

Mark 7:24-8:10 - Shows No Partiality

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Introduction - Jesus demonstrates He came for all people to minister both personally and publicly out of compassion for us. Everyone can receive the gospel to be reconciled to God, know Jesus personally, and serve in His kingdom. There's no limit of His grace, and no bounds on who He will use to build His kingdom.

v24-30 - Salvation is open to all people - Jesus leaves the house he was at (likely in Capernaum¹) and goes to Tyre. Seemingly, He needs some time away from the huge crowds with just His disciples. The journey to Tyre would be over 50 miles in mountainous terrain.² That area has an ungodly reputation (Matt 11:21-22, Neh 13:16, Ps 83, Is 23), though eventually there will be Christians there (Act 21:3-6).

Jesus meets a gentile, Syrophenician ("born in Phoenicia, part of the province of Syria"¹) woman begging for Jesus to cast a demon out of her little daughter. Matt 15:21-28 says she's Canaanite, and the disciples ask Jesus to grant her request so she'll leave. He eventually engages her with an analogy that the children's bread shouldn't be tossed to the dogs. The normal word for dog, *kyon*, had negative connotations, but Jesus uses this diminutive word, *kynarion*, meaning "little dog," the pet dogs of the family.³ She finishes the truth of His statement: the dogs get what the children drop. Because of her answer, Jesus heals her daughter. Meaning: Salvation first to the Jews, then also to the Gentiles (Act 10:34-48). Jesus' intent is that all people will be blessed by His coming as fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:3).

v31-37 - Jesus ministers in a personal way - The non-Jewish region Jesus goes to is the Decapolis, where the man who had Legion was sent to share his testimony (Mark 5:20). Jesus privately heals a mute and deaf man. They asked Jesus to lay His hand on the man, but Jesus does something very visual. Jesus' actions explain to the man what Jesus would do and give him room to exercise his faith.¹ He said to *him*, *ephphatha*, be opened. "The idea is... the whole person being opened or released.... One whom Satan has kept shut up and bound is being released" (*Mark*, CGTC, P. 252).³ As Is 35:3-6 prophesied, when God comes, He will save and He will start to bring the Kingdom of God to earth.

The people respond in amazement. In popular belief at the time, one needed to learn the name of the demon in order to cast it out. Since this man couldn't talk, there was no hope of being able to cast out the demon/heal his disease. Wiersbe: "the more He told the people to keep quiet, the more they talked! On the other hand, He tells us to tell everyone the Good News, and we keep quiet!"⁴

8:1-10 - Jesus ministers in a corporate way - The crowd has spent three days with Jesus and He has compassion for the crowds. It seems like Jesus sets the disciples up to respond faithfully, but they don't. He feeds the crowd of four thousand, similarly to the feeding of the five thousand in Mar 6:30-44. These are two different events (Mar 8:19-20). Key differences: a new area (7:31 - Decapolis) vs. Bethsaida Julias (8:32, Lu 9:10), likely more Gentiles than Jews, and the numbers of people, provisions, and results. A different word for baskets (*spyridas*) is used than His previous miracle, this type being potentially larger (same word used for basket to let Paul down in Acts 9:25).¹

So, what? Now, what? God's message of salvation is open to all. He is no respecter of persons (Rom 2:11), but desires that all should come to a saving faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. As Christians, we endeavor to do likewise. We should seek those who may be outcasts and be ready to minister both personally and corporately to those around us.

- Who are the "Women of Syrophenicia" of our day? Are we impartial when people come into our midst?
- Have we gone to the house of Israel with the gospel? Who else needs to hear the gospel message?
- How can we minister both personally to people and corporately to the church body?
- Do we get "bored" of the miraculous, lose our sense of wonder? What can we do to maintain our sense of awe of God? How can we change up our worship of Him in our day to day lives?

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg. 135-137.

² *The Great Physician: The Method of Jesus with Individuals*. G. Campbell Morgan. Pg. 177.

³ *Word Meanings in the New Testament*. Earle. Pg. 14, 40-41

⁴ *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*. Warren W. Wiersbe. Pg. 121.