

A Light to the Gentiles

Mark 7:14-37

October 13, 2024, Jory Nunn

Good morning again, everybody. It's wonderful to be in the house of the Lord, worshiping together with you. That's what we've been doing this morning, right? We worship the Lord in song. We worship the Lord in prayer. We worship the Lord in giving. We worship the Lord in the public reading of His scripture, and now we're going to worship Him in the proclamation of His scripture.

I invite you to open your Bibles to the Gospel of Mark. The Gospel of Mark is where we are. It's where we have been. It's where you were before I even came. And we're going to continue in it all the way to the end. We may have a little interlude during Christmas time. We won't ignore Christmas. We'll go ahead and do some special stuff for Christmas, but for now, we are in Mark chapter seven, and today's text is verses 24 to 37. Mark 7:24-37 I titled the message this morning, if you look on the back of your bulletin, "A light to the Gentiles." And if you have been paying attention in worship this morning, you will have noticed that there is a lot that is being said about the Gentiles. And this title, the reason why it's a light to the Gentiles is that's exactly what Mark is doing for us here. He steps out of Jesus's normal ministry to the nation of Israel, and He steps into the Gentile world. And so that's where we're going to go with it this morning.

Where we were last week in the section prior, if you remember, we were talking about what it means to be defiled, what it means to be internally within the heart of who you are, defiled for worship. Jesus was explaining, in response to the Pharisees and religious leaders and their external aspects of worship. There are external rituals. He was contrasting that and saying, there is nothing that you put in your body, there is nothing outside of your body that can make you unfit for worship. It is only the things that are at the core of who you are internally that make you unfit for worship, that defile you, that disallow you from being in fellowship with God. The things that God requires of us is a pure heart. No one, of course, can be completely pure. As in, if you still have breath in you, there's still a remnant of your old self, right? We recognize that. But unless you come to God when your last breath is taken in this life with a pure heart that is with perfect righteousness, you will not enter in. You'll be cast away. You'll be left out. And so that's what He's talking about in that section, that a man or a woman or a child who is defiled, they're defiled on the inside, the secret places, if you will, those places that only the Scriptures speak to and only the Lord actually sees. That's what keeps us separated from Him.

And so He continues through that same vein, that same teaching, that same understanding, as He moves into the Gentile world here that the apostles are going to be completely awestruck about what's taking place. Because they also, not only believed that things externally come in defiled them, what they eat could defile them, but they also believed that other peoples other than the Jews, were already defiled. They were already outside of the covenant of God. They were already, as it were, the dogs of the human race. And so that's what He's going to do. He's going to continue in that same vein here in this section

and teach us that there is light to the Gentiles as well, that this salvation that David read this morning, that He was going to make Jesus a light to the Gentiles, that His salvation would go to the ends of the earth.

We're going to see that revealed this morning. And so in our in our proposition, if you read on the back there, in our passage, the Lord, through two miracles, reveals that salvation is for the Gentiles as well as Israel. Really simple proposition, that's where we're going to go. We have two points: genuine faith revealed, verse 24 to 28. And these kind of overlap because there's two parallels here, two different miracles. There's going to be one miracle that's performed with this woman's daughter and another miracle that's performed in a different region, but the same teaching between the two of them. So there's going to be some overlap. So we're going to see genuine faith revealed and then we're going to see genuine faith rewarded.

Let's pray together, Father, we are grateful once again, that we can come to Your word. Those of us that are in Christ, who have the Spirit of truth within us, we can come to Your word in such a way that we can actually know what it says and what it means, and beyond that, through You instructing us, we will know how to apply it appropriately to our lives. Lord, may we see Your word and truth as the Spirit of Truth instructs us. This morning, Lord, we need You. We want to hear from You. I pray that You help me as well this morning, and that the Lord Jesus Christ would be glorified through our study, amen.

So first, genuine faith revealed, and as we've been doing, we want to work through this, as Mark is teaching us, we want to work through this just one verse at a time. We're not going to read the whole section, but as his gospel is, remember his favorite word is what? immediately. So that's the way he likes to work just one thing right after another. And so we're going to go just one verse at a time on this and work through it as Mark and the Holy Spirit is revealing to us what he's wanting to teach us regarding what genuine faith looks like.

