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*TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD*

# Mark - Lesson 7C

## Chapter 7:24-30

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- Within our first two teachings of Mark Chapter 7, more specifically verses 1-23, we've covered a few things:
  - We discussed the burdens in which tradition has plagued the lives of the Jewish people, in that day – and even today I might add.
    - Tradition, we discovered, can distort the truth for the benefit of those who began the tradition.
    - In the case of the Pharisaical leaders of that day, tradition and practice was conformed to their interpretation of truth (Mishnah) and not God's word as truth (Mosaic Law).
    - More specifically, in context, this particular "tradition of the elders" dealt with that of ritual handwashing.
  - It became apparent through Jesus' refutation of this custom, using scripture, that ritual handwashing was not a matter of Mosaic Law.
    - It became clear that the "traditions of men" were not a means of one being righteous before God, but rather a front for self-righteousness before others.
  - Although traditions may begin with pure intent, if not measured against the heart of the law, it can drive others toward external appeasement rather than recognizing the need for true internal spiritual transformation.
    - Jesus further explained in verses 14-23 that it is the human heart that is desperately wicked and needs to be made anew.
  - Through the parabolic use of dietary restrictions, Jesus makes the point that food is not the source of people's unclean state before God.
    - That point became clear through the later scribal addition stating, "all foods are clean".
  - The essence of this statement was not that the dietary laws were abolished per se, but that they did not contribute to one being made clean before God.
    - It spoke to the reality that it is not what we put inside our bodies that defiles us but what naturally comes out that defiles us.
  - Therefore, the statement "all foods are clean" was pointing to something much bigger regarding the Kingdom program.
    - It would be that all foods being "deemed clean" was in direct connection to the fact that those in whom God was drawing to Himself, even outside of the Jewish race, would eventually be brought into faith in Christ.
  - Tonight, we will see Mark's use of this small statement "all foods are clean" bring clarity and understanding to the Kingdom Program.
    - This Kingdom program that was unfolding would be unprecedented and would foreshadow a glorious day that was in the near, not too far future.
    - If I were to put a tag on tonight's text it would be: "The Children, the Crumbs, and the Dogs"
    - With that being said, I invite you to open your bibles and meet me in Mark 7:24-30.

**Mark 7:24 Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And**

when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.

**Mark 7:25** But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.

**Mark 7:26** Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

**Mark 7:27** And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

**Mark 7:28** But she answered and \*said to Him, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.”

**Mark 7:29** And He said to her, “Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”

**Mark 7:30** And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.

- Let’s Pray.
- Desperation leads to desperate measures.
  - If you are desperate enough, no matter the obstacles before you, you will find a way to get what you’re looking for.
    - This position of desperation is where we find one of our characters in our narrative tonight.
  - Although she will be met with many obstacles before her, in the end she manages to get and ascertain the true prize in it all.
    - Let’s begin here at verse 24.

**Mark 7:24** Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.

- Mark begins this pick up in a transitory way.
  - The scene shifts from a private home conversation with His disciples in the lower Galilee to a region northwest of there.
    - The text tells us that Jesus and the disciples leave the home, potentially in Capernaum, and travel to “the region of Tyre”.
  - If you recall in previous teachings, we discovered that the region of Tyre and Sidon were heavily Gentile regions.
    - The region of Tyre was roughly 40 miles northwest of Capernaum.
    - These regions today are a part of modern-day Lebanon.
  - One question that comes to mind at this point in the text is: What was the cause of Jesus leaving the area, but more specifically to a Gentile region?
  - Well from the immediate context, it’s no surprise that right after Jesus’ mention of “foods not being the source of what makes one unclean”, that Jesus wants to now bring about some practical reality into the mix.

