



## *Sermon-Based Study Guide*

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**Sermon Title: Finally!**

Sermon Text: Mark 7:24-30

Related Texts: 15:5-16

### **I. Start It – Connecting With One Another**

What do you think about these questions? “When I realize the vastness of all creation and the immensity of the cosmos am I of any significance? Do I matter to God? Does God care about me?”

### **II. Introduction**

Mark has recorded Jesus’ interaction with the religious leaders regarding the ineffectiveness of their belief in ritual cleanness and traditions that they deem to be the means of being made acceptable to God. Jesus is emphatic, as we have seen in Mark 7:1-23, that the real issue is human hearts tainted by sin by which a person is polluted or defiled. Humans are helpless and harassed by this pre-disposition to evil. The situation calls for a rescue that is now at hand as Jesus ushers in the Kingdom of God.

### **III. Study the Text –Read the Gospel of Mark 7:24-30**

1) How do you best find refreshment, relaxation, and re-creation?

2) Mark tells us that Jesus made his way from the area surrounding the Sea of Galilee to the city of Tyre, a predominantly Gentile area (with a notable Jewish population) roughly 30 miles to the northwest. It has been suggested that he went there to avoid the increasing conflict with the Pharisees, or to escape from the throngs of people who pursued him in Galilee, or to simply get away for some R and R. What do you think the reason is (or reasons are) for Jesus heading to this outlying area along the Mediterranean Sea?



3) He enters into a house (probably the home of a Jewish family – maybe a relative) but cannot remain incognito – the secret is out... Jesus is here! What is significant about Jesus wanting his presence to be a secret?

4) Why do you think Mark gives his readers so much information about the woman who approaches Jesus (verse 26)? By the way, Syria Phoenicia is the region above and to the east of Tyre. How might the Pharisees of Mark 7:1-23 view this woman had they been present in this house? What does she really need?

**Note:** Because Mark had no way to underline or use bold print for emphasis, he depends on things like repetition and adding details in order to emphasize things. Clearly he wants his readers to understand that this woman is not Jewish, not from Israel, and has been

made unclean by her daughter's condition of spirit possession. Significantly, Mark records this event in the context of the dispute with the Jewish teachers over tradition and ritual cleanliness and true cleanliness – a heart transformed by God.

- 5) In verses 27 and 28 we find a peculiar interaction – Jesus uses a common parable to make a point and the woman, using the same form of communication, responds. How does Jesus' statement in verse 27 convey his priority of calling Jews ("the children") to enter into the Kingdom of God (See Matthew 10:5-6)? How does his reference to "the dogs" indicate to her that she (a Gentile) is somehow "outside" of his ministry priorities?
- 6) The Apostle Paul, in Romans 15:5-16 explains Jesus' ministry priority being to the Jews. How does this help you understand Jesus' interaction with the Gentile woman?
- 7) Verse 28. She shoots right back – using the language of a parable. What significant spiritual insight does this woman have regarding God's grace toward Gentiles and God's willingness to help her? Are you surprised by her awareness of God? Her insight?
- 8) By the way, did you notice how she addresses Jesus – "Lord"? It's the only time we see this used in Mark's gospel account. What do you think she understood about Jesus and the Kingdom of God (God's rule in human hearts)?
- 9) Verses 29-30 wrap it up. Jesus is able to make the girl clean and whole without being present with her. He has supernatural knowledge that she is made clean. How does this event demonstrate what Jesus has been talking about which is the need to turn to God (by turning to him) in order to be made clean and acceptable to God?

#### **IV. Pray It – Reflection and Responding in Prayer**

Mark says, "Jesus could not keep his presence secret..." How do you make Jesus' presence known to people around you? Do you make his presence known or keep it a secret? What are some ways you might make his presence known to others?

The woman had some amazing spiritual understanding and insight. What does this suggest about the ways God is at work in people – even those we might think are not "spiritual" or not interested? Can you think of ways you might direct conversations with friends to what they think about God, about Jesus?

Pray for opportunities to speak with friends, family, and neighbors about the life-transforming experience of knowing God through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

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*Jesus could not be concealed from the one person who acknowledged both his lordship and her abject position before him. She did not stand on privilege or rank. She was willing to accept the crumbs that fell unnoticed from the table. The story of the Greek woman expresses in the simplest and clearest terms the way every human being comes to God.*

*Jesus is still found at the place where we understand our need for God and realize we have no right to expect anything at all. In fact, at this place, he cannot be hidden.*

*Ronald J. Kernaghan, Mark*