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Mark 7:17 - 7:37



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

In Mark 7:17-7:37, Jesus teaches that moral purity stems from the heart and not from external actions or cleanliness. He declares that all foods are clean, eliminating the distinctions between clean and unclean foods observed by Jews, and stresses the importance of faith in receiving God's blessings. In the story of the Syrophenician woman, Jesus tests her faith and ultimately grants her request for healing, demonstrating that Gentiles can also receive God's blessings through faith. Jesus also performs a miracle in the region of Decapolis, healing a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, further establishing his ability to heal the sick and perform miracles.

Transcript

Last time we stopped right in the midst of Mark chapter 7, and right in the midst of a particular story that's rather unnatural to break up. But because it goes on long enough after the point where we stopped and we didn't really have time to deal with it justly, I wanted to break it off and resume it here. This was the occasion when Jesus' disciples were criticized because they ate food without washing their hands, and Jesus returned the criticism to the Pharisees that they were judging by a standard of human tradition rather than by the word of God.

And in fact, they themselves were not as faithful to the word of God as they were to the traditions of men. And that was actually a much bigger criticism, a much greater offense than anything the disciples could be said to have done. The Pharisees were suggesting that by not washing their hands properly, the disciples might be incurring ceremonial defilement.

And Jesus says in verse 15, There's nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him. You don't get defiled in the sight of God by eating something or by putting something in your body. Now, that would mean, of course, that it's not a moral infraction to eat something, let's say, that's unhealthy.

As many, many Christians in modern times are very health conscious and feel that, you know, we need to be good stewards of our bodies. And we do. We do need to be good

stewards of our bodies, as with everything else God has given us.

But some people, you know, they became almost anal about, you know, how you have to avoid sugars and salts and everything else that isn't completely healthy. It's an extension of the same mentality that condemns smoking cigarettes. Many Christians condemn smoking cigarettes.

Well, I think the practice of smoking cigarettes can be criticized legitimately on many bases. It's a habit that's objectionable to many people. The smell, you know, permeates the environment and therefore others may have to be subject to it.

If you're smoking secondhand smoke, conceivably could be damaging to people's health. At least there's some evidence that that's true. It's it's it may it may send a message in some quarters that you're worldly.

It may just be a really expensive, bad use of God's money. There's all kinds of ways that a person could object to smoking cigarettes. But we'd have to, on that same basis, object to a lot of other things, like maybe spending more on our clothing than we could.

I mean, maybe we should buy cheaper clothing as a good stewardship. Maybe we should wear our hair, our clothes more in a way that no one's going to get the wrong message from us. I mean, we can get really legalistic about all the ways in which the choices we're making could be improved upon.

And the condemnation, for example, of smoking cigarettes is argued from all those ways. But but many Christians resort to arguing that it's your body is the temple, the Holy Spirit. And smoking cigarettes is bad for your health.

And therefore, it's damaging to the temple of the Holy Spirit. And you shouldn't do that. And again, I personally would agree that the body is not your own.

You are a steward of your body, which belongs to God. You've been bought with a price and therefore you should steward it well. I also would agree that smoking cigarettes is a really bad health choice.

But there are many things that Christians don't condemn that are also bad health choices. On different bases, whether it's, you know, like eating, eating fatty foods, eating too much sugar, too much sauce. But we don't call those sins.

We might consider them bad ideas. We might consider them foolish if somebody is not more careful than they should be about their healthiness in their diet. But we don't call it moral evil.

And we shouldn't call it moral evil because it's not. What's moral evil is not what you put into your body. It's not whether you're observing the best health and hygiene practices

or not, although obviously a wise person will want to be wise about their eating and their hygiene.

But that's not that's a different issue. Wisdom is one issue. Moral obligation is another.

And the Pharisees were acting like what you put in your body is something of a moral issue. Now, you could see why they might think that in general, because the law that God had given them did have a lot of restrictions about what they could eat. There were foods that were unclean and foods that were clean.

