

INCLUDES

MARK 7:24-37

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

ENGAGE!

1. When have you felt like an outsider most?
2. Which best describes your playground experience as a child: first one picked, last one picked, never picked? (When I was in elementary school, I was the chubby kid everyone picked on. I had few if any friends at school.)
3. How did that feel? (I dreaded recess!)
4. How have you felt similar emotions as an adult?

Most of us have had at least one experience where we were excluded and felt like an outsider. It is emotionally painful, whatever the reason.

In contrast, being included in a group or event can be life-giving. The memory of belonging can remain with us throughout life.

CONTEXT!

Mark 7 begins with some Pharisees and scribes confronting Jesus because the disciples were eating without washing ceremonially before they ate. This was not in the Law but "traditions of the elders." Jesus used this opportunity to confront them about their hypocrisy. They disregarded God's laws in preference of their traditions. When the disciples were alone with Jesus back in the house, they asked for an explanation of the parable. Jesus responded in verse 18-19. Jesus said "It isn't what goes into a man that defiles him but what comes out of his heart." Evidently Peter wasn't listening, he had to learn this lesson again in Acts 10 when the Holy Spirit led him to share the gospel to the Gentile, Cornelius.

THE DEJECTED! Read Mark 7:24-30

This woman couldn't be more non-Jewish! This woman was the exact opposite of the Pharisees and scribes. In verse 19 Jesus pronounced all food clean. Now he pronounced all people clean.

1. Why did Jesus choose this area and why did He not want anyone to know where He was staying? (Jesus brought His disciples here to try to escape the crowds. They needed time to rest, and He needed time to teach them.)

Jesus' primary mission was not to cast out demons and heal the sick. But doing so fulfilled Scripture—Isa. 35. Word spread quickly that Jesus was there.

2. Why did this Gentile lady come to Jesus? (She wanted Him to heal her demon-possessed daughter.) Tyre and Sidon were in Gentile territory, although there were Jews who lived there also.
3. How did she approach Jesus? (Humbly and respectfully, fell at His feet, called Him Lord, and persisted—almost begging.)

The children represented the Jews; the bread represented the gospel, and the dog represented the Gentiles.

4. Does Jesus' response seem harsh and out of character for Jesus?

The word for "dog" used here would be a small house dog or puppy, not a stray or mongrel.

5. How did the woman respond to Jesus? (She agreed the gospel was for the Jews first then to the Gentiles. But the puppy can feed on the crumbs under the table.)

Even Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, said that the gospel was to the Jews first then to the Gentiles is Romans 1:16.

6. How did Jesus respond? (Her daughter was healed, according to Matt. 15:28 because of her great faith!)

7. How do ethnic and religious differences serve as barriers for expressing compassion? (Don't know how to approach them; afraid of insulting them; language can be a barrier; customs.)
 8. How can faith in Jesus help a person look beyond these barriers? (Sometimes the best expression of faith is through loving them through our actions.)
 9. Who are the "Gentiles" in your world?
 10. How can you help them experience the grace and salvation offered by the Messiah?
- Jesus could have ignored the woman, which would have been culturally acceptable. Instead, He spoke with her and, ultimately, granted her request.

THE DEAF! Read Mark 7:31-35

This miracle was foretold in Isa. 35:5-6.

This man was deaf and couldn't speak clearly.

1. What reasons would people, especially the Jews, have to consider this man an outcast? (He was likely a Gentile. Because of his handicap he was considered unclean. They may have even thought he was deaf and slow to speak because of some sin he had committed.)
2. How did this deaf man get to Jesus? (It seems some of his friends brought him to Jesus like the four brought the paralytic earlier in Mark.)
3. Why did Jesus take this man away from the crowd to heal him? (He wanted to avoid creating a public spectacle and further public acclaim for His miracles.)
4. What can we do to effectively minister to individuals with physical challenges? (Go out of our way to speak to them, hug them, make them feel special; help them reach things in the grocery store; volunteer at the group homes or care facilities. Treat them with love and respect.)
5. Why did Jesus groan as He looked up to the Father? ("Jesus hates what His creation has done to itself. He groans over the pain that humanity has brought upon itself through sin. He expressed His deep compassion for this man and out of longing to see him freed from his misery."—Charles Swindoll.

THE DUMBFUNDED! Read Mark 7:36-37

1. Why would Jesus want people to keep quiet about His miracles? (In some ways, the expectations of miracles and healing could distract people from Jesus' primary message. So, His command was designed to keep their focus on the main thing.)
2. **Read James 4:6.** What attitude is God drawn toward?
3. In what way does spiritual pride keep us from seeing Jesus? (We get to thinking we don't need Him.)
4. Why do you think people talked about Jesus' healings even after He commanded them not to tell anyone?
5. How do we keep our ministry priorities straight? (Know what our primary mission is! Guard our time carefully to be sure we don't allow a secondary mission to consume our time and energy.)

CHALLENGE!

1. What obstacles must be overcome to include outsiders and those with physical disabilities in our class?
2. Where do you see God at work among people considered "non-religious"?
3. How could you be a part of what He is doing with them?