- The example that He used regarding the abandoning, if you will, of the dietary restriction laws is being used for a specific purpose.
  - Remember, for a Jew, these dietary laws speak to their identity on a national level and therefore becomes a “tradition” in and of itself.
- This example was hitting at the core of several things:
  - 1. What the Kingdom Program unfolding meant for those who would inherit the Kingdom of God, dispensationally speaking?
  - 2. What it would mean for these Jewish men (future leaders) following Christ?
  - 3. Who the Kingdom of God would be composed of regarding faith in Christ.
  - It would be that the Kingdom and salvation and being “made clean” before God would not be accomplished through means of Jewish traditionalism or custom, but rather through the finished work of the Messiah, that all people would be blessed.
- Now, to provide some cultural context regarding the region they are traveling to, it is well documented that both the Jews and the Gentiles were staunch enemies of one another.
  - These two groups hated one another and to resolve their issues, at all cost, they lived separately as best as possible.
- The Jewish people saw Gentiles as being “ceremonially unclean”.
  - Perhaps it is for this reason the Pharisees addressed Jesus and His disciples regarding the handwashing routine.
  - Because the lack of handwashing was in lock sync and step with what “unclean” and otherwise “defiled people groups and nations” did – which was not participating in their customs and laws.
- Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus records this statement, speaking to the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles:

**“Now, the very same thing will I endeavor to do; for I will bring the Egyptians and the Phoenicians as my principal witnesses, because nobody can complain of their testimony as false on account that they are known to have born the greatest ill will towards us,—I mean this as to the Egyptians, in general all of them, while of the Phoenicians it is known the Tyrians have been most of all in the same ill disposition towards us:”**

- So it is the region of Tyre where Jesus is going to lead His disciples into healthy exposure for His disciples to confront their unhealthy prejudices towards the Gentile people.
  - Because it will ultimately be these men with the exception of one, who will lead the efforts of the New Testament Church in the right direction.
  - It would be through these apostolic leaders that there would be no room for cultural or racial divides because we are being made one in Christ.
  - Galatians 3:28, Paul speaks to this newness and oneness in Christ this way:

**Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

- The other reason for cause of Jesus departing the area near Capernaum, and probably most obvious, is due to the growing persecution from the religious leaders.
  - If you remember, Jesus' intent originally for the disciples to crossover the Sea of Galilee to the other side was for the purpose of resting.
  - However, the opportunity to do so has not been provided as they were bombarded with the needs of the people in Genasseret and now the criticism of the religious leaders.
  - So in a way, Jesus retreating to a place He knew the religious leaders would not go was a perfect opportunity to get away, but also a teaching opportunity for the disciples.
    - At this point, we should be seeing the growing anticipation of the Kingdom Program becoming more realized.
  - However, before we move too quickly, we see in the text in verse 24b that despite the efforts of leaving and being unnoticed, the text mentions this:
    - “He could not escape notice.”
    - Check out verses 25-26 and we will see why.

**Mark 7:25** But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.

**Mark 7:26** Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

- It becomes clear from Mark's account that Jesus and His disciples' attempt at going “unnoticed” for some rest was indeed a “no-go”.
  - Mark mentions that word has apparently traveled quickly regarding Jesus' arrival to the region of Tyre because not too long upon their arrival, He is met by “a woman”.
    - Although the text does not provide a name for this woman, it does provide her need.
    - According to verse 25, this woman had great need as her daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit.
  - Up to this point, it could be said that this woman, through the grapevine, has heard about what Jesus had done before for others.
    - Perhaps she has heard how Jesus responded to the desperate need of Jairus' daughter and how Jairus kneeled before the Lord for help.
  - After mentioning the woman's need and her physical expression of honor and desperation before Jesus, Mark informs us of the woman's background.
    - Mark tells us that she was a “Gentile of the Syrophenician race”.
    - Syrophenician is a word that combines the two terms: Syrian and Phoenician.