So verse 24, "Jesus got up and went away from there." That is where He was at, engaging with the religious leaders that came and were questioning Him. He got up from that region in Galilee, and He went somewhere. "He 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."

Now, the region of Tyre, this is a completely Gentile area. You would be hard pressed to find a Jew in this area. This is a region of Tyre and Sidon. It's on the Mediterranean coast. If you're to look at a map, and you'll see the Mediterranean Sea here, and you have Israel coming out to the edge in the border. Go just north of Israel, and you'll run into Tyre, and then Sidon, that's where this is at. Probably multiple reasons that Jesus wanted to go to this region.

We're going to talk about all of them, but there's really no indication at this point that the disciples have received any kind of rest after they got back from being sent out by Him. When they came back and

reported to Him all the things that had taken place, immediately, there's this massive crowd that shows up, so they don't get to escape and get away. He puts them in a boat and sends them out. They don't get any rest there. He comes to them in the middle of the night, walking on water. They come to the shore, and they're lambasted again by other people. So there was really no indication that they get any kind of rest. And so it may be that He is taking them to a place, and it seems like in the text, that He's trying to get them out where nobody knows them, to get out in a way so that they can have a little R and R. That may be one of the reasons why He went there. Seem like verse 24 be there, if you look at that, "that He wanted no one to know of it." That is the house that He entered. So He was trying to go in there secretly, possibly to give them some rest.

And remember what we talked about last time that there's a major transition that took place after the feeding of the 5,000, after the engagement with the religious leaders and the chief priest that He was going to shift His ministry outside of the large public venues to more private with His disciples. And so that could be a reason as well. It may seem strange to us that He wants privacy, but remember, once again, He is shifting His focus. And really for Him to be able to focus in on the disciples and their apostolic ministry, to prepare them for the crucifixion, He needed private time with them. So in all likelihood, that's one of the main reasons why He was trying to get away.

But the other, certainly is to reveal God's plan for salvation to the Gentiles. We got to remember, in Mark's gospel, He wrote this primarily to a Gentile audience. We know that for many different reasons, whenever there's an Aramaic direct quote, Mark actually translates it into Greek. Now Aramaic was a common language; it would have been the language that Jesus and the disciples spoke. And so when Mark is writing this to a Gentile audience, and there's an Aramaic word there, Mark translates it into Greek, so that the common language of the Gentiles, which was Greek, they would understand what was being said. We'll actually see one of those translations in our text today. And so certainly, God's revealed plan for the Gentiles is also part of Jesus's plan to bring His disciples to this region. Many strictly Jewish components of Mark that other gospels record, Mark just completely leaves out because it wouldn't make any sense to a Gentile. And so one of the primary reasons not only to try to get away, to get with the disciples in a more private setting, but also to show them that this message is for the Gentiles.

As David Read this morning, Isaiah, 49:6, he says, "It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob," that's Israel, "and to restore the preserved ones of Israel. I will also make you a light to the nations, so that My salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." Seven hundred years earlier, God, through the prophet Isaiah, said, it is going to be too small a thing that I raise you up just to save Israel. We're not going to stop there. No, you will also be, as He is speaking to the Son, a light to the Gentiles, so that salvation will reach to the ends of the earth. And us of course, we understand that in retrospect, that's exactly what took place, right? Through the apostles, and mainly through the Apostle Paul.

So not able to get privacy, verse 24b there, He could not escape notice. His popularity had grown to such a point that He couldn't escape notice there. Remember last week I said that He entered *the* house, which was a house that was probably known. Here the text actually says that He entered *a* house. That was part of it, let's go over there; maybe we can find some privacy in that house. But He couldn't escape notice. Word certainly would have spread to this region. Write this text down in your notes, earlier on in Mark, we get an indication of how this message, how the message of Christ, the things that He was doing, the miracles, how it could have made it to Tyre and Sidon. Mark 3:7-8 says this, "Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and *also* from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon." So there were people present at His great revelation of who He was, not necessarily of who He was, but the teaching, the Sermon on the Mount, there was tons of people from all the different regions, including Tyre and Sidon. And so there was individuals there from that region that would have heard about Him. And so He couldn't escape notice. People already knew about Him. He couldn't hide in secret with His disciples. They were noticed.

