

32) As we finished last time some of the Pharisees from Jerusalem had traveled to the Bethsaida area south of Capernaum and were challenging Jesus – hoping to discredit him before the multitudes.

33) We read

Mark 7:1-7 (NIV)

34) There is something we need to note here. The Pharisees knew the status of the command Jesus' disciples were being accused of – it was a “tradition of the elders”.

35) The key to Jesus' rebuttal and for that matter what their real error was, is summed up in his comment in vs. 6 when he calls them HYPOCRITES and in vs. 8

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

36) Jesus has silenced the pharisees with a challenge of his own regarding Corban and the Pharisaical treating of the law.

37) He goes on to address to the crowd the original question they raised.

Easy one – What is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees?

Mark 7:14-23 (NIV)

- 1) To us, Jesus' opening statement to the crowd is perfectly clear – we have had the benefit of the rest of the gospel message.
- 2) Even without that, I think it is pretty clear.
- 3) Cleanness or uncleanness to the Jewish people to this point was a physical thing.
 - a) Don't touch a dead body.
 - b) Don't touch a dead animal.
 - c) The dietary laws were seen as purely a physical thing.
 - d) LABC comments:

Lev 11 records many of the Jewish dietary laws, including foods considered "clean" and "unclean." The Jews had a restricted diet for three main reasons: (1) To ensure the health of the nation. The forbidden foods were usually scavenger animals that fed on dead animals; thus, disease could be transmitted through them. (2) To visibly distinguish Israel from other nations. For example, the pig was a common sacrifice of pagan religions. (3) To avoid objectionable associations. The creatures that move about on the ground, for example, were reminiscent of serpents, a common symbol for sin.

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Gospel of Mark – NOTES

- 4) Though God had intended these rules as physical He had also intended them to teach the very lesson Jesus is about to pronounce.
- 5) We have to realize that verses 17-19 represent a huge change in thinking for the Jew of this time.
- 6) Over the years, they had lost the point that it was not necessarily the food that defiled – it was the act of disobedience that defiled.
- 7) This disobedience begins in the heart.
- 8) Here we see one of those examples of folks still not getting it!
- 9) Remember, it is Peter (along with the Holy Spirit of course) who is most likely the source for Mark's thoughts here.
- 10) We don't see Peter really getting this concept until chapter 10 of Acts!
- 11) Obviously, this applies to us very well – **the sin in our lives does not begin with the act it begins in the mind and the heart. SAY THAT AGAIN!!!**
- 12) I'm sure I have related the anecdote from a comedian many years ago to you before – Brother Dave Gardner.
- 13) Though his irreverent style got him in trouble throughout his career this is one thing he said that truly is a gem.
- 14) When asked how did he try to stay out of trouble he replied.
 “I don't have to watch what I say – I watch what I think!
- 15) As simple as that sounds, that is really basic idea of how to help eliminate sin in our lives.
- 16) Not easy – Never easy – but truly a key to the whole problem!
- 17) Paul gives us one of the absolute best ways to help us in accomplishing this in our lives every day – and – it falls right in line with Dave Gardner's answer!

Phil 4:8-9 (NIV)

- 18) Occupying our minds with good and righteous thought is always a deterrent for bad and evil thoughts!
- 19) Like the tossed out evil spirit that returns to find an empty house he goes in and occupies it with even more evil spirits.
- 20) If we evict an evil thought or idea from our mind we need to replace it with good thoughts else, the evil thought will return.
- 21) Again, **Not easy – Never easy!**

Mark 7:24-30 (NIV)

- 1) Jesus and his disciples were still in need of rest.
- 2) Leaving Galilee and heading into Gentile territory was a way to possibly get that rest and also, traveling that distance would give time for more training for the disciples.

