

25. Jesus Healed the Daughter of a Greek Woman

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to understand that Jesus explained what the heart of man without Christ is like. We saw that such a heart is filled with evil. We also saw that a person receives a new heart through repentance and faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Then, Jesus explained the foundation for the fact that the Gospel must be taken to all people.

In Mark 7:24-27, we read, “From there He arose and 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. 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, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, ‘Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.’” Tyre and Sidon was an area where the people were Gentiles, instead of Jews. Most of the people in that area had no true understanding about Jesus, although it is clear from these verses that they had been hearing about Him.

We saw, in Mark 6:30-31, that the disciples returned to Jesus after their ministry trip. Those verses say, “Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, ‘Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.” We saw in the rest of the chapter that Jesus and the disciples had no opportunity to rest and discuss what had happened on their ministry trip. As a result, Jesus took the disciples to this Gentile area, so they could have time to rest and He could teach them important lessons from their ministry trip. However, one of the Greek women, of that area, had heard that Jesus had cast out many demons.

This woman had a daughter who was possessed with a demon. As a result, she came, to the house where Jesus and the disciples were, and fell at the feet of Jesus. Then, she began begging him to cast the demon out of her daughter. Jesus knew that this woman had great faith. Jesus wanted His disciples to see and understand the faith of this Gentile woman, so Jesus gave the woman a very unusual answer. Jesus told the woman, “Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw *it* to the little dogs.” At first, it sounded like Jesus was only concerned for the Jews, as He said let the children be filled first. The Jews often referred to the Gentiles as dogs. However, Jesus used a different word than was usually used. This was the word for a little dog. The only places this word is used in the New Testament are in Matthew 15:26-27 and in these verses. Matthew wrote about this same woman and event, so this was the only woman with whom Jesus used this word. This was the word that was used for a little dog that a family kept as a pet.

In both Matthew and Mark, the same word is used when the woman answered Jesus. Mark 7:28-30 says, “And she answered and said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.’ Then He said to her, ‘For this saying go your way; 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.” Here, we see that the woman showed her faith by saying

that the little dogs were allowed to eat the crumbs that the children dropped.

Matthew 15:28 says, “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.” Here, we see that Jesus wanted to honor the faith of the woman. He wanted the disciples to understand that a Gentile could have great faith. As a result, the words of the woman gave Jesus the opportunity to point out the greatness of her faith to the disciples. Here, we see that Jesus was preparing the disciples for the time when He would send them to take the Gospel to all people, not just the Jews.

Jesus told the woman that the demon had gone out of her daughter. The woman then showed her faith in another way as she believed Jesus and stopped begging him to heal her daughter. Instead, she immediately left to go to her house. When she arrived at her house, she saw that her faith had been rewarded. The demon was gone from her daughter, and the daughter was lying on the bed. This is another of the miracles Jesus performed without even going to the place where the person was. He showed, again, that He could heal just by speaking the word, even though the needy person was not in the same area where Jesus was when He spoke.

Jesus had given the disciples a little time for rest and teaching by going to this area. Mark 7:31-34 says, “Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of 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, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’” Once Jesus had shown the disciples that Gentiles could have great faith, Jesus left that area and traveled east until He and the disciples were on the other side of the Jordan River. Then, they traveled south toward the east side of the Sea of Galilee. This was the area known as Decapolis. These ten cities were considered a separate group of cities which had been greatly influenced by the Greek culture, because many Greeks lived there. Since this was an area with a large Greek influence, it is possible that this man was also a Gentile.

In the area of these ten cities, some of the people brought a man, who was deaf and could not speak clearly, to Jesus. The people who brought this man to Jesus begged Jesus to heal the man. This was actually one of many people Jesus healed in this area, because Matthew 15:29-31 says, “Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. 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. 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.” We see that Jesus took this man, and those who had brought him, away from the crowd, so He could speak to the man personally.

When they were away from the crowd, Jesus put His fingers in the ears of the man. Then, Jesus spat and touched his tongue. This was probably the way that Jesus showed this man what He was planning to do for him. Jesus wanted this man to know that He cared for the man and that He was going to heal him. We see that Jesus always had time to show His care and love for an individual.

Then, Jesus looked up to heaven. The word translated “sighed” means *to give a sigh or a groan*. Then, Jesus spoke, and said, “Ephphatha”. This word means, *be opened*.

Mark 7:35-37 says, “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.’” We see that the healing of this man happened instantly and included both his ears and his speech. We read that his ears were “opened.” This word means *to open completely*. This means that the man could hear clearly, just like any person that had good hearing.

We also see that the thing, that caused the man to speak with a speech impediment, was healed. The word translated “impediment” means *a bond, a band a string or a chain*. This word is used in Luke 13:16, where we read, “So ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?” This woman had a back that was so bent, she could not even stand up straight. Christ said that this woman had been bound by Satan. Then, in Philippians 1:13-14, Paul used this word twice to speak of his chains in Rome. Those verses say, “So that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” In both places, and most of the other places this word is used, it speaks about something that holds a person in bondage. Jesus immediately set the tongue of this man free.

Jesus then told the man, and those with him, not to tell anyone. However, the more Jesus commanded them not to speak, the more the people told others what had happened to this man. As a result, the verses quoted earlier from Matthew showed that many others brought people, who needed healing of various physical problems, to Jesus. This included “the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others.” As a result, the multitudes in this area were filled with amazement. They expressed their amazement by saying, “He has done all things well.” The word translated “well” means *excellently, beautifully or well*. The disciples realized that Jesus was doing things that caused the crowds to have great respect for Jesus. We see that they glorified the God of Israel. This is a further indication that most of these people were Gentiles.

We also want to help our physical and spiritual children follow the example of Jesus and develop a great concern for people in other areas who do not yet know Christ. They will develop that concern as they see us show Christ’s concern for others. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children your concern for the salvation of others.