Verse 25 says, read with me, "But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet." Here we are introduced to a woman. This is a woman who's got an issue. She has a problem, and it's not necessarily even her issue. It's her child's, right? This woman comes to Jesus without the child and prostrates herself before Him. This is the first indication that we have of her faith and trust in the person who is before her, in the Lord Jesus Christ. She falls, the language here is she literally falls on her face and prostrates herself in a posture of worship. That's what the language indicates, a posture of worship, of supplication, of pleading with Him for something. It's a picture of worship. It is what our heart attitude is to be when we come before this place, when we come before the Lord, and we worship Him. Our posture is as such that we recognize He is the one worthy to bow down before, that's what she's doing. She's fallen at His feet.

We have no indication here of where this unclean spirit came from. Unclean spirits, in case some of you don't know, is just a demon. This is one of the fallen angels who left with Satan out of heaven when Satan fell; it's just a fallen angel, a demon, commonly known, an unclean spirit. No idea where it came from or how it entered this young lady. The text doesn't say but we need to remember where these people lived. They lived in Tyre and Sidon, which was steep, knee deep, as we're going to see, their history is only pagan. This is the Canaanites, literally the people that led Israel astray. That's who this woman is. That's the area that she is living in. That's the type of paganistic religion that they have.

And so remember, last time we were together, all religions have their source in who? Satan, except the one, right? The only one that does not have its source, its founding member, is Christianity, would be Satan. The only one who starts any false religion. I'm going to repeat that over and over again. When you have so many people out here, and even in Chilliwack and all these different religions that are out here, you need to have one thing in your mind, Satan is the founder of that religion. He is the source of its beginning. He is the head priest, if you will. Save one religion in the world, all have been founded by

Satan. And so Satan would be very familiar with this woman and her child. He would be very familiar with the things that they were involved with. And so it was probably quite easy for one of them, one of His demons, to take up resident in this child, just because of the things that they were involved with in the society that they lived.

And so this woman, she is identified as an individual who has a daughter who is demon possessed. That is, she is demonized. Literally, the demon lives inside of her. This is a spirit-being inside of a physical human being, and she, well, we'll get to how she is tormented later.

But verse 26 says gives us the identity of this woman. Now, the woman was a Gentile. Everybody understands what a Gentile is? There's two categories of people in the world. There are Jews and there are Gentiles. That's it. With regard to Scripture and how it communicates about people. There are Jews and there are Gentiles. If you're not a Jew, you're a Gentile. So the woman was a Gentile, and the name that the Scripture gives her here in verse 26 A Syrophoenician. That's a compound word of two different regions. So we have Syria and Phoenicia, they were annexed together under Roman rule. So that's why that name is there. She was a Syrophoenician. That is those two regions, Syria and Phoenicia, that's the area that she came from. They were a single region at this time, and that is Tyre and Sidon. Those two communities were within that area. These are individuals who are descendants of the Canaanites. Look back in your Bible to Matthew chapter 15 verse 22 Matthew 15:22, and I want you to keep a marker in there, because we're going to be referencing back to Matthew chapter 15. Matthew 15 is the parallel passage to the one that we're in in Mark chapter seven. Okay, so keep your thumb in that section. Matthew 15:22 says, "And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, 'Have mercy on me.'" So this woman is a Canaanite. She is a descendant of Canaan.

Now, what was God's command to the nation of Israel when they came into the land of Canaan, what were they supposed to do? They were to kill every single living thing. Nothing was to survive. Not one single person, man, woman, child, beast. Everything was to be wiped out. This woman is a descendant of them. Obviously, Israel failed, right? They failed to complete their task. And one of the most amazing things about this text here is there was never, ever, according to the Levitical law, to be a Canaanite within the people of God ever. So this, let it build in your mind just how shocking this is about to come to the disciples. Never a Moabite, never a Canaanite. Who is a Moabite that was in the descendant of the line of the Messiah? Remember Ruth; she was a Moabite. So this woman is of the descendants of Canaan, absolutely despised in the eyes of every Jew that exists. Pagan worshipers of every god imaginable, absolute scum of the earth in the Jews' eyes, only fit for God's unmitigated wrath. That's what these people were seen as. They were not seen as human beings who had any worth, any value in them whatsoever, intrinsically. They were fit for God's destruction. That's it. That is the condition of this woman in the mind of the Jewish people.

