

21- A Glimpse into Grace

Mark 7:24-37

I- To the Gentiles:

We know from the teachings of the whole Bible that Jesus came to the house of Israel to be their Messiah. As a matter of fact Jesus was and is the promised Messiah of Israel through which the whole world would be blessed.

The people of Israel were excited about the feedings, the healing and other things that Jesus was doing for them. Still the opposition was beginning to reach a fever pitch for Him in Israel. We find for the first time recorded in Mark that Jesus traveled outside the territory of Israel.

Roberson's Word Pictures says, "There was too much excitement among the people, too much bitterness among the Pharisees, too much suspicion on the part of Herod Antipas, too much dulness on the part of the disciples for Jesus to remain in Galilee."

Mark 7:24-30 *And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid. 25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.*

Jesus is in a Gentile area attempting to get rest. This territory was part of the original land given to Israel but never conquered and thus remained Gentile.

However, His presence was not secret and before long this woman come to him. Matthew tell us in addition to Mark the following when the woman approached Jesus. **Matthew 15:23** *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

This woman persisted in her task. Matthew tells us the cry of the woman in **Matthew 15:22** *... Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* Her daughter was sick with demon possession. The problem was she was a Gentile, not of the household of Israel.

Paul gives us some insight into this in **Ephesians 2:11-12** *Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

The promise of Messiah had been given to Israel and the Jews. One of the great mysteries of the Old Testament was that the Gentiles would be able to be part of the church without becoming Jewish.

On the surface it seems like Jesus speak extremely harsh to her. **Mark 7:27** *But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.* Matthew gives it this way. **Matthew 15:24** *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

The Gentiles were considered low as dogs to the Jews. They would not have anything to do with them because they were considered unclean by the Jews. Now Jesus finds Himself engaged in a discussion with a Gentile woman. Let me give us a lengthy quote from William Barclay that gives us insight into this dialogue.

No matter how you look at it, the term dog is an insult. How, then, are we to explain Jesus' use of it here?

(a) He did not use the usual word; he used a diminutive word which described, not the wild dogs of the streets, but the little pet lap-dogs of the house....Jesus took the sting out of the word.

(b) Without a doubt his tone of voice made all the difference. The same word can be a deadly insult and an affectionate address, according to the tone of voice. We can call a man "an old rascal" in a voice of contempt or a voice of affection. Jesus' tone took all the poison out of the word.

(c) In any event Jesus did not shut the door. First, he said, the children must be fed; but only first; there is meat left for the household pets. True, Israel had the first offer of the gospel, but only the first; there were others still to come. The woman was a Greek, and the Greeks had a gift of repartee; and she saw at once that Jesus was speaking with a smile. She knew that the door was swinging on its hinges. In those days people did not have either knives or forks or table-napkins. They ate with their hands; they wiped the soiled hands on chunks of bread and then flung the bread away and the house-dogs ate it. So the woman said, "I know the children are fed first, but can't I even get the scraps the children throw away?" And Jesus loved it. Here was a sunny faith that would not take no for an answer,

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

here was a woman with the tragedy of an ill daughter at home, and there was still light enough in her heart to reply with a smile. Her faith was tested and her faith was real, and her prayer was answered. Symbolically she stands for the Gentile world which so eagerly seized on the bread of heaven which the Jews rejected and threw away.

Her reply is recorded in **Mark 7:28** *And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.*

Jesus simply spoke to her and gave her the assurance that her daughter was healed. **Mark 7:29** *And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.* We have no indication that she did anything except turn and go home believing. What would she find? **Mark 7:30** *And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.*

One more quote before we leave this section.

She had no claim on His Mercy and Power, for she was under the curse. Her daughter had a demon. And though she had no claim on His power and no promise, she believed in His love. She takes the place He gave to her and the daughter was restored. What a manifestation of Grace! And how it must have cheered the Servant's heart!

In that moment His omniscient eye must have beheld the multitudes of Gentiles, who, after His death on the Cross, as lost sinners with no promise, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, would believe in His love.
Gaebelin

II- Back to Galilee:

Jesus moves closer to His impending confrontation with the officials that would ultimately end with Him being crucified when He returned back to Galilee.

Mark 7:31-37 *And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.* Some think that this journey took Jesus several months to complete. Now He returns to Israel. Remember Mark portrays Him as a Servant. We find them bringing Him a deaf and dumb man.

Mark 7:32 *And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. 33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.*

Jesus healed the man of deafness as well as his speech problem. One thing that we notice is that Jesus was very compassionate with the man. He did not do the healing as a great speculate but took him aside in private. Those who were privileged to be in the presence of the healing saw Him look to heaven and thus give glory to God for the healing.

Mark 7:36 *And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; 37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.*

The people were amazed and the fame of Jesus spread. In my originally outline we said that we would break down Mark into three divisions. First from **Mark 10:45** *For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister...*The time of His ministry is winding down and we have only a couple of other miracles that Mark records before we move into the final days of Jesus. The second part of our outline says He came ...*to give his life a ransom for many.*

In this section we have seen a glimpse of the grace that was coming with the healing of the Gentile mother's daughter. We also see grace crying out to the Jews that the Messiah was there with the healing of the deaf and dumb man. Have you experienced this grace...free to all.