And so obviously, under their law, it would appear that they could defile themselves by eating the wrong things. If you ate pork, at least you'd be defiled in the sense that, you know, you'd be considered to be engaging in an unclean practice. But Jesus says, you know, when it comes to defilement, the defilement that matters to God is not the defilement of a ceremonial defilement that comes because you ate something that was technically forbidden as an unclean food, but rather it's what comes out of you.

Your defilement is what's inside you. It's where your heart's at. If you've got a defiled heart, then you can do good things and they're even evil.

The sacrifice of a wicked man is an abomination to the Lord. A sacrifice is a good thing, but he's a wicked man in his heart. And therefore, even his sacrifice, even his prayer, it says in Proverbs, is an abomination.

So the defilement is what is inside and what comes out of you is either clean or unclean, as it were, depending on what's in your heart. But eating food or putting smoke or anything else in your body isn't defiling. Now, some of you might say, well, what about drugs and alcohol? Well, drugs and alcohol, of course, are things you put in your body and they are somewhat in a different category for the simple reason that they affect the heart.

They affect the mind. You know, eating potato chips doesn't affect your mind, at least not in any way that impairs moral judgment, as far as I know. Whereas, obviously, things like drugs and alcohol, they affect the mind.

So you're actually intruding into the realm of your heart and into your mind. It says in Hosea chapter four, wine and new wine and harlotry take away the heart or enslave the heart. And so there are some things you can put in your body that do affect the way your inner life is affected.

And certainly they would be, in a sense, in a different category than what we're talking about here. We're talking about things that go into your body and then go out of your body. And there's been no moral change in your behavior or your heart.

And so he says it's what comes out of the man, that's what defiles him. This is similar

teaching to what we find in another setting recorded in Matthew chapter 12, where Jesus is criticizing the Pharisees again for something else they've done wrong. And in Matthew 12, 33, Jesus said, either make the tree good and its fruit good or make the tree bad and its fruit bad for the tree is known by its fruit.

Brood of vipers, how can you being evil speak good things for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks a good man out of a good heart, out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. So if your heart is evil, then there's going to be evil things coming out of you. If your heart is good, there's good things coming out of you speaking primarily of the words you speak.

And that is one of the main things that exhibits what's in your heart, as Jesus points out. But the issue is that your heart. What it's full of spills over into all your actions and your actions are clean or unclean, not because of what you put in your mouth, but what comes out of your heart.

In Proverbs, chapter four. And verse twenty three. Proverbs says in Proverbs four, twenty three, keep your heart with all diligence for out of it spring the issues of life or the springs of life.

That which issues from you like springs of water from the ground, the quality of that water depends on the reservoir inside from which it comes. And your heart is that thing from which all the rivers of your life, all the things that spring forth from your life come from your heart. So guard your heart.

Make sure your heart is clean. That's the same thing Jesus is teaching here. Now, when we come back to Mark's gospel in chapter seven, verse 16, Jesus said, if anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.

And Matthew's gospel inserts at this point something that Mark leaves out. I'll just read it to you in Matthew 15, 12 through 14. Matthew inserts these words, then his disciples came and said to him, do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying? But he answered and said, every plant which my heavenly father has not planted will be uprooted.

Let them alone. They're blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.

So when Jesus made this statement about, you know, nothing going into a man will defile him, that offended the Pharisees because they felt, well, a very large percentage of their religious ideas came from staying clean and undefiled by not having contact with and not eating the wrong kinds of things. And so the disciples came. Jesus said, you know, you offended them.

He said, I don't care. They are plants that my father has not planted. They're all going to be rooted up anyway.

But here it continues in Mark 7, 17, and when he had entered the house away from the crowd, the disciples asked him concerning the parable. Matthew tells us it was Peter who asked in Matthew 15, 15. So he said to them, are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach and it's eliminated, thus purifying all foods.

