

Mark 7:24-30 – Great Faith In Jesus Brings Great Mercy From Jesus

Leader's Guide

May 26, 2019

1. Read Mark 7:24-30 to familiarize yourself with the passage.

The Syrophoenician Woman's Faith

²⁴ And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. ²⁵ But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophoenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸ But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

2. Did Jesus intend to insult the woman in this parable by calling her a dog? Why or why not?

- The illustration Jesus gave was a parable. It was meant to be a contrast between the priority of feeding children before feeding the family pets. If you want to take it as an insult, it is noteworthy that the term used for dog in this passage is a little dog, which refers to a household pet.
- In another sense, this might be considered insulting because Jesus clearly tells her that the Gentiles are not the priority of his mission at this time. The beauty of this woman's response is she doesn't fight being considered the family pet in the parable but embraces her place. From that place she humbly asks for a few crumbs from the table. This shows her understanding of her place and her humility, both of which Jesus loves.

3. Why does this woman's answer evidence remarkable faith? What does she do that in this Gospel no one has done?

- Her answer shows remarkable faith because she places all of her hope for her daughter's healing in Jesus and she is not put off either by Jesus ignoring her or the parable which is not encouraging. Instead she enters into the parable and is confident that Jesus is so good that there certainly will be crumbs of healing available for her even before God's mission to the Gentiles has begun.

4. The apostles could only see this woman's background. They couldn't see the faith in this woman's heart, which is what really mattered. It is easy for us to fall into the same trap. What steps can we take to embrace Christians because of our common faith and experience of God's mercy, instead of cultural or economic similarities?

- Intentionally invite people of a different economic or age background to our home for dinner.
- Broaden your Life Group to include all ages.
- Go out of your way to be a friend to someone in the church that is economically and socially different from you.

5. Even though this woman realized she didn't deserve Jesus' mercy, she was confident Jesus' mercy was so great there would be plenty of crumbs for her to receive even before the mission to the Gentile world began. When we pray, do we ask for things we don't deserve because we are confident God has so much grace and mercy that he will give us what we don't deserve? How does this change the way we pray?

- As God for things that are immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine. We should pray bold prayers and big prayers, especially for God's kingdom and how God can use us, our family, and our church in that way. This is the way the apostle Paul prayed in Ephesians.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)