

## Mark Chapter 7:

From the very first verses in Mark, we're told that this contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of what Jesus has come to do for sinners, people like you, people like me. We've seen Jesus preaching that the kingdom of God has come with him. He's been authenticating this message with miracles, with healings, and with deliverance

Just last week in chapter six, we saw Jesus take a couple fish and a few loaves of bread and multiply them to feed thousands of people. And then He walked on water

That brings us to today, where we're going to see the Pharisees, the religious leaders at that time, seem to be remarkably picky about a small area of tradition with the guy who walked on water and has done miracles, and has basically beat them in every conversation they've had so far.

So, with Chapter 7 let's divide it into two sections - the whole discourse about clean and unclean and then the two miracles of Gentiles

### First Section:

According to **verses 3-4**, the Pharisees and all religious Jews would not eat unless they had washed their hands a certain way. For the Jews, and all religious people, everything revolves around ritual.

This washing had nothing to do with cleaning the hands. It was a ceremonial cleansing. John MacArthur describes it this way. ***"This washing had nothing to do with cleaning dirty hands but with a ceremonial rinsing. The ceremony involved someone pouring water out of a jar onto another's hands, whose fingers must be pointing up. As long as the water dripped off at the wrist, the person could proceed to the next step. He then had water poured over both hands with the fingers pointing down. Then each hand was to be rubbed with the fist of the other hand."***

We still have the Pharisees with us today.

There are plenty of people who would try to force you to live by their rules.

They want to tell you how you can dress; where you can go; what you can do etc.

The problem with man's rules is just that. They are man's rules and not the Lord's.

In **verses 14-23** Jesus sheds some much needed light on this subject. Jesus tells the crowds, that it is not what comes into the body, like eating with unwashed hands, that causes spiritual defilement; it is those things that arise from within the heart of a person that defile him or her. Bottom line - keeping external rules will not change the heart.

Jesus takes the words of the Pharisees and uses this occasion to talk about the internal corruption of humanity

So, He is not just addressing the Pharisees or the Scribes - He uses this occasion to talk about the heart of man

The word *anthrōpos* ("human being" or "person") is used eleven times in the span of **Mark 7:7--23 a**

The basic problem Christians should be concerned about, Mark seems to be saying through this striking pileup [of the word *anthrōpos*], is not how or what one should eat but the internal corruption of the *anthrōpos*.

We know enough about the human condition to say that evil is about more than an individual's selfishness or bad decisions.

Without soft-pedaling the passage's negative focus, we must be grateful for the love and mercy God nevertheless extends to each and every broken *anthrōpos*.

### **The Two Gentiles in need:**

Juxtaposed to the teaching on defilement He has just given Jesus now shows compassion to even those who were "outside" the Jewish nation

Jesus apparently insulting and dehumanizing a desperate woman seeking the health of her family. This is Jesus writing Gentiles off as second-tier citizens...Jesus' statement was full of prejudice and ethnocentrism.

The woman isn't just described as a Gentile; Mark is careful to tell us that she is a Syrophenician, a resident of Tyre and Sidon (now Lebanon)

Jesus' answer is indeed harsh, but he is reflecting, in a nutshell, the tumultuous and ambiguous relationship between Israel and her idolatrous Syrophenician neighbors.

For when we see the depth of the enmity between Israel and the Sidonians, which forms the backdrop to Jesus' initial statement, we can understand the depth of the radical and gracious nature of God's blessings through Jesus. When she admits her humility before the Messiah — when she begs for mercy—we see that even a former enemy can receive the deliverance and blessing that belongs to God's children

For us it demonstrates that that there is mercy for any and everyone

With the healing of the deaf mute - again a Gentile it demonstrates that Jesus came to seek and save the world - it does not matter race, color or creed

**So - some things to reflect on - think about:**

- 1. The first part of this Mark 7 - thoughts, comments or something you would like to add**
- 2. Tell us about a time when you were desperate for help. What did you do?**
- 3. When Jesus enters a house in the vicinity of Tyre, why does He try to "keep His presence secret"?**
- 4. What is odd and unconventional about the Syrophenician woman's request?**
- 5. Why does Jesus answer her with what seem to be harsh words?**
- 6. What do His metaphors of "children" and "dogs" refer to?**
- 7. Why was the woman undeterred by Christ's reply? What does she add to Christ's mini-parable?**
- 8. In what ways is the Syrophenician woman a model for us?**
- 9. Who does Jesus meet in the Decapolis?**
- 10. What is the first thing Jesus does with the deaf man and why do you think Jesus did this**
- 11. How did Jesus heal this man who was handicapped with deafness and a speech impediment?**

Let's approach Jesus with faith that He can meet our needs and praise Him who "has done everything well."