And he said, what comes out of a man that defiles a man for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, that's covetousness, wickedness, deceit. Licentiousness and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within the man and defile a man.

Now, when the disciples ask him about the meaning of his statement, he seems disturbed because they don't understand any better than they do. He says in verse 18, are you thus without understanding also? And again, later on in chapter eight and verse 17, he says, why do you reason? Because, you know, bread, do you not yet perceive or understand is your heart still hardened? It's obvious that at this point in Jesus ministry, he's kind of expecting his disciples to be a little further along than they are in their understanding of spiritual things. There's a likelihood that these disciples at this point have been with Jesus for about a year because the feeding of the five thousand took place at Passover, according to John chapter six.

And Jesus Galilean ministry began sometime after the previous Passover, because at the Passover season the previous year, according to John chapter two, Jesus had gone and he had driven the money changes out of the temple. That was a year earlier than this or maybe two years earlier, because there's another feast in John chapter five that might have been a Passover. If it was, then the disciples, most of them have been with Jesus for two years now.

They've been with him either one or two years at this point, and he's going to die a year from this point. He's only got one more year with them. He'll die at the next Passover.

So he's been training them for a year or maybe two, and they're still very much their minds are still very much wrapped up in their traditional thinking from their upbringing, which is not too surprising. I mean, after being Christians a long time, when we've read the Bible through one or two times, we've seen several things new, but there's a lot of things we haven't seen yet. We still are reading through a grid of our culture in many cases.

A lot of times the values that we're raised with or that the church has always taught us, we just assume them to be true. We read the Bible. We almost read those things into the Bible.

And although we're exposed the word of God, which should be correcting all of our. Default viewpoints that we had before, sometimes we're a little slow because sometimes it takes a while for us to see that something we're hearing from the Bible doesn't mean what we've always thought it meant. And so Jesus had been teaching people and they apparently were, in many cases, listening to him and interpreting him through the grid of what they already thought.

This is probably reflected even just before he ascended, when they say, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? He'd been talking to them about the kingdom, but they were apparently interpreting kingdom. In terms of their Jewish understanding and trying to fit what he said into that grid somehow, into that paradigm. And so it's possible to be under intensive instruction for a year or two under Jesus himself, apparently, and still really be missing his point, because they obviously didn't understand what he meant.

That what comes out of a man is what defiles him and what goes into him does not. This is just a basic spiritual truth that one would kind of hope that all Christians would learn early on. And that is that God's looking at your heart and your heart has to be right.

If your heart's not right, then that's what matters. Not what you eat, not external things, not what you wear, what you put on. Those are not the things that God's looking at.

He's looking at the heart. And Jesus is kind of surprised his disciples haven't really understood that yet. So he says, do you not perceive, verse 18, that what enters a man from outside does not defile him, not in any moral sense, because it doesn't affect his heart.

And his heart is the moral center of his life because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach and is eliminated just passes right through. It doesn't have an impact on his brain or his heart or his values or his morals. Once he's eaten it, he doesn't give it another thought and eventually is eliminated.

It's gone. And it passed through without changing anything about him, who he is essentially spiritually. That's what he's saying.

Now, that last line of verse 19, which says thus purifying all foods. This statement has been understood variously. And the new King James places it within the quotation marks, the quotation marks are not found in the Greek text.

So the translators open and close quotations where they think they should be open and close, but they might make a mistake. Some people think the quotation marks should be closed in verse 19 after the word eliminated. Jesus says, because they go in the stomach and it's eliminated, close quote, end of Jesus statement and that the rest of that verse is what Mark tells us.

Mark's commentary on what Jesus just said, thus he purified all foods, meaning thus Jesus declared all foods are clean, not no foods are unclean to the Jews. Certain foods are unclean. But this statement of Jesus eliminate those distinctions between clean and unclean foods.

And declares all foods to be clean. He's purified all foods. Well, why would Mark say that? Well, because he said nothing that you eat can defile you.

