

THE CHILDREN'S CRUMBS

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus accepts and heals us, we can accept and love others.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus showed His authority over the demonic spirit that tormented the Gentile girl, but this miracle only pointed to the truth that all evil will one day be defeated with Jesus's second coming at the end of the age. Believers can walk in hope, trusting by faith that this victory will come.



OUTSIDERS NO MORE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

Mark 7

JESUS BRINGS US OUT OF DARKNESS

MARK 7:24-30

24 He got up and departed from there to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, but he could not escape notice. 25 Instead, immediately after hearing about him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth, and she was asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, because it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she replied to him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 Then he told her, "Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has left your daughter." 30 When she went back to her home, she found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

JESUS HEALS US

MARK 7:31-37

31 Again, leaving the region of Tyre, he went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had difficulty speaking and begged Jesus to lay his hand on him. 33 So he took him away from the crowd in private. After putting his fingers in the man's ears and spitting, he touched his tongue. 34 Looking up to heaven, he sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!"). 35 Immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly. 36 He ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more they proclaimed it. 37 They were extremely astonished and said, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

BEFORE YOU TEACH

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus accepts and heals us, we can accept and love others.

Leaders: Many students wrestle with being accepted by God because they don't feel accepted by believers. Look for ways to extend God's heart to them. See them as Jesus does and love them deeply.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

JESUS BRINGS US OUT OF DARKNESS

MARK 7:24

"This had been the home of Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31-32). Both Ezekiel (ch. 26) and Zechariah (ch. 9) prophesied against her. James Edwards says, 'Tyre probably represented the most extreme expression of paganism, both actually and symbolically, that a Jew could expect to encounter.' Yet Jesus goes there and graciously expands the scope and reach of the Messiah beyond what Israel expected. Unfortunately, like Jonah, too many Jews of that day could not imagine that God would extend His salvation beyond the borders of Israel. 'From a socioreligious perspective, Jesus's visit to Tyre universalizes the concept of Messiah in terms of geography, ethnicity, gender and religion in a way entirely unprecedented in Judaism.' This Savior is not for just one nation. He is for all nations, and we should be as well."⁷

MARK 7:24-30

"Whether Jesus went into Phoenicia immediately after the preceding event(s) is unimportant, but Mark's placing the account immediately after 7:1-23 is most significant. If the proper inference from the teaching of Jesus in 7:1-23 is that all foods are clean (v. 19), the lesson to be learned from 7:24-30 is that all people are clean! For Mark the excursion of Jesus into 'unclean' Gentile territory exemplified His disregard for the concept of ritual defilement. He saw in the ministry to the woman a preview of the Gentile mission and in the response of the woman a preview of the acceptance of the gospel by the Gentiles. Mark's Gentile readers/hearers no doubt found in the account reassurance that they were part of the true people of God."⁸

JESUS HEALS US

MARK 7:33-35

"Jesus takes the man aside. His attention is personal and compassionate. Entering the man's world, our Lord uses 'sign language.' 'The man could not hear Jesus and he was also incapable of verbal communication. So Jesus "spoke" to him in the language he could understand—sign language. The fingers placed in his ears and then removed meant, "I am going to remove the blockage in your hearing." The spitting and the touching of the man's tongue meant, "I am going to remove the blockage in your mouth." The glance up to heaven meant, "It is God alone who is able to do this for you." Jesus wanted the man to understand that it was not magic but God's grace that healed him."⁹

CONTEXT



Many of us have read Isaiah's prophecy about a virgin giving birth to a son named Immanuel (Isa. 7:14). A thread connects this prophecy to today's passage. Jesus left Jewish territory for the Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon. Hostility between Jews and Gentiles ran deep, reaching back to the Syro-Ephraimite War around 735 BC. God's kingdom had been split: Israel (north) and Judah (south). The kings of Syria and Israel (also called Ephraim) tried to force Judah into an alliance against Assyria, a powerful threat to the entire region (Assyria did conquer/deport Israel by 722 BC). The prophet Isaiah met with King Ahaz of Judah, warning him to have faith in God and not to align with the other nations, including Assyria. When Syria and Israel attacked Judah, killing 120,000 troops and taking 200,000 captives (2 Chron. 28:6-8), Ahaz didn't trust the Lord; he called to Assyria for help. Because of Ahaz's unfaithfulness, God later used Babylon as an instrument of judgment; they leveled Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and carried the people into exile. The long, messy conflict raised a question both during the battle and the exile period: Would God really keep His promise to the house of David (2 Sam. 7:16) or was hope lost?¹⁰ Today, we meet a Gentile woman from the very region (Phoenician Syria) which threatened David's line all those years ago. And we see the Living Answer to the question, the fruition of Isaiah's prophecy that God was sending a good King, a Son named Immanuel: Jesus is the fulfilled promise.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION



New Identity of the Believer

When we place faith in Jesus, we go through a change of identity—from being enemies under God's wrath (Eph. 2:1-3) to members of God's family as beloved children (Eph. 2:19). Believers are declared righteous on account of Jesus's perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer are believers slaves to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. Believers are delivered from the realm of darkness and belong to the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Anyone who is in Jesus is a "new creation"; the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive, becoming more and more like Him (2 Cor. 5:17).

LEADERS' PRAYER

LORD, WE THANK YOU FOR MAKING SALVATION POSSIBLE FOR EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES, NOT JUST A SELECT FEW. WE HAVE DONE NOTHING TO DESERVE YOUR GRACE, AND YET YOU POUR IT OUT ON US. THANK YOU FOR COMING TO SAVE US.



KICK STARTER

DID YOU KNOW?

Wealthy Greek and Roman families would keep small dogs as pets, which were often fed scraps or crumbs under the table. Readers of Mark's Gospel would have known exactly what to picture when the woman used this example.¹¹

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

1

NEVER UNSEEN

SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Ask the following questions, allowing time for students to share responses:

- **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT LIKE YOU DIDN'T REALLY BELONG IN A ROOM, WITH A GROUP, OR AT AN EVENT?**
- **HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO ASK MORE THAN ONCE FOR HELP DOING SOMETHING? HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?**
- **WHAT MAKES YOU FEEL SEEN OR UNDERSTOOD?**

Feeling like we don't belong or like no one sees or understands us is a feeling many of us probably experience more than we want to admit. Statistics say even though our world is more connected than it has ever been with phones, social media, and technology, it is also wrecked by loneliness. As we look at this lesson, we see that Jesus came for the outcast, the lonely, and the forgotten.

2

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Labels are everywhere: labels that situate each of us into certain groups; labels that say we belong in some places but not others; labels of approval and disapproval. Most of us are just struggling to fit somewhere. We don't want to stand out, but we don't want to blend in either. At the heart of this struggle is a surprising truth: God created us with a desire to belong. The very fact that we are created beings means we belong to someone, right? We try so hard to find acceptance here. The issue though? We weren't created to root our sense of belonging in anyone but God. Do you ever wonder, "Does Jesus actually see me, and if He does, am I actually welcome?" And the loudest, most incredible answer is "Yes!" Sure, God desires each of us to have community here with people to encourage us and walk with us. But the labels, the striving to belong, the disappointment when we don't—we can let all of that go. The only label that will ever matter is that you're God's child, deeply loved and wholly accepted.

DISCUSSION

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus accepts and heals us, we can accept and love others.

JESUS BRINGS US OUT OF DARKNESS

READ MARK 7:24-30



HOW DO YOU THINK THE WOMAN FELT AS SHE APPROACHED JESUS? WHAT STOPS US FROM GOING TO HIM LIKE THIS?

This Gentile mother was desperate to see the One who could help her daughter. She risked being rejected, humiliated, and punished for her child's healing. But we often hesitate to bring our needs to Jesus. **We remain outside the room because we forget He loves us, we think we can handle our problems, we lack faith in His ability to help us, we fear what others will say. Maybe we asked for His help before but felt like He didn't answer.** So, we stopped going to Him. This woman went to Jesus because she trusted His authority. She knew He was the One to bring her daughter out of the darkness. He can bring us out of darkness too.



HOW DO JESUS'S WORDS MAKE YOU FEEL (V. 27)? WHY DID HE RESPOND LIKE THIS?

Leaders: Share Context for deeper understanding. We must wrestle with Jesus's words within context. His response to a woman begging for help in faith doesn't feel like Jesus, right? But His words are weighty with purpose. Jews believed the Messiah was for them only; the Gentile woman had faith Jesus cared for her too. Jesus responded like most Jews would've—maybe even how some of His disciples wanted to respond. His words seem to sting with elitism and prejudice, but they point to a misunderstanding in this time period. God chose Israel to bring about His Son's birth; the gospel began with His people (Rom. 1:16). **But here, Jesus taught His watching disciples that superiority doesn't reflect God's heart, preparing them to understand that He is the Savior of all.**



WHO ARE THE OUTSIDERS IN OUR CULTURE? IN YOUR LIFE? AS BELIEVERS, WHAT IS OUR ROLE IN HELPING THEM LEAVE DARKNESS?

