

The Gospel of Mark: “The Messiah at the Margins”
Mark 7:24-8:10

Mercy for All (7:24-30)

- This desperate woman has multiple strikes against her—she is a woman, has a daughter with an unclean spirit, is a Gentile, and is from an historically hostile and pagan region.
- The exchange between Jesus and this woman is both bracing and beautiful.
 - Dogs were not viewed positively by most 1st century Jews.
 - Jesus is not embracing a derogatory term, but He is embracing a defined mission.

- God chose Israel and made them His own.

The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession. (Deuteronomy 7:6)

- Jesus didn’t come to contradict Scripture or deny the priority of grace to Israel.

For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs. (Romans 15:8)

- But notice that the mission is not miserly or limited.

He said to her, “Let the children be fed first...”

- “First” implies “second” or “next”.
- That possibility of grace is the hope upon which this woman rightly seizes.
- She is commended for her reverent yet unrelenting faith.

- Ironically and beautifully, she understands the Jewish Scriptures better than the Jews of Jesus’ day.

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 shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

- Application:

- Emulate the great humility of this desperate woman.

God sends no one away empty except those who are full of themselves. (D.L. Moody)

- Embrace the grand mission of this merciful Jesus.

I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 8:11)

Ability for All (7:31-37)

- Again, this story illustrates the spill-over mercy available in Christ to all the peoples.
- Jesus' deep compassion is on display—He heals in private and with deep sympathy.
- Application:

- Trust that Jesus possesses all authority. (“He has done all things well”)

I am leaving the ship of the church in a storm, but while the great Pilot is in it the loss of a poore under-rower will be inconsiderable. (John Owen)

- See that Jesus provides new life.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. (Isaiah 35:1-6)

Compassion for All (8:1-10)

- Jesus and the disciples are apparently still in the Decapolis—largely Gentile territory.
 - Jesus will not abide hungry people fainting on the way.
 - He simply cares for those in need.
- What is equally remarkable is the denseness of the disciples.
 - Now in a lesser situation than before with the 5,000, the disciples still doubt.
 - How often do we neglect past mercies in present crisis?
- But the main point is the abundantly merciful Jesus.

They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. (8:8)

- Do you believe that Jesus is enough for you?
- Do you think that Jesus is withholding good?
- Do you think that Jesus is without good?

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (John 1:16)