Therefore, if you eat pork, it can't defile you. If you eat shellfish or some other unclean food, it can't defile you. Jesus said nothing that goes in your mouth can defile you.

And thus Mark points out to his reader. In the same, Jesus purified or declared clean all foods. So that's how many understand it now, the New King James translators apparently believe that purifying all foods is within the quotation marks, and that's where they place it so that Jesus would be saying that the very process of elimination.

In a sense, purifies all foods, I mean, or in a sense, purifies your body of the foods. Whatever, whatever contamination one might have imagined came into your body through eating those foods is eliminated. And therefore, the food is really never, you know, it doesn't have any impact on your actual moral defilement.

That Jesus words do have the impact of purifying all foods, that is of declaring all foods clean, seems to be unavoidable. Because he said nothing that you put into your body can defile you, and then that's eliminated the categories of unclean foods from consideration. Jesus said something similar to that in Luke chapter 11, and he's talking to the Pharisees there.

In Luke 11:41, he says, but rather give alms of such things as you have, then indeed all things are clean to you. Now, give alms is simply a way of saying be generous, have a generous heart, be non materialistic, be compassionate toward people who have need. Give charity, this this would reflect something he's not talking about doing it hypocritically, he's talking about doing it from your heart.

And if your heart is charitable, then everything is clean to you, he says. And he means by that foods and Paul talks that way, too. He he says all things are lawful to me, but he doesn't mean all actions, but all foods.

We see that, for example, in First Corinthians six, and he's talking about how in Corinth some of the people were thinking that it's OK to commit fornication because apparently they had heard Paul say at some point that all things are lawful. And they mistakenly thought that means all behaviors are lawful. And so Paul has to address that and clarify that in First Corinthians 6:12, he says, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any foods or for

the stomach. And the stomach is for foods. God will eventually destroy the food and the stomach.

So they're not of eternal consequence. But he says, but the body is not for sexual immorality, but is for the Lord and the Lord's for the body. So he's saying, yeah, when I say all things are lawful, I mean the foods on the food issue, all foods are lawful, but not fornication.

That's different. Whatever is food oriented is not an eternal issue. The body is made from the bellies made for food, the food made for the belly.

Eventually, all those things will be destroyed. It's all going to burn. It's not eternal issues what you eat.

And so Paul, therefore, fairly strongly makes it clear that a person does not have to observe the dietary laws. And that is because of what Jesus teaches in First Timothy chapter four. Paul talks about certain what he says that in the latter days, some people will depart from the faith and will teach doctrines of demons.

And among the things he says are the doctrines of demons that they will teach. In verse three, First Timothy four, three, they will forbid to marry and command to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth for every creature of God is good and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. That is, there's no food unclean anymore.

It has been sanctified. It has been purified. It has been rendered clean by what? By the word of God, by Jesus statements.

Jesus gave this word. What goes into a man's mouth doesn't follow. He declared all foods clean.

Therefore, all foods are clean by the word of God, by the declaration of God through Christ. And, of course, through our prayers and thanksgiving, if we receive with thanksgiving, it's all waffles. So this story of Jesus.

In March, after seven goes further than just telling us of another conflict of the Pharisees, but it's a key issue. On several matters, one is, are there still unclean foods today? Apparently not. Not according to the New Testament, there are not.

Another question is. What kind of religious behavior matters to God and what's meant here, it was one of your ceremonial clean, this is not one of the things that matters to God. A pure heart matters to God, and this is something that wasn't new with Jesus and no wonder it surprised him that his disciples did not yet know it.

They should have picked that up from being around Jesus themselves. They've seen him touch lepers. They've seen him not objecting, touched by a woman with an issue of blood.

They'd seen him in situations where the Jewish law would declare him unclean, but he wasn't concerned. They should have known that cleanness and uncleanness were not really an issue to him. But they should have if they didn't know from Jesus on teachings and his behavior, they should have known it from the Old Testament.

