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No Escaping

Mark 7:24-37

When people know you are an expert at something, like playing the piano or singing or sewing or cooking, or doing handyman things, they come to you wanting your involvement and help. There are times we might try to be quiet about those things we can do so that we are not overwhelmed with people asking us to do those things for them. Somehow the word gets around. Jesus was looking for a time and place to train His disciples. He needed to get them ready for His departure and there was a lot that they needed to know and learn. The disciples looked at people as Jews and Gentiles. Jesus wanted **His disciples to see all people** as people made in the image of God, people God loves and cares for. In our scripture today, Jesus leaves the region of Galilee and travels north into the Gentile territory of Tyre and Sidon. Even in the Gentile countries people had heard of Jesus. Word got around about His ability to heal people and cast out demons.

Mark 7:24 *“From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden.”* In these verses of scripture today the disciples are not mentioned although we assume they are with Jesus. In the related text in Matthew (15:21-31) the disciples are mentioned as being with Jesus. The whole purpose of Jesus going to this area, we believe, was to get away from the places where He was well known so He could spend quality time with His disciples. Jesus was well known as a healer among the people in Galilee. There were times when so many people were coming to Jesus for help that He and His disciples did not even have time to eat (Mark 3:20 / 6:31). Jesus was also well known among the scribes and Pharisees as the One breaking the Jewish traditional laws. In Galilee, He was loved by most of the people because of the healings. He was hated by some, the Pharisees, who wanted Him dead. In the region of Tyre and Sidon, no one should have known about Jesus. But even among the Gentiles, they heard and talked about Jesus. Jesus and His disciples found a house to stay in. They were hoping that no one would know who they were. But there was no escaping. Jesus could not be hidden.

Verses 25-26 *“For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.”* It seems that there were a lot of people who were demon possessed in Jesus’ day. Do you believe that a person can be possessed by a demon today? I do. The demons use what is in our heart to destroy us and keep us away from being obedient the Living

God. Do you remember what is in our hearts that comes out of us and defiles us? *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within”* (Mark 7:21-23). The demons have a lot to work with that is already in us. You might wonder, **how can a demon get into a person?** I believe it is the same way that the Holy Spirit enters a person. He is invited in. When a person confesses their sins and trusts Jesus as their Lord, that person should also invite Jesus to live in their life. That may automatically happen when you confess Jesus as Lord and choose to obey Him. Yet I think asking God for His Spirit is a sign of our dependence upon Him. Jesus did say, *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”* (Luke 11:13). Ask God to fill you with His Spirit so you can glorify God in every circumstance. In sickness or health, whether rich or poor, glorify God. We do not know how young this daughter was. She was old enough to ask a demon to enter her life and it did. We do not know all that happened in this young girl’s life nor how long this had been going on. What we know is **her mother loved her so much** that when she heard that Jesus was in town, she stopped at nothing to get His help.

She was a **Greek**. That means she had gone to all the pagan temples, to all her priests and gods to get help. I would guess she begged all those priests and idols over and over for help, but no one would help her. Satan does not cast out Satan (Mark 3:23-26). If that happened, his kingdom would be divided. She lost her faith in her gods. She heard the miracles that Jesus did, so she went to Him. She fell down at Jesus’ feet and sought His help. She was **Syro-Phoenician**. That means she was not of the Jewish race and she did not speak the same language as the Jews. None of that mattered to her. Somehow Jesus would understand. She **believed** that Jesus could make a difference. He could remove the demon from her daughter. She was **persistent**. She begged over and over until Jesus responded to her.

Verse 27 *“But Jesus said to her, ‘Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.’”* Today, people may think that Jesus is being racist. He is not. He is simply acknowledging that God has an order of things in this world. With all the healings that Jesus did throughout Galilee, with all the Gentiles in that area, surely, He had healed some Gentiles along the way. He did not ask about their race or beliefs. He saw people as made in the image of God. He saw their need. He had compassion and He changed lives. Jesus had come to this area to disciple His followers. He was busy teaching them and training them for what was ahead. His disciples needed Him. The Jews needed Him and His time and His ability. When Jesus called her a little dog, He was not referring to the wild

dogs that roamed the street. He was referring to the house pets. Those pets are loved and cared for and fed later. They just did not have a place at the dinner table with the family. Those pets would get their fill later.

Verse 28 *“And she answered and said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.’”* Again, she did not call Jesus a racist for His comment about her because it was not. She understood how pets are loved and treated. Yes, they will get fed later. But sometimes, they are also given food off of the table. Often times it is the children themselves who feed their pets food off of their plate. We have had several indoor dogs in our lifetime. Generally, we did not like feeding our dogs from the dinner table while we were eating. We did not want them to learn to beg for food while we were eating. But there were times those pets just looked so desperate, so pitiful. They just wanting a little morsel from the table and at times, we would give in. Jesus was so impressed with her response that He said, *“For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter”* (7:29). Jesus did not have to see her daughter. There was no formula, no incantation. He did not have to confront the demon. It was just done. I think she went home believing! We always like to see what we believe. *“When she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed”* (7:30). Finally, the mother’s daughter could relax. Mom found her daughter resting on her bed. What Jesus spoke was true.

After sometime in the area of Tyre, Jesus and His disciples left for the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 15:29-31 records **the general account**. *“Jesus departed from there, skirted the sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus’ feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”* It is very possible that the majority of these people that were healed are Gentiles because they *“glorified the God of Israel.”* Mark records **a specific account** of one of those healings. It may have been the first of those healings as Jesus was trying to keep a low profile concerning His healings or His presence would become all about healings. This man was deaf and had a speech impediment. They begged Jesus to touch Him (Mark 7:32). For this person, Jesus separated him from the crowd. The crowd wanted to watch what Jesus was going to do and how He was going to do it, but He did not allow that to happen.

Jesus took the man aside *“and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’*

*that is, 'Be opened.' Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly" (7:33-35). Why did Jesus do it this way? We do not know. Maybe Jesus touched him in this way because the man could not hear what was being said. Of course, when Jesus took him back to the crowd everyone was excited because the man could hear and speak plainly. He could finally be understood. Then Jesus "commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it" (7:36). Then we have Matthew's general account. *Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel"* (Matthew 15:30-31).*

At least they responded correctly. They gave glory to God. They specified the God of Israel instead of any of their Greek gods. They understood all their healings and restorations to health came only from the Living God. When we pray, we do not specify "the God of Israel." We understand Him to be our God as well. He is the only God and every good and perfect gift that anyone receives comes from Him! (James 1:17). These people needed their healings to know who the real God is. As Christians, we do not need healings to believe who God is. We know He is a loving God. We know He wants the best for us. He gave us His only begotten Son. He demonstrated His own love for us, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). He paid the debt for our sins (1 John 2:2). He wants us to be content in any circumstance that we are in so that we can be His witnesses and glorify Him. As a child of God, learn to put into practice His commands. "*Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God"* (Philippians 4:4-6).

Questions to ask yourself:

Are you content? Can you rejoice in everything? Are you anxious about something?

Actions to take: Pray to God. He knows what you are going through. Seek His help
And His guidance. Ask Him to help you to learn to be content.

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