She must have tried everything within her culture to free her daughter. There was so much at her disposal, nothing obviously worked. Her daughter was still consumed by this unclean spirit. So

somehow, she heard of Jesus, and she prostrates herself before Him as her only hope. She did not bring along her pagan gods with her. She didn't bring anyone else with her. She alone laid bare before the Lord. You are the only one that can help. Let's look at Matthew chapter 15, just to fill in a little bit a little bit of gaps here that Mark leaves out. Turn back in there to Matthew 15 with me. Listen to verse 21 to 23, "Jesus went away from there and He withdrew to the district of Tyre in Sidon, and a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out." That is, she is literally screaming it out, a desperate woman, a desperate plea. And she was saying, "Have mercy on me Lord." The Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew text, Yahweh, in the Hebrew text is always translated Lord. So her proclamation to Jesus is "Yahweh, son of David." Son of David is a specific term that has to do with the Messiah. So she is saying, "Yahweh, Messiah, my daughter is cruelly demon possessed." Her faith in Jesus is clear here. She knew who He was. She was crying out who He was, and she was crying out in such a way, a posture of worship. "You are my only hope. You are my daughter's only hope." The great trust that she had in Him is expressed in those two terms, Yahweh, Messiah. She knew exactly who He was. Somehow, she heard of Him again through maybe the people that were, she could have even been one of the ones that was there at the Sermon on the Mount that was from Tyre and Sidon. We don't know, but she heard about Him, and she believes. She knew that He was Messiah.

So despite her begging, this is really interesting, despite her begging, listen to what Jesus does in verse 23 there. "He did not answer her a word." Now, if somebody comes up screaming in your face, it's really hard to ignore them. Jesus has got some kind of plan here, like this isn't common. You wouldn't just ignore somebody that comes up yelling at your face. Does not respond to her a word.

Now I want you to listen to what the disciples say and remember this whole thing for Him being in the area of Tyre and Sidon is primarily for the disciples, so they can see what God's plan is. Listen to what they say, and you're going to get a really clear picture of the heart of the disciples in this. They say, "And His disciples came and implored Him." So now, now the woman's not begging Jesus. The disciples are coming and begging Jesus. They're imploring Him, saying, "Send her away because she keeps shouting at us." They are annoyed with this woman because she is pleading for the demon to be cast out of her daughter. You hear how cold they are? No compassionate heart whatsoever. "Get this woman out of here. She's annoying us." No care for her plight, no care for her condition, her daughter's condition. "Lord, send her away. She keeps shouting at us."

Well, finally He does answer. In verse 24 He answers and said, we're still in Matthew 15 and verse 24 He said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Seemingly another kind of distant comment. Jesus obviously recognized her plight. He knew what was going on, but He's got a different plan. His plan is always greater. His plan is always better. And He says to this woman, seemingly something that would turn her away, "I didn't come for your people." That's what He's saying. "I wasn't sent to the people of Tyre and Sidon. I wasn't sent to Canaanites."

I think my faith is weak enough I probably would have left if the Lord who I know is Messiah, who I know is Yahweh, says to me, “I didn’t come for you. I came for someone else.” I think my faith is not strong enough to stick around.

No, she is not dissuaded by this statement. This is the shocking reality of genuine faith. She’s not dissuaded in the slightest. Listen to this, “but she came.” So she had already come. She’s already prostrate. Now she comes even closer, and she falls down before Him, begging Him, elevates the term here in Matthew. She is begging Him to do this thing. So instead of being dissuaded, instead of losing her hope in the Messiah, to lose her hope in the Lord, instead of walking away, and instead of losing faith, instead of losing trust, she comes closer.

Is that our reality? When the difficult things in life come, your faith is being challenged. It is being challenged to prove its genuineness and to make it stronger. It’s being challenged to cause you to do exactly what the Syrophenician woman did, to come closer to the Lord, as it were, cling tighter, amazing faith. And it is a stark contrast from the apostles’ faith. That’s the reality of this as well.

Verse 26 He gives seemingly another cold response to her, seemingly something that would really push her away, something even more seemingly offensive that any lesser faith would walk. He says this to her, “And He answered and said, ‘It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.’” Wow. Sounds kind of offensive, right? How many of you would be okay with somebody calling you a dog?

