

Sermon #29

Series: Mark

Title: **MERCY NEEDED, MERCY SOUGHT, MERCY GIVEN**
Text: Mark 7:24-30
Readings: Office: Auditorium:
Subject: Lessons From the Canaanite Woman
Date: Sunday Evening - September 6, 1997
Tape # U-3

Introduction:

Bro. David Coleman and I played a round of golf late Wednesday afternoon. As we were finishing the round, he made several statements which stuck with me. He compared preaching, as the Scriptures do, to serving a feast. He said, "Some preachers talk a lot about the feast, but never get around to serving it. They talk a lot about preaching the gospel, but never seem to get around to preaching it. Others spread a huge table of salads, but never serve the main course or the desserts. They spend all their time laying the foundation and giving the introduction to the message, telling you what they want to tell you, but never tell it." Then he said, "I sure like it when a preacher serves a small salad, or leaves it off altogether, and gets to the main course. I like the meat and potatoes and lots of good desserts."

Tonight, I am going to follow his advice. There will be no salads at all, just meat, potatoes, and lots of good desserts. The title of my message is **MERCY NEEDED, MERCY SOUGHT, MERCY GIVEN**. You will find my text in Mark 7:24-30.

Mark 7:24-30 "And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid. (25) For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: (26) The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. (27) But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. (28) And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. (29) And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. (30) And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."

Put you book mark here and turn over to Matthew's account of this same event (Matt.15:21-28). I want us to read that as well. Matthew gives us details that Mark leaves out; and Mark gives us details omitted by Matthew. So I want us to read both accounts.

Matthew 15:21-28 "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. (22) And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. (23) But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. (24) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (25) Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. (26) But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast *it* to dogs. (27) And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. (28) Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Putting these two passages of Scripture together, I want to give you **TEN GOSPEL LESSONS FROM THE STORY OF THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN.**

I. Man's unbelief never thwarts or even hinders the purpose of God.

Matthew 15:21 "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon."

The Pharisees would not hear him or receive his Word. Their pride, self-righteousness, and religious traditions kept them out of the kingdom of God. Therefore, in judicial reprobation, our Lord left them; but his leaving them was that he might enter into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and there bestow his grace upon a chosen Gentile woman.

Romans 3:3-4 "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? (4) God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."

II. Before ever a sinner will come to Christ seeking mercy, the Lord Jesus Christ must come to that sinner in mercy.

We do not read this story aright if all we see is a needy soul coming to Christ. We must not neglect that. I will talk about it in a minute. But this Syrophenician woman could never have come to Christ for mercy if Christ had not come to her in mercy. She sought the Lord; but he came to seek her first. It is not the lost sheep who seeks and finds the Shepherd, but the Shepherd who seeks and finds his one lost sheep.

NOTICE: Our Lord passed by the multitudes, the congested cities, and the people of renown and came to the outskirts of nowhere to show mercy to a nobody. That brings me to our third lesson...

III. Grace always comes to the most unlikely.

I always get a little uneasy when I hear men talk about being able to tell who is going to be saved. Anyone would have thought, "If the Lord is going to do any great work or perform any great miracle, he will pick someone important, someone respected, someone other people will look up to." But that simply is not the case. The Son of God comes to a Greek, a Canaanite, a Syrophenician woman, a woman with no promise from God, no covenant rights with God, no relationship to God, and nothing to offer God; but she was "a *certain woman*" loved and chosen by God as the special object of his special grace.

IV. When the Lord God intends to be gracious to a sinner, he always causes that sinner, like this poor woman, to "hear of him," to hear the gospel of his free and sovereign grace in Christ.

Mark 7:25 "For a *certain woman*, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, **heard of him**, and came and fell at his feet:"

Romans 1:15-16 "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. (16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Romans 10:13-17 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (16) But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? (17) So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

James 1:18 "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

1 Peter 1:23-25 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (24) For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the

flower thereof falleth away: (25) But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

V. True prayer arises from a heartfelt need of mercy, grace, and divine intervention.

Matthew 15:22 "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, **Have mercy on me, O Lord**, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

Mark 7:26 "The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and **she besought him** that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter."

Such is the pride, self-sufficiency, and arrogance of our hearts that we will never come down until God brings us down. We will never beg for mercy until we need mercy. We will not seek grace until we need grace. We will not come to Christ until we have to have him.

VI. The place of mercy is at his feet.

Look at Mark's description of this woman's behavior (Mk 7:25-26).

- She was in trouble and had a desperate need.
- She heard about Christ.
- She came to the Son of God.
- She fell at his feet.
 1. The Place of Mercy.
 2. The Place of Humility.
 3. The Place of Reverence.
 4. The Place of Worship.
 5. The Place of Love.
 6. The Place of Obedience.
 7. The Place of Blessing.
 8. The Place of Honor.
 9. The Place of Peace.
 10. The Place of Contentment.

VII. True faith always bows to Christ.

Faith does not rebel against Christ's words or his deeds. Faith bows, because faith acknowledges Christ's place, dominion, and right as Lord.

Matthew 15:23-27 "But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. (24) But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (25) Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. (26) But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast *it* to dogs. (27) And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

Mark 7:27-28 "But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. (28) And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

- A. The Lord Jesus ignored her; but she considered that his right and waited for him to acknowledge her.
- B. The Master spoke to her plainly about the purpose of God in election and the distinguishing character of his grace; and she worshipped him (Matt. 15:24-25).
- C. The Lord described her in the most humbling terms, calling her a dog; but she took the ground he gave her, and begged his mercy and help, even if it were just the crumbs others despised.

VIII. Faith honors Christ and Christ honors faith.

Matthew 15:28 "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

IX. When Christ enters into the house of man's soul and takes possession of it, he drives the devil out by the power of his grace.

We are told that when this woman came into her house, "*she found the devil gone out.*" What a blessing!

Let me show you one more thing. I readily admit that I'm stretching the text, using it now in a strictly allegorical, spiritual way; but I am not stretching the Scriptures. What I have to say in the last place is the teaching of Scripture, and a blessed teaching of Scripture. This is the dessert I promised you. In Mark 7:30 we read, "*And her daughter laid upon the bed.*" Here is our tenth lesson...

X. When Christ saves sinners he always puts them to bed.

Isaiah tells us of those who lay in a bed of religious deceit, a bed of free will, works religion, in which no rest is to be found. The bed of your works is too short to stretch out on; and the covering of your self-righteousness is too narrow to wrap up in (Isa. 28:20).

- A. Here is a bed you can stretch out on - **Christ's Blood Atonement!**
- B. Here is a covering you can wrap up in - **Christ's perfect Righteousness!**
- C. But the only way you will ever stretch out on this bed and wrap up in this cover is if Christ himself gives you rest.

Therefore, he graciously bids weary, helpless, guilty sinners to come to him.

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

AMEN.