

Jesus Heals the Nations

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Mark 7:24-30

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Synopsis:

In a dramatic, offensive, and surprising story, Jesus and a pride-less woman collide, resulting in the healing of her daughter and the crossing of boundaries, which Jesus himself may not have anticipated. It all happens because one person needed Jesus more than she needed her pride. She stepped across a boundary and encountered the boundless mercy of God.

I.

The Woman

Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin

She had everything against her: Let me list her demerits

READ Mark 7:24-26a

Tyre =

Island city state, modern Lebanon, wealthy, oppressed Galileans, home city of Jezebel (1Kgs 16), full of pagan temples, Josephus calls “our bitterest enemies.”

Woman =

Even in middle East today, women are less than men

Gentile =

Greek *hellenis*, Jews did not associate with Gentiles, especially Greeks; Matthew calls her *Canaanite*, term of disgust

Syrophenician =

Roman designation for province, Roman hatred, Phoenicia = coastal traders who oppressed Jews

Dogs =

Jesus uses a parable about children and dogs; dogs being a term of disgust for Gentiles; dogs lick the blood of Jezebel (2Kgs 9)

Begged Jesus =

Matthew version, “She keeps shouting after us”

SUM = Everything going against her

Wealthy oppressor, Jezebel-woman, Roman, dog, shouting at Jesus

What was she thinking?

How was she feeling?

How about you?

What’s your list of demerits?

Everything going against you?

What are you thinking?

What might you be feeling?

II.

The Jews

Mark 7:27 Let the children be fed first

Walk Through the Bible: Story of God's plan

- Good creation, human choice, God's plan
- Woman encounters Jesus and God's plan for blessing

Jesus understood the Plan of Blessing: Big picture

Gen 12:1-3	Abraham family blesses other families
Exod 19:3-6	Israel priest to other nations
Isaiah 2:1-4	Zion will teach the nations
Romans 1:16	Jew first, then the Greek
Romans 9-11	Paul explores the plan
Galatians	Paul uses Abraham to explore
Acts 13	Paul puts in practice the plan

SUM: God planned to use Israel to bless, be priests, teach, and be the conduit for salvation to the nations. The Messiah was the major step in this plan. Jesus knew this.

Plan Disrupted?

- Here was a woman stepping in front of the queue!
- Don't you hate someone to step in front of you!
- The wrong kind of woman!
- What will happen?
- Something drives her over a boundary?
- What would drive you over a boundary?

III.

Jesus, Jews, and a Woman

Mark 7:30 For saying that you may go

The story should have ended with Mark 7:27 but it didn't

What surprises you about this story?

- Jesus seems offensive
- He tells a story about dogs!
- Notice what comes before: Mark 7:17-23
- *Clean-Unclean foods, now Clean-Unclean woman!
- Mark 7:20 "It is what comes out of a person that defiles"

Let's watch to see what happens: READ Mark 7:26b-27

- Jesus tells a parable about dogs and children
- Dogs? Disgust or family?
- Parable to put her off or ask her in?

- Is this a Jew-first parable?
- She has everything going against her
- Jesus seems opaque, maybe offensive

Back up in Mark: What has happened?

- Jesus heals: Do people understand?
- Jesus tells parables: Do disciples/Pharisees understand?
- Jesus confronts about clean/unclean: Do people understand?

Woman responds: She gets it, READ Mark 7:28

- first person to enter/understand a parable in Mark
- she sees Dogs = Gentiles, Children = Jews
- she accepts bread from God
- she knows she is unworthy

*Her only merit is her need!
 She needs Jesus; and he replies
 READ Mark 7:29-30

Here's the question for us:

- Despite our demerits, do we need Jesus?
- Can we overcome our pride to seek healing?
- Say: "I don't deserve it" That's right
- Say: "I don't want to be exposed" That's a choice
- Say: "I might be embarrassed" That's true
- What's keeping you from seeking Jesus?

Jesus crossed a boundary, changed a plan because a woman crossed a boundary, let her pride go, and sought him. That can happen to you and me. It starts with a need deep enough to dump our pride.

Do you want Jesus enough to drop the pretense?
 He's waiting.