Because in Psalm 51, David said the sacrifice of 16 and following for you do not desire sacrifice or else I would give it. You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

These, oh God, you will not despise. Now, David is saying, though the law in its ceremonial requirements requires animal sacrifices, these are not the things that God really cares about. These ceremonial acts are not what God cares about.

What he cares about is the heart, a broken, repentant heart. That's something that's of great value to God. He will not despise that, says David.

And so the disciples should have known from both the Old Testament and from Jesus teaching that it's what's in the heart that matters to God. Now, let's go to verse 24, Mark 7, 24, and from there he arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Now, this was essentially a Gentile region officially, but it was there were there were plenty of Jews in the area, but he was probably trying to get away from the Jews.

He's probably going to Tyre and Sidon because he's having a hard time getting some private conference time with his disciples. Remember, when they came back from their short term mission, he tried to get some time with them. They went in a boat to cross the sea to get away from the crowds, but the crowds anticipated them, ran across and met them.

So they didn't really get the time off they wanted. And the next day when they came back to Capernaum, they were thronged also. He's been looking for an opportunity to get along with the disciples for some relaxation, among other things, for some time.

And he's not had a chance to get it. In fact, it says from here, he arose, went to the region of Tyre and Sidon and he entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but he could not be hidden. He wanted privacy, but news got around that he was there.

And says, for a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him and she came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek. She's not Jewish and therefore did not have any prior claim on the Messiah and his attention because the Messiah was sent to a lost sheep of the house of Israel and she was not Jewish.

She was a Greek, Syrophenician by birth. She kept asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter. Now, Matthew tells us that in this story, which is in Matthew 15, Jesus ignored her for a while.

Mark just tells us that she kept asking and we might figure, why did she have to keep asking? Well, the truth is, he was kind of ignoring her, acting like she wasn't there for a while. And actually, in Matthew's version more than in Mark, it comes out that Jesus seemed to be kind of rude to her. But why? He ignored her.

Now, Matthew tells us more, too, before before we get to the material here in verse 27, Matthew tells us that the disciples finally came to Jesus and said, send her away. She keeps pestering us. So she was dogging their steps.

She was pestering and Jesus was paying no attention to her and the disciples didn't know why he was paying no attention to her, but they might have deduced it's because she's a Gentile. So, you know, Lord, she's not leaving. She's not getting the message.

Send her away. And it was when the disciples said that to Jesus that he said this in verse 27. But he said to her, Jesus said to her, let the children be filled first, for it's not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs, little dogs.

The Greek word means little dogs, which we pet dogs. You know, I mean, dogs in third world countries, dogs are not always pets. They're sometimes just kind of disgusting, half starved, mangy scavengers that run the streets.

If you've been to third world countries, you may have seen this. Dogs are not always viewed with affection. If they're a pet dog, they are.

But but there's more dogs than there are pet owners. And and dogs were seen as an unclean, mangy, kind of an unattractive beast. And and that is the way that the word dog would normally be understood.

That's why the Jews spoke of the Gentiles as dogs. This word Jesus used, though, is somewhat a slightly softer word. And that's why the translation says little dogs.

He's using a word that speaks of perhaps a dog that would be a house pet. So that, you know, it kind of softens the seeming insult of what he says. But not too much, not very soft.

And she answered and said to him, yes, Lord. Yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs. And he said to her, for this saying, go your way.

Actually, in Matthew, he says, your old woman, great is your faith, be it unto you, as you've said. And here it says, he said to her, go your way for the same. And the demon has gone out of your daughter.

And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out and her daughter lying on the bed. Now, this exchange between Jesus and the woman is troubling to many people because of the seeming rudeness of Jesus. And as I say, if you read in Matthew's version, there's even other additional things that seem rude in that he just ignored her for a while.

She was coming, begging for help. And he's just he's just paying no attention to her. Now, I believe he was testing her faith and he was delighted when she showed great faith, when she persisted.