We’ve got to be careful how we translate this term dog. Just to be clear, this is a household pet, the word that’s used for dog here. It’s not the dogs that are seen as running through the streets as mongrels and no master. It is a household pet. So it’s a lesser offensive word, if you will. This is a dog who’s actually within the home. But He says to her something, these children of Israel, the children I have come for, I didn’t come for the household pets. I didn’t come for the dogs. Now we really got faith challenged. I know I’m out at this point. I don’t, I don’t got faith like that. Literally, the Lord and Master I knew, is telling me, I didn’t come for you. I didn’t come for you. That’s what He’s saying to her. This is a major illustration for the disciples, watching this woman not dissuaded as the Lord speaks this truth.

And what’s even, if it could get any more shocking, listen to what she says. She actually agrees with Him. Listen to what she says, but she said in verse 27 of Matthew 15. “But she said, ‘Yes, [Yahweh] Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.’” What a statement of faith. She actually uses His illustration to make her point. I mean, what brilliance. What an amazing faith that would say, “Yes, I know I’m a dog. Yes, I know I’m the lowest of the lowest. Yes, I know that I, according to our history, I am fit for destruction, but I trust you,” as it were. The way Peter said it, “To whom shall we go? Lord, you have the words of eternal life.” This woman understood that. “So I know that I’m considered a dog.” That’s what she’s saying. She’s agreeing with Him. “I know I don’t deserve

anything from You, but even as a dog, surely the children, as they drop little crumbs that I could still receive some type of small as it were, blessing from You."

What amazing faith. This is the type of faith when you got the picture of Mary and Martha, all you want is just to be close to Him. That's it. Lord, give me a corner in heaven, and I'm satisfied. Lord, any small thing from You will be enough. What amazing faith. What amazing faith.

Well, let's look at Jesus's proclamation to her. Let's look at what He has to say to her. That is, her faith is about to be rewarded. Her faith is about to be rewarded. Jesus said in Mark, let's actually look at Matthew 15, his version of it, and then we'll look at Mark's. Verse 28 Jesus' response to her in Matthew 15, "Jesus said to her," listen to this, "Oh woman," it's a term of endearment. "Your faith is great." *Magos*, big, massive. Your faith is great. "It shall be done for you as you wish, and her daughter was healed at once." Mark records it this way in verse 29, He says, In Mark 7:29, he says, "And He said to her, 'Because of this, your answer, go. The demon has gone out of your daughter.'" Same thing. Your faith is great. You have received your petition. Your daughter has been freed from the demon. And verse 30, "And going back to her home, she found the child lying in bed, the demon having gone out of her." So she's there, comfortable in bed, probably resting, because she had been tormented for so long, just relaxing, finally feeling the relief of the demon that left her. Imagine being that little girl. Put yourself there next to her. Imagine being there present when the demon actually left. What a feeling that must have been. Maybe she didn't even know anything than the presence of this demon from birth, from when she was a very, very young child. Maybe she only knew torment. Imagine the moment that that thing left. Peace, right? God's peace. God's peace, finally having freedom. So this woman's great faith was rewarded by giving her her petition.

The lesson is not necessarily for us, that if we plead long enough and hard enough with the Lord that He's going to give us what we're asking. This is not a health and wealth teaching. The lesson is that genuine faith never gives up, ever. No matter how hard it gets, no matter if your life comes to an end, genuine faith never gives up.

Give a little instruction to parents here. Your faith may not be your child's faith. Children raised up in a Christian home, following all the rules of the home, seemingly living out their Christian walk, and then they go to college, and what do we say? "Oh, they walked away from the faith." Well, maybe they were never in it in the first place. It's exactly the reality of it. If they never come back, and they live out the rest of their days in absolute rebellion against the Lord, they were never His. Not saying that that's not sad, I'm not saying that's not disappointing. But the reality is, our children have to have their own faith. They don't get yours. The Christian cliche, of course, there's no grandchildren in heaven, there's only children.

So let that be a reminder to us that genuine faith never gives up. It always pursues the Lord more and more and more and more, all the way to the end, notwithstanding sin along the way. I'm not saying that.

Of course, we recognize that, but genuine faith never gives up, no matter the circumstances. It will never quit. This is, as Scripture calls it, the perseverance of the saints. You are kept by the power of God, right, but you are also going to persevere. There's a reality there that seems dichotomous, but it's not. They mesh actually together. God is doing it, and you are doing it. You will continue to the end, if you're genuine by His keeping power and by you keeping faith, that is the reality of it.

And this woman stands as, quite possibly, one of the most amazing illustrations of genuine faith in all of Scripture. There could not have been a greater deck stacked against someone her entire life, absolute paganism, surrounded by unbelief, surrounded by pagan worship, and here she is with greater faith than the very apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, even after just having seen Him walk on water. It's never the miracles, folks, it's never the amazing things that God does. It's genuine faith that perseveres. You don't need a sign, you don't need a wonder, you simply need to cling to the cross. Nothing more, nothing more. Shocking, the contrast between the apostles and this woman's faith. Hardly knew anything about Jesus other than maybe what she heard, and she trusted Him more than they did.

Verse 31 let's move on. We're going to look at other faith that is genuine and other faith that is rewarded. "Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis." So Jesus leaves Tyre and Sidon; He leaves in a really strange way. Sidon is actually north of Tyre the Sea of Galilee where He's going on the other side Decapolis is down over here. So He goes way up north, a long ways, I can't remember how many miles it was, but it's multiple miles north. Goes out and about and around and then down. No idea why He did that, possibly that He was still teaching in that region. Mark does not record that, but He went up and around. He might have been concerned about all the crowds that He left behind. Remember, He's trying to get away, trying to get privacy, so He might have taken that route for that. Not sure why, but if you look on a map, you'll see it's very strange. We usually take a one direction shot to where we want to go. He goes way up and around. Not sure why. You can ask Him when you get to heaven.

So the sea is south. The Sea of Galilee, that's where He's going. And He's going to the region of the Decapolis. That's two words, *deca* that is 10, *polis*, that is cities. So this is a region where there's 10 cities. This is the place where He went and healed the demoniac. Remember the guy that had legions of demons inside of Him, and those demons were put into the pigs, and they ran over into the sea and died? That's this region He went back to. It is a Gentile region once again, possibly to continue this illustration to the disciples, that this message that I have is not just for you and Israel. This message is also for the Gentiles.

Upon arriving, verse 32, "They brought to Him." *They*, outline in your Bible there, "they brought to Him. They do not have a name. We have no idea who they are, but they are going to be key in this next part of the text, they brought to Him, one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hands on him."

Now, I want you to imagine for a minute what the life of this man must have been like. So first of all, He's outside of Israel. He's not a Jew, He's a Gentile. If he was a Jew, he would still be viewed as an outcast. Remember, the Jews viewed people that had infirmities like this as people who are actually cursed by God. They did something wrong to receive whatever physical infirmity that they had. Remember the man that the disciples came up and asked Jesus, "Who sinned? Was it this man, or was it His parents?" Right? So in their mind, it's called retribution theology, that is, you get what you deserve. Whatever you do, you're going to receive a reward for that in like. Retribution theology. And so in the Jews' mind, this man would be outcast, not only because he's a Gentile, but also, if he's blind and deaf, he had to have done something really bad. In a pagan world, it's going to be manifold worse, manifold worse. They are in this condition, completely ostracized. They have zero value whatsoever societally. They have no way to communicate. They can't hear, they can't speak, and so they have no benefit to the society. This man is a complete outcast.

Now I want to ask a question, whose faith is on display here? What is their name? *They*. That's whose faith is on display in this section. The man's faith isn't on display at all. He doesn't have a clue what's going on. They brought him to Jesus. These individuals, not the deaf man, the companions of him. They could have been family, could have just been friends, whoever it was, they were in a pagan society along with this guy, and they did not view him as an outcast. They had heard of the Lord Jesus, possibly by the demoniac, who was told to go out and proclaim the gospel, right? To proclaim the good things that God has done for him. Maybe they heard about him that way, through that proclamation. Either way, the deaf man didn't know. He was just being brought there by his companions. He can't hear and he can't talk, or the way he talks, it says, is with an impediment. Have you ever listened to somebody who's deaf try to communicate in clear speech? They have a really hard time doing it. They're different. They're viewed as different. We don't know how long this guy had this impediment, but it probably was a long time. So their faith is on display here. The *they* of the group, they brought him to Jesus, the one they believed could heal him. And that's key. They are the ones that had trust in Christ here. They must have had an amazing love for this man and compassion for Him, because they possibly watched him growing up, and how society viewed him, how society treated him. You can hear the compassion they have for him. They came. They brought him to Jesus and implored Him. There's that same word again. They begged Him. They were begging Jesus to lay His hands on him. They didn't abandon him. The only source that they knew that could actually fix his situation was right here amongst them, right here before them. They heard about this Jesus.