- And Phoenicia was a part of the larger Roman province of Syria.
- Interestingly enough, Matthew’s account informs us that this woman is a “Canaanite”.
  - Now this detail may not mean much to the average hearer, but it plays a crucial role in understanding the unfolding of the Kingdom program.
- The fact that Matthew’s account mentions the word Canaanite should begin to bring up some historical/cultural implications between the Jews and Gentiles.
  - Within the Hebrew scriptures, it was God’s intent that the Canaanites be driven out of the land which belonged to the Jewish people. (Book of Joshua)
  - However, because of Israel’s failure to drive them out of the land, it causes further corruption (morally) for the Jewish people.
- So, the implications of Mark mentioning that this woman was a Gentile (Greek more specifically) allows a Roman reader to grasp the cultural controversy at that time.
  - What I want to draw our attention to is verse 26, because it would seem as if her presence and persistence was of double annoyance to the disciples.
  - Notice the text states: “And she repeatedly asked Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.”
  - The question that we must address here is: “What was the cause of the woman’s consistent plea to Jesus regarding her daughter’s condition?”
  - There has to be a reason for her persistent pursuit of Christ while He and the disciples are in the region.
- Well in order for us to grasp the reason as to the cause of her persistence we need to go to Matthew’s parallel account. (Matthew 15:22-23)
  - Check out what Matthew states:

**Matthew 15:22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.”**

**Matthew 15:23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, “Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.”**

- Well, it becomes quite clear why the woman was so persistent in her plea: Jesus was ignoring her!
  - Within Matthew’s account we can further see the desperation of the woman and the disturbance of the disciples.
  - The Greek language in Matthew 15:22 suggest that where the boundary of the Jewish territory and the Gentile territory met, she crossed it. (Exit)
  - Her shouting and pleading before the Lord apparently was bothersome at best in the eyes of the disciples.
  - And to that end, they implore Jesus to “Send her away!”
  - What we can’t miss here at this point in the story is the woman’s sense of need but also her recognition of Jesus’ person and power.

- She approaches Jesus in a way that shows deep respect (falling to her knees in reverence), but beyond that, she uses a particular Messianic title:
- She calls Jesus “Son of David”
- Clearly, this Gentile woman knows something about the Jewish Messiah that Jesus’ own people didn’t fully see or recognize yet.
- As a matter of fact, this woman is so sure of who Jesus is that the Greek language suggest that she was not going to leave until her daughter was healed.
  - Friends, if that isn’t a demonstration of faith, I don’t know what is!
- For a moment, recognize the risk this woman took for the sake of her daughter being healed: She defied the cultural, ethnic, and religious expectations of that day.
  - This shows us the dire need she was in because nothing else and no one else could meet her needs like Jesus could.
  - It is often when we get to the lowest point, outside of our own abilities and skillsets, that we seek the only true help that was there all along.
- Desperation is the environment in which God demonstrates His Divine illumination so that we may see Him for who He really is.
  - Let’s keep moving. Check out verses 27 and 28.

**Mark 7:27 And He was saying to her, “Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”**

**Mark 7:28 But she answered and \*said to Him, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs.”**

- It is here where Mark brings us to one of the most controversial and debated pieces of scripture within culture.
  - This particular section of scripture has been misused, misapplied, and misinterpreted by believers and non-believers, alike.
    - So, before we approach this section, understand that we will approach it in its proper literal exegetical hermeneutic.
  - Jesus, after having attempted to ignore and avoid the woman’s request and pleading over a period of time, finally responds.
    - Jesus states the following: “Let the children be satisfied first for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”
    - There are a few things that we need to observe from this parabolic conversation. Those things are the following words:
      - 1. Children
      - 2. Bread
      - 3. Dogs
    - The question from this becomes: “How are all of these things related and connected?”
  - Another question that you could be raising in your mind right now is: “Who is

Jesus speaking about regarding letting the children eat first?”

- Well, reading through Matthew’s account again will provide us context to this statement.
- Turn with me to Matthew 15:24. This is what it reads:

**Matthew 15:24** But He answered and said, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

- This Matthean statement speaks to the purpose of Messiah reaching and dealing with the Jewish people first.
  - We see Paul explain this reasoning in Romans 1:16:

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

- So we see that salvation is to everyone who believes, meaning that salvation goes beyond just the Jew.
  - However, the way in which it goes to the Gentile is that it first is made known and brought to the Jew.
  - Therefore, the reference to the “Children” is speaking to the Jewish people, more specifically, “the remnant of Israel” , those who have placed faith in Christ.
    - In other words, the priority of the Gospel message to be initially given to the Jew is why Christ came, and it would be through the Jewish people that the nations would know who Christ is!
    - The prophet Isaiah mentioned this means of dispensation in Isaiah 49:6 in this way:

**Isaiah 49:6** “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant  
To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;  
I will also make You a light of the nations  
So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

- So if the Children are the remnant of the house of Israel, and the message of salvation is the bread and is consistent with that of the sustaining life and nourishment found in Christ, then by process of elimination that means the reference of the dogs, refers to the Gentiles.
  - Why would Jesus use this term to describe the Gentile people?
  - Wouldn’t this term have been offensive to the Gentile people during that time?
  - Again, we must remember that this vernacular was a means of custom during that day. This does not make Jesus a racist or any other nonsensical title one chooses to use.
  - We also must read the text in context and not through our particular cultural lens.
  - The term “dogs”, here in Greek, is *kynarion*, which is different from *kuon* in



Hebrew and conveys a different tone.

- Where *Kuon* in Hebrew means “a scavenging and ravenous, scraggly dog from the streets”, *Kynarion* means “puppy” or a “tamed house dog”.
  - So the difference of terms changes the tone in which one would interpret the text.
- So with the word *Kynarion* in mind referencing the Gentile people, what Jesus is saying is: “You don’t feed the “puppies” while the children are eating at the table.”
  - Now I want to emphasize the phrase “while at the table” because it is not to say that the dogs will not get fed.
  - It simply means that once the children (the remnant of Israel) has been satisfied, meaning responded in faith to Christ and received God’s intended promise, then the Gentiles will have their time to receive their portion.
- This begs the question: “When will that time in its fullness arrive?”
  - In other words: When would that time be for the Gentile people to respond to or receive Christ as Messiah in faith for salvation?
  - Well friends, we are in that dispensation today and that time is known as The Church Age which exists within the Age of the Gentiles.
- We can’t miss here what Jesus is doing. Every opportunity He has with His disciples is a learning opportunity for them.
  - Although the disciples do not fully understand it at this time, they are witnessing a crucial aspect of the unfolding Kingdom Program.
- Remember, the way in which Jesus is communicating to “outsiders”, in which this Gentile woman is one, is always in parable.
  - The question that arises in our text at this point is: Does this woman understand and see what Jesus is saying in light of the offensive language used?
  - We find our answer in verse 28.
- Verse 28 seems to show us that this woman not only understood what Jesus was saying, but it demonstrated her faith in who He is and what He came to do.
  - One thing that is to be considered is the fact that despite the pushback, she is committed to getting a response no matter how long it takes.
  - There is something that this woman is convinced of, and will not budge on it.
- As R.T France in his commentary on the Gospel of Mark states:

**“the mission of the Messiah of Israel, while it must of course begin with Israel, cannot be confined there.”**

- The Gentiles could still benefit from what Messiah brought at that time (i.e healing, etc.), but the greater grace was salvation that would be fully realized in the age of the Gentiles.
  - It is possible that this Gentile woman heard Genesis 12:3 taught in and around the synagogue.

- Genesis 12:3 promised this:

**Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you I will curse.  
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

- Whatever the case may have been, this woman was confident in knowing that it would be through the Jewish people that she would be blessed.
  - And that it was through the Person of Jesus Christ, the promised One, the Son of David, that she would be blessed.
  - Let’s keep moving to our last 2 verses of the night. Verses 29 and 30.