But you see, the reason he ignored her initially was the reason he said it's not proper to take the food that belongs to the children and give it to the dogs. Now, what he's saying is children are more important than dogs. And the Jews were the children.

At this point, the children of the kingdom, they were the ones that God had a special relationship with from the old covenant. He still had a covenant with them. They were still his family, as it were.

The Gentiles, he had never had any such relationship with. He'd never had a covenant with them. They weren't his family.

They weren't his children. They were like dogs. And for Jesus to say that.

Seems very insulting, but it seems like Jesus is almost doing everything he can to see if he can put this woman off, but he can't. And he's glad that she passes the test. You ever see Willy Wonka and how at the end there, I don't remember the little boy's name, Charlie.

You know, Willy Wonka acts like he's mad at him, you know, at the very end there, and they turned around. He's all happy because the boy made the right decision. And it finally comes out.

There's a big test of these children to see if they'd be honest and if they'd be good. And near the end there, it looks like Charlie's the only one who's made it through. But actually, he had compromised earlier.

And Willy Wonka seems very cold and very unhappy with them and won't even look him in the face and so forth. And then Charlie says something that's very virtuous. And Willy Wonka turns around.

He's all happy. And, you know, you win the grand prize. You know, you win the chocolate factory.

And that's kind of how I picture this with Jesus. He's testing this woman because she doesn't have an innate right to his attention. But if she has enough faith, she'll get it

anyway.

Gentiles have always been able to get, even in the Old Testament, things from God if they had faith. That's the point Jesus made when he said that in the days of Elijah, there were many widows who were starving in the famine. But only one widow, a Gentile, was helped by Elijah.

Why? She had faith. And in the days of Elijah, there were many lepers in Israel, but they didn't get help. But a Gentile leper did because he had faith.

It's always been possible in the Old and New Testament for a Gentile to receive something from God if they had faith. But this was a case of a Gentile woman who had to demonstrate if she had faith. And when she did, Jesus said, Oh, woman, great is your faith.

Your request is granted. And I think his coldness toward her, his rudeness, was just to see if she's going to give up or not. And even when he said, I'm not going to give the children's food to the dogs, he means actually also not here.

But in Matthew's version, he had earlier said, I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That was also explaining why he was ignoring her. He wasn't sent to the Gentiles.

Not at this point. The time would come when his gospel would go to the Gentiles. But this was not that time.

The Jews had not formally rejected him yet. He was still offering himself primarily to Israel. If they had been receptive, then that'd be a different story.

Then they could take it to the Gentiles as the disciples eventually did. But it was not time for Jesus to go to the Gentiles. But a Gentile could press in if they had enough faith and get what they needed anyway from him.

And that's what happens here. Now, he says, of course, you don't take the children's food and give it to the dogs. I actually knew a Christian man.

There may be more than one. I only have met one who felt on this basis that people should not have pet dogs. Because dog food is made from food that children could eat, people could eat.

In some parts of the world, children are starving. They'd be glad to eat the dog food we give to our dogs. And it is not right to take food that should go to the children and give it to dogs.

I don't know how much he gives the children overseas, you know, but that would be a stewardship decision that a person could make on their own. But I thought it was an

interesting application of this because I'd never really heard anyone object to having pets. Jesus apparently didn't object to having pets because that's the illustration is used a pet dog under the table.

At least that's the illustration she used because she said, well, true, Lord. I am a dog. I'm not one of the children.

I am a Gentile. I'm not a Jew. But even the dogs are allowed to eat the children's crumbs, the things that the children leave behind, the things that the children don't want.

The dogs under the table get those. It's obviously the imagery of a pet dog, it's not a dog out in the streets, it's a dog under the family table and the children who don't like that they're sneaking stuff under the table to the dog. Whatever the kids don't eat and don't want, whatever is rejected by them, the crumbs they leave behind, the dogs get.