What Jesus does here is seemingly at first glance, really strange. Read the text with me there. Number one, verse 33 Mark 7:33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd. Okay, so He takes him away from the crowd by Himself, to reiterate they are alone, Jesus and the deaf man, not even his companions. They're alone. And He put His fingers in his ears, and after spitting, touched his tongue with the saliva. That seems kind of strange. That seems kind of strange to me. It seems very strange in our culture. We would never do such a thing like, what is that? How does that even make sense? Put your fingers in somebody's

ears, and then you spit on your hand and you touch their, what? Something else is going on here that is not familiar to us, and we need to understand that.

So verse 33, why such an act? Why doesn't He just simply heal the guy? He didn't have to say anything. There doesn't need to be any display of what He's doing, as far as being the thing that heals him. So why would He do it? So we need to look at the context.

Number one, He's alone. Can the guy hear Him? No, he can't hear Him at all. And so when Jesus comes up to him and He touches his ears like this, He's not plugging his ears, He's coming up and touching his ears to give him an indication that He recognizes his plight. Remember he is alone. There's no one else around, and so this is a non-verbal cue for the guy, I understand what's going on, right? He understands the man's need. All He would have had to do was heal, but no, He wants the man to understand what's going on, and so that's the first non-verbal cue.

Second, by touching the man's tongue with His spit, Jesus is communicating another non-verbal cue of what He intended to do. It was widely believed in the Greco-Roman culture that human saliva actually had healing properties. We actually have writings of emperors who believed that if they spit on people, that they could heal them. So this is not foreign to them. They guy in a Greco-Roman culture, knew exactly what Jesus was communicating, that the saliva on His hand and the touching of his tongue, the healing of the saliva touching his tongue, he recognized that his tongue didn't work either. So both of these non-verbal cues were just simply to let the man know, remember in private, that this is what I intend to do. I understand and this is what I'm going to do. Jesus did not need to perform some type of ritual. Don't go out spitting on your friends. It won't work. Well, something might work. You might not like it.

Verse 34, "And looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, 'Ephphatha!' that is, 'Be opened!'" Remember what I said whenever there's an Aramaic term that comes out in the Gospel of Mark? Mark translates it into Greek. That's exactly what happens here. That word, Ephphatha, that is the Aramaic word, which means be opened. And when He says, "Be opened" there, that's in Greek. So Mark is telling us that he is translating it. So for Mark's Greek readers, they now understand the direct quote from Jesus and what it means.

And so here's another non-verbal cue when He looks up to heaven. So now the man understands that You understand my hearing problem, that You're going to heal by the touching of the spit on his tongue, and now, when Jesus looks up to heaven, all of those things, oh, the source of those is coming from the heavens. Another non-verbal cue in the deep sigh that Jesus gives him here, it's probably just another non-verbal cue to him, to recognize probably His compassion for the man. That He was sighing deeply in His spirit, just another non-verbal cue.

And He says, "Be open." That is in the command form, open completely. That's what it means, open completely. And it's important that we recognize He said, "open completely." This is not some false prophet. This is not some false teacher of our day that says he's going to heal someone, and six weeks later, they finally get healed. No. Open completely, heal. Completely heal, perfectly. Jesus always does it that way, except one other instance, where there's a specific illustration he was giving to the apostles, and we'll get to that later. But when Jesus heals, it's always perfectly and completely. That's what that is. Be opened, open completely. Verse 35 and his ears were opened, and the impediment of His tongue was removed, and He began listen to speak plainly.

