church is full of hypocrites!
- Does the bible really teach that God chooses people for salvation?
- No matter the direct statements from Jesus, this woman's faith was undeterred
- "And he said to her, 'For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.'"
 - Jesus immediately applauds and rewards this woman's faith
 - Her statement represented a sincere heart of faith in Christ and His power
- "And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone."
 - This is the only time we see Jesus healing from a distance in Mark
 - Jesus was not merely saying words to get this woman to leave
 - Jesus chose to highlight and reward her faith