

# Going to the Dogs

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Date: 11 June 2025

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[ 0 : 00 ] So far in chapter 7 of Mark's Gospel, Jesus has been focusing on what makes a person clean! or unclean. The Jewish religious leaders thought that compliance with their own rules and traditions,! which they developed outside of the Mosaic Law, could keep a person clean. Said another way, the scribes and Pharisees thought that if they followed their rules and traditions, they could make themselves right with God. Jesus has been showing us that being right with God has nothing to do with whether we follow external rules or regulations. Instead, God focuses on our hearts. Jesus' disciples who grew up in Judaism have been struggling with that concept. Remember what Jesus said to them in Mark chapter 7 verses 18 through 23, verses that we covered last week. