

Jesus Ministers to Gentiles in the Surrounding Regions

Matthew 15:21-31; Mark 7:24 - 37

A Gentile Shows Her Faith (Mark 7:24-29)

²¹ Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. (^{7:24} And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it*, but He could not be hidden.) ²² And behold, a woman of Canaan (^{7:25} whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him) came from that region and cried out to Him (and fell at His feet,) saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." (^{7:26} The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.) ²³ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." ²⁴ But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶ But He answered and said, (²⁷ "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.") ²⁷ And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." ²⁸ Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute

³¹ Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. ³² 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. ³³ And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴ Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵ Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶ Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*. ³⁷ 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."

Jesus Heals Great Multitudes

²⁹ Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰ Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them. ³¹ So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Questions:

1. Why would Jesus here leave familiar territory where He was well known and go north into the region of Tyre and Sidon (Gentile territory)? What do we learn from Mark's account in Mark 7:24?
2. What do you think the disciples were thinking when the Canaanite woman came and created a loud scene and kept on asking Jesus to help her demon-possessed daughter? Why do you think Jesus was not saying a word?
3. Were the disciples urging Jesus to just send her away or to grant her request so she would leave them alone? Why did Jesus answer them by saying He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel?
4. When the woman began and begging Him to help her, how did Jesus give her what seemed to be a 'NO' that still gave her a little hope that He might actually be saying 'YES'? How did she then gain Jesus admiration?
5. How was this little episode a valuable lesson for the disciples that they might have never gotten in Israel? They had earlier gone only to the lost sheep of Israel, but now they were among Gentiles; what did they learn?
6. Was Jesus here completely shutting out the Gentiles? Why would He later send the gospel to the whole world?
7. What was wrong with the man brought to Jesus in the region of Decapolis? The man to be healed could speak - but how? Why did Jesus take this man away from the multitude to help him?
8. Why was Jesus giving such personal attention to this man? How were Jesus' actions all adapted to the needs of this man? How is this a good story for those who are deaf or have speech impediments today?
9. Why command these people to tell no one about this? What was their response afterwards?
10. How is this miracle and response closely related to the miracles Matthew records in vs 29-31?