Culture conditions us from an early age to develop a mentality of "us versus them." We more easily see what makes people different from us rather than all the ways we are similar. Then, we begin drawing boxes to keep outsiders out and insiders in. We feel safer that way. Who are these outsiders? They are the people we don't like, don't get along with, don't agree with or understand, and don't want to be around. They don't fit inside our boxes. But let's go back to one of the first truths in Scripture: Humans are made in God's image (Gen. 1:27). They are made in His image. **We may want to ignore, avoid, judge, and tolerate them from a distance. But in the Gospels, we see Jesus come close.** He treats outsiders with love, honor, care, and respect. He heals them. Our role is to treat others as Jesus treats them, welcoming them in instead of pushing them out. Our role is to love them as Jesus loves them. **Our role is to share the truth of the gospel with them, which is this: God loves them so much that He gave His Son to welcome them in as sons and daughters. We don't have to agree with everyone, but who are we to decide that some must remain outside in darkness when Jesus has opened the door and invited all people into light?**

JESUS HEALS US

READ MARK 7:31-37



WHAT STANDS OUT ABOUT HOW JESUS HEALED THE DEAF MAN? HOW SHOULD THIS SHAPE OUR HEART FOR OTHERS?

Jesus is God; He could have healed the man however He wanted. But we see Jesus's heart for people in the way He chose to heal this man. Jesus took him to the side, away from the crowd. A man the religious leaders would've considered flawed or sinful—Jesus held him, touched him, and restored him. In this culture, many people would have avoided this man, but Jesus treated him like he mattered. Because he did. **Jesus doesn't treat us like projects. He sees us, cares for us as individuals, and meets our needs with compassion, care, and presence.** Our hearts don't always work this way. We can pray to have eyes like Jesus's eyes and ask God to give us a heart that cares for the hurting, the lost, and the broken.

HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE GIVE US HOPE WHEN SO MUCH BROKENNESS SURROUNDS US?

With one word Jesus healed this man. He didn't need to go to the doctor the next day or see a specialist. The man's healing came through faith and wasn't dependent on any other step. Jesus's work was enough. Jesus didn't just heal a man's hearing; He made right what never should have been wrong in the first place, reversing the effects of sin! **Jesus's healings give us glimpses of God's desire for us, glimpses of what eternity will look like, when everything that's wrong here is made right and made new.** We have incredible hope because Jesus's work on the cross was enough. Faith in Him is enough.

WHAT ARE WAYS YOU NEED JESUS'S HEALING TODAY?

This question may be tough for you to answer. Maybe you're scared to vocalize the things you desperately want or need. We still need healing today. Our world is sick with physical, mental, and emotional ailments. **But the Gospels teach us this: We can go to Jesus. He invites us.** His sacrifice has healed our sin and restored us to God. But the Lord cares about every part of our lives because we're His children. He cares about what hurts us, and He cares about what brings us joy. When sin entered the world, sickness, pain, and brokenness came with it. **Jesus came to heal us from our sin, but we can ask Him and trust Him to heal us from everything else sin has broken.**

WRAP-UP



WHAT NEED OR STRUGGLE HAVE YOU BEEN AFRAID TO BRING TO JESUS? HOW CAN YOU TAKE STEPS TO SURRENDER IT?

We all struggle to surrender everything to Jesus. Sanctification is the process of being made more like Jesus over time. **Jesus lived His life surrendered to the Father at all times. He held nothing back. The only way we do the same is by continually examining our life and handing everything we'd rather cling to over to Him.** As believers, we will never reach a point on this side of eternity when we're done surrendering to Him all that needs healed or brought out of darkness. Trying to handle struggles on our own to keep from being disappointed isn't the answer; surrendering to Jesus and trusting His authority is. Maybe you are afraid of the future, and anxiety consumes your thoughts. God is your good Father, and He cares. Maybe you've been hiding something from your parents and are afraid to confess because you worry they won't look at you the same. Jesus already knows and already loves you. Confess your sin to the Lord, and ask Him to help you confess it to others. **Take your needs to the Lord. He has promised it is safe to do so (Matt. 11:28).**