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- 3) When He arrives at Tyre some 30 miles to the north of Galilee Mark tells us that he entered a house and wanted to keep His presence a secret – again probably to give time for rest and disciple training.
- 4) The house was probably the house of a Jew who lived there and perhaps Jesus or one of the disciples knew them.
- 5) As in most cases we have seen, despite His desire not to be announced, some folks obviously learn of His presence and thus we see what unfolds next.
- 6) A woman who has a daughter possessed of an evil spirit comes to Jesus.
- 7) Mark says of her “a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia”.
- 8) Matthew says she was a Canaanite woman.
- 9) These are not mutually exclusive – she can be both.
- 10) The Matthew account of this encounter is somewhat more drawn out than is Mark’s.
- 11) The basics of the situation are that she was desperate and was asking repeatedly for Jesus’ help.
- 12) Here is one of those cases that we really need to be careful about assumptions based on wording.
- 13) First, we really need to continue to consider Matthew’s account to get the full picture of what is happening.
- 14) In that account, the woman is asking repeatedly and Jesus is basically not acknowledging her until the disciples say that he should send her away.
- 15) At that point, Jesus says to them that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.
- 16) In context, it would sound like he was really agreeing with them that they should just send her away.
- 17) However, that truly becomes the start of a teaching moment for them.
- 18) The woman comes to Jesus one more time and kneels before Him saying “Lord help me!”
- 19) Then, here is the part we need to be careful about.
- 20) Jesus says;
27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."
- 21) The word used for dogs here is one of two words in the Greek that he could have used – one indicating pets the other referring to stray mongrel dogs that roamed the streets.
- 22) The latter was the term used most often by Jews in referring to Gentiles.
- 23) The other word is basically referring to a family pet – this is the term used here.
- 24) Even without that word difference, we would know that since He referred to them as “their dogs” also indicating they were pets not stray mongrel dogs.
- 25) It is also obvious that the woman understood

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28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

26) With this response, Jesus simply tells the woman her daughter has been relieved of the demon and she can go to her.

How do you think the woman felt at this point?

Trust? Faith? Relief?

Mark 7:31-37 (NIV)

- 1) Jesus continues His circuitous route by going north to Sidon then back south and to the east of the Sea of Galilee down to the region of the Decapolis (10 cities) which is another Gentile area.
- 2) In fact, archaeological discoveries indicate that these towns were centers of Greek paganism.
- 3) Many idols honoring pagan deities like Zeus, Aphrodite, Artemis, and Dionysus have been found throughout the region.
- 4) Though the nation of Israel was still Jesus' priority, His willingness to minister in this Gentile area, and in Tyre and Sidon before that, previewed the fact that the gospel was always intended to be preached throughout the whole world.

What are some reasons you can think of that caused Jesus to go to the gentiles now?

- Disciple training – different approach – gentile vs. Jew.
 - Gospel Message to the Jews of the area.
 - Make clear God's plan was for all.
- 5) As you may recall, the last time Jesus and the disciples were in this area, He removed the demons from the man (or men) in the tombs.
 - 6) As far as we know, he never left the spot where they landed.
 - 7) Reading from ...

Mark 5:18-20 (NIV)

- 8) Of course, this means that Jesus is now known in this region so, it is no surprise when people begin bringing the sick to Him for healing.
- 9) Though Matthew relays a bigger picture of the stay in the Decapolis, Mark relates a very specific instance here that has some interesting facts.
- 10) Here, we have a deaf and at least partially mute man brought to Jesus by "some people" and we know nothing about them either.
- 11) However, we will get a clue in Jesus' actions that at least the man, might have been Jewish.
- 12) The most important thing is what Jesus does.

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- 13) First, regardless of the crowds which there probably were some around Him at this point, he pulled the man aside.
- 14) Some commentators say that He did this to keep the healing a secret, however, I think it was more for the man's benefit – especially in light of what Jesus does next.
- 15) Jesus knows the man's problems and he wants to communicate with him in the most loving and effective way.
- 16) To do that, Jesus does several things that might at first seem strange but, if we look at it from the perspective of the man it would likely be considered a kind set of gestures that he could understand.
- 17) In an act of profound kindness Jesus uses four specific signs communicate with the man.
- 18) **First**, He put His fingers into both of his ears to indicate that He recognized the man's physical problem.
 - a) Jesus understood that he was not stunted mentally or possessed by demons, as some may have thought; he simply could not hear.
- 19) **Second**, after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva.
 - a) Jesus again employed a physical gesture to identify the man's speech disability.
 - b) Though Jesus used saliva in His healings on two other occasions (cf. Mark 8:23; John 9:6), it obviously had no power.
 - c) However, ancient people generally believed that saliva had healing properties.
 - d) The deaf man would have understood that Jesus' use of saliva meant He intended to heal him.
- 20) **Third**, looking up to heaven, Jesus demonstrated that the creative power He exercised came from God.
 - a) Even as a pagan, the man would have understood what Jesus meant by gazing toward heaven.
- 21) **Fourth**, by giving a deep sigh and a single Aramaic word "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!"), the Lord communicated a sincere sympathy for the long agonies of this man's disability.
- 22) This is the clue that the man may have been Jewish.
- 23) Regardless of the man's origin, using nonverbal communication, the Lord Jesus taught this man about both God's power and His compassion.
- 24) The Son of God has healed him, with power that came from above, because He cared deeply about him.
- 25) Jesus again tells the man who can now hear and speak and presumably those that brought him not to speak of this.
- 26) However, because of their amazement, they cannot keep quite.