

Mark 7:24-37

from the Common English Bible

²⁴Jesus left that place and went into the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know that he had entered a house, but he couldn't hide. ²⁵In fact, a woman whose young daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard about him right away. She came and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was Greek, Syrophenician by birth. She begged Jesus to throw the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He responded, "The children have to be fed first. It isn't right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹"Good answer!" he said. "Go on home. The demon has already left your daughter." ³⁰When she returned to her house, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone. ³¹After leaving the region of Tyre, Jesus went through Sidon toward the Galilee Sea through the region of the Ten Cities. ³²Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to place his hand on the man for healing. ³³Jesus took him away from the crowd by himself and put his fingers in the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴Looking into heaven, Jesus sighed deeply and said, "*Ephphatha*," which means, "Open up." ³⁵At once, his ears opened, his twisted tongue was released, and he began to speak clearly. ³⁶Jesus gave the people strict orders not to tell anyone. But the more he tried to silence them, the more eagerly they shared the news. ³⁷People were overcome with wonder, saying, "He does everything well! He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who can't speak."

This is the word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

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from the Common English Bible

¹The people who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion:
never shaken, lasting forever.

²Mountains surround Jerusalem. That's how the Lord surrounds his people from now until forever from now!

³The wicked rod won't remain in the land given to the righteous so that they don't use their hands to do anything wrong.

⁴Lord, do good to people who are good, to people whose hearts are right.

⁵But as for those people who turn to their own twisted ways...

...may the Lord march them off with other evildoers! Peace be on Israel!

Second Scripture Reading

James 2:1-17

from the Common English Bible

¹My brothers and sisters, when you show favoritism you deny the faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been resurrected in glory. ²Imagine two people coming into your meeting. One has a gold ring and fine clothes, while the other is poor, dressed in filthy rags. ³Then suppose that you were to take special notice of the one wearing fine clothes, saying, “Here’s an excellent place. Sit here.” But to the poor person you say, “Stand over there”; or, “Here, sit at my feet.” ⁴Wouldn’t you have shown favoritism among yourselves and become evil-minded judges? ⁵My dear brothers and sisters, listen! Hasn’t God chosen those who are poor by worldly standards to be rich in terms of faith? Hasn’t God chosen the poor as heirs of the kingdom he has promised to those who love him? ⁶But you have dishonored the poor. Don’t the wealthy make life difficult for you? Aren’t they the ones who drag you into court? ⁷Aren’t they the ones who insult the good name spoken over you at your baptism? ⁸You do well when you really fulfill the royal law found in scripture, *Love your neighbor as yourself*. ⁹But when you show favoritism, you are committing a sin, and by that same law you are exposed as a lawbreaker. ¹⁰Anyone who tries to keep all of the Law but fails at one point is guilty of failing to keep all of it. ¹¹The one who said, *Don’t commit adultery*, also said, *Don’t commit murder*. So if you don’t commit adultery but do commit murder, you are a lawbreaker. ¹²In every way, then, speak and act as people who will be judged by the law of freedom. ¹³There will be no mercy in judgment for anyone who hasn’t shown mercy. Mercy overrules judgment. ¹⁴My brothers and sisters, what good is it if people say they have faith but do nothing to show it? Claiming to have faith can’t save anyone, can

it? ¹⁵Imagine a brother or sister who is naked and never has enough food to eat. ¹⁶What if one of you said, “Go in peace! Stay warm! Have a nice meal!”? What good is it if you don’t actually give them what their body needs? ¹⁷In the same way, faith is dead when it doesn’t result in faithful activity.