**Mark 7:29 And He said to her, “Because of this answer, go; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”**

**Mark 7:30 And after going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.**

- Mark’s account shows us that the woman was able to understand what Jesus was telling her parabolically.
  - The woman’s response of “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children’s crumbs” greatly displayed her understanding of Christ and His Person.
    - Matthew’s gospel gives way for us to understand that her faith is to be noted and not simply the healing of her daughter itself.
    - This is what Matthew’s account says in Matthew 15:28:

**Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus said to her, “O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.**

- The word “great” here in Greek is *megas* which means “remarkable or out of the ordinary in degree, magnitude or effect”. What made her faith so remarkable?
  - Her faith was not in a heritage or tradition.
  - Her faith was not in a thing.
  - Her faith was not in a national identification.
  - Her faith alone was in Christ alone.
  - Friends, this is what Jesus was ultimately trying to show His disciples and the lost sheep of Israel.
    - This message of the Gospel goes beyond cultural connectivity and relation.
    - This message of the Gospel goes beyond national identity, heritage, or dietary laws.
    - Your means of salvation is not in how patriotic you are or how you vote or what you do or your social pedigree.

- Salvation is found in a single person; His work, His death, His life, and on the basis of His work alone.
  - This is what Peter would ultimately understand in the vision the Lord would give him in the book of Acts regarding the vision of food coming from the sky and descending on a mat.
  - This gift of salvation will come through the Jewish people to make known to the world how the Nations will be blessed and how the Nations can be saved.
- There are so many people in the world seeking meaning, hope, and joy through means of cultural identity, spiritual enlightenment through burning of incense, even attempting to be their own masters of their fate.
  - But all of these are measly attempts to somehow connect with God, but yet failing to realize that He has come to meet us where we are!
  - If you want to talk about true contextualization of the Gospel, God fulfilled that through His Person by living amongst us, taking on our sin, and becoming our High priest.
  - Hebrews 4:14-16 tells us this:

**Hebrews 4:14** Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

**Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

**Hebrews 4:16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- What I find so encouraging in this text is that humility drove her to see, rightly, her present condition and her only help!
  - She did not negate or dismiss the reality of her physical/ethnic condition – she realized she was deemed unclean.
  - It is through her humility and recognition of the person of Christ that the woman's needs were answered.
  - The text gives us a beautiful picture of how one comes to know Christ and that is, it requires one to come to the end of themselves:
    - Their traditions
    - Their striving
    - Their perceptions
    - Their worries
    - Their cares
    - Their all
    - And simply come to the end of themselves.
  - For it is when we come to the end of ourselves that we come to see Christ most clearly.

- Not only does the woman come to Christ believing who she knows Him to be, but she leaves knowing that what He said was what she would see.
- The text tells us in verse 30 that when the woman had gotten home that she found her child in the bed and the demon gone.
  - What a relief that must have been?
- One could imagine that the sight of the woman's daughter upon arrival would have once again drawn her to her knees in worship of Christ.
  - I could only imagine, being a fly on the wall in that room, the woman is possibly weeping, knowing that she had come face to face with Messiah and a promise from the God of Israel.
- It would be that moment that every idol god she worshipped before would have been discarded, changing her mind about all that was and used to be.
  - What we take away in seeing from this woman's faith and understanding of Jesus' teaching here is that this woman understood Messiah's coming better than that of the Children of Israel themselves.
- Friends, it was a Gentile woman who was considered the first to truly understand the mystery of the Kingdom of God.
  - Herein lies the great mercy of God: that His great mercy and message of Salvation is not just for the Jew, but for the entire world to know.
  - And it is through Christ alone, that we men can be saved!
  - Jesus, our bread of life; Jesus, our sustainer; Jesus our provider; Jesus our present help in trouble; Jesus our teacher; Jesus our great servant-King. Do you know Him?
  - Let's Pray.