

HALLELUJAH!

WHAT A SAVIOR

JESUS, OUR ADVOCATE

Mark 7:24–37

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Matthew 15:21–28 | Mark 7:1–23 | Isaiah 35:5–6

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 05.11.25

SUMMARY

When reading through narratives in the gospels, it's important to remember the purpose behind the writing. In Mark's gospel, he is zealous to convince Gentile readers that Jesus *is* the Son of God. In Mark chapter 7, we read of encounters that Jesus has with two Gentiles—both in great need. However, these encounters are framed against Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and scribes, as detailed earlier in Mark 7. These religious leaders accuse the disciples of being "unclean" because they are eating with their hands (v. 2). However, Jesus proceeds to preach that it is what is in the heart that makes someone unclean (v. 23). After this message, Mark then details for the reader the encounters Jesus has with two different Gentiles, both of whom would have been considered unclean merely for being Gentiles. In his first encounter, Jesus travels to an unclean area and has an encounter with a Syrophenician woman who begs Jesus—for quite some time—to cast the demon out of her daughter. If Jesus' delay was surprising, his verbal response might be even more so as he says, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (v. 27). Jesus seems to acknowledge the "uncleanness" of this woman, a Gentile, as he likens her to a dog—a diminutive description for Gentiles during this time. While it may seem shocking, Jesus (through Mark) is comparing the attitude of this woman—who has nothing—and the Pharisees and scribes—who believe they have everything in terms of righteousness. Jesus' simple message is, "To enter the kingdom of heaven, we need nothing, only Jesus." In this respect, all of Jesus' followers are "dogs" who should be satisfied with crumbs yet, by his grace, receive a Kingdom. The account that follows this one is similar in many respects. A deaf man—who was also a Gentile—would have been considered unclean by the religious rulers. Yet Jesus has mercy on him; only Jesus can make what is unclean clean again. But more importantly, Jesus' actions echo the mercy foretold by the prophets—that a Messiah would come and open the eyes of the blind and make the tongue of the mute sing for joy (Isaiah 35:5–6). Jesus is the Messiah, not only for the Jews but for the world.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Mark 7:24–37.

Does it bother you that Jesus uses the word "dog" in reference to the Syrophenician woman? What is the comparison Jesus is making? How are we all like this woman? How are we all like the Pharisees and scribes?

If Jesus came to fulfill all the requirements of the law, why does it seem that Jesus isn't deterred by "uncleanness," which is an element of the law?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.