And Jesus was impressed by this, I think, because he may have recognized that she had spiritual perception of what was going on. She could see the Jews to whom he was offering this. They weren't really necessarily receiving it for what it was.

They were glad to have miracles done for them, but they weren't really seeing him as the Savior. They weren't really seeing him as the Messiah. And they were coming to him in a shallow level.

And she was seeking some spiritual benefit from him for her daughter. She may have been seeing that she was accepting what he had in a way that the Jews often were not. Or she may have just felt like after the children have had all they want, the dogs get the crumbs are left over.

In any case, she felt that the master of the house would care about the dogs, too, but not before the children. And so her statement is essentially that God's children, sure, should come first. I'm not one of them, but certainly God has enough left over for me.

And what the children don't eat, God cares enough for me, like a like a pet under the table. God will not let me starve. And she, despite Jesus seemingly coldness and seeming refusal to show any signs that he was willing to help her, she hung on to her determination that God would care for her situation, even if it was only secondarily, even if it was only second to the Jews.

Still, she was somebody that God would pay heed to and she was right. And she said, for this thing, go your way. The demons gone out of your daughter.

And sure enough, that was true. Verse 31, and again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, he came through the midst of the region of Decapolis in the Sea of Galilee to the Sea of Galilee. The region of Decapolis was mentioned earlier.

Decapolis was 10 cities on the east shore of the Jordan, across from Israel. It was in it was in Semitic territory because that's where the tribes of Ephraim or Manasseh and Gad and Reuben had taken some property. And that's there was mainly a Jewish area.

But these were 10 Greek cities. Decapolis is Greek for 10 cities. So it means.

And so that that region and these cities that dominate it were called the Decapolis, that's where he was over on the far side. Now, he's left Tyre and Sidon. He probably went to Tyre and Sidon to avoid the crowds.

He's not staying in Tyre and Sidon, but he does stay kind of out of central Israel for the time being. And he's on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, where it's mostly not Jewish crowds as he would have over in Galilee. Then they brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech.

And they begged him to put his hand on him and he took him aside from the multitude. He put his fingers in his ears and spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, Epithah, and that is be opened.

Again, the Aramaic word Jesus used, which means to be open. Immediately his ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was loosed and he spoke plainly. Then he commanded them that they should tell no one.

But the more he commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

So another miracle. I mean, it gets to be you begin to wonder why they choose to record the miracles they do. And when there's so many, they don't mention specifically.

But this one miracle perhaps was the main miracle he did while he was over there, since he was trying to be in retirement. He may not have done a lot of miracles at this particular point in this particular location, but this one was brought to him. So it's recorded because it may have stood out as an exception.

And this is a different kind of case. There was something wrong with the man's tongue. Now, why Jesus put his fingers in the ears and spat and touched his tongue.

I can't tell you the answer to that anymore. I can tell you why he made mud and put it in the man's eyes and had him wash him out. Jesus did unusual things sometimes in association with his healing.

I guess doing something physical like that, doing something would make it very clear that this man was made well by association with Jesus, because obviously the strange things Jesus did would draw attention to the fact that he was doing something to the

man. Whereas if he just said, be well and walked his way, the man and the man got better, it would not be obvious to lookers on that Jesus had anything to do with it necessarily, unless they heard him give the command. But doing something like this, which would get attention, may have been just a way of showing that it was he that was working the miracle and it wasn't something happening independently of him at all.

And again, I don't know why Mark chooses to preserve the Aramaic form of what Jesus said and then translated, but he does here. Apart from that, we just have, in a sense, another case of a remarkable healing, a man whose tongue had been apparently misformed or bound in some way and was now loose so he could speak plainly for the first time in his life. It's probably a birth defect, so now he could speak plainly and he could hear.

And once again, people are astonished, but there's most of these things we're accustomed to by now, these these reactions to his miracles and so forth. We we could go on into chapter eight and we actually have time to do so, but we don't have time to get through chapter eight. So I think we're going to stop right here and we'll pick it up at eight next time.