So the hearing thing, as shocking as that was, he couldn't hear anything before, and now, all sudden, he hears, possibly for the first time ever. The first thing that he hears is Jesus's command "be opened." That's the first thing that he hears possibly ever. So he has perfect hearing, but also, not only does he have perfect hearing, but his tongue was loosed, and he could speak plainly. The term there for plainly is clearly. Just as I'm trying to speak clearly to you right now, this man could talk with no impediment. You know, how deaf they have, their R's are really messed up, multiple parts of their speech are messed up. This man, possibly not being able to talk clearly ever, his entire life, instantly, the healing. Not only was he able to speak, but he was able to speak and enunciate perfectly, perfect healing. Perfect healing, no more impediment. Absolute perfect healing. Not only able to talk, but to talk clearly, an amazing miracle. This is what clarity everyone around should have received because of what just took place. What this man's condition was before, completely gone, completely gone, restored, healed.

Verse 36, the Lord does something again here, as it'll be clear to you, but the Lord does something again here. He tells everyone and He gave them orders. That is, He commanded them not to tell anyone. So before with the demoniac, He said, "Go out and tell everybody." And here He says, "Don't tell anyone. But the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it." Imagine if you're this guy who just had this healing and your tongue is loose now for the first time, can anything shut you up? I mean, I can imagine the conversation with this guy and his companions proclaiming as loud and as far and as wide as he can despite what the Lord told him not to do. He's telling everybody about this. He's telling everyone about the Lord. He can speak plainly now look at what God has done for me. No, you couldn't shut him up.

Of course, we know again that the Lord was giving this command because He didn't want to become more popular. He didn't want people flocking around Him for miracles. He had a message to preach. He had a gospel to spread. He came with a message that says, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The miracles, yes, were part of His ministry, but it was way down here. The message of salvation was the most important thing, and so He didn't want a crowd. He didn't want people hovering around Him. He wanted sinners to hear the message of salvation, and the disciples need to be reminded once again that the gospel was for the Gentiles.

They're going to get it in the future. They're going to understand it. Remember we talked about Peter, when that sheet came down, it was full of all unclean things. And then he goes to Cornelius's house, and he sees Cornelius and his entire family gets saved. He's like, "It's come to the Gentiles as well." They will get it; they will understand it. But right here, they don't get it. They don't understand it. They don't understand that the gospel is for the Gentiles.

And so for us, we need to be reminded. We all have that person in our mind. We all have that person that we know "there is no way God is going to save them." That's who He came for. He came for the outcast. He came for the dirty like you, actually, and like me. That's who He came for. Jesus did not come to call the righteous to repentance. They're already righteous in their own eyes. No, He came to call sinners to repentance. So be reminded of that. Don't seek out the nicest looking person, or the one that you would think, "Oh, he would make a great Christian." We need to seek those people out. Sure, they need the gospel. But He's not calling many wise. He's not calling many noble. He's not calling those that don't think they need a Saviour. No, He is calling sinners to repentance and salvation. Jesus hung out with the nastiest of society. He went to the dogs because salvation needed to be proclaimed there, and He needed to illustrate for His apostles that salvation was not just for them alone, that it was to go to the ends of the earth. They needed to be reminded of that, that when that day come and He ascended and He said, "Go and proclaim this gospel message to the ends of the earth," that they got it, that they understood it. And because of what we have in the text of Scripture, they actually got to fulfill that, right? They are proclaiming that message to the ends of the earth.

So for us, remember the Lord came to save sinners, so go practice preaching the gospel to sinners because that's who He came to save.

Jesus, thank You so much for not being satisfied with only being a light for the nation of Israel. We know that You're still working in that nation. We know that they will never come to an end. We know that they are the only actual nation who will truly honour and love You. But Lord, right now Your focus is on the Gentiles, and we're so grateful for that. We're thankful that we can actually be grafted into that tree which has You as its root. Thank You that we can actually be part of the root of Jesse. What an amazing reality. Thank You that You sent people such as the apostles, the apostle Paul, to proclaim that message to the Gentiles, and it made it to us here, where we are. Lord, may we continue that until that final day when You either call us home, You come to bring us home. Lord, may we continue that. Truly we have no other reason to be here than to proclaim that message. That's the reality of what it means to be an ambassador. We plead with people "Turn to the Saviour." May we be faithful in doing that, and may You receive all the glory because of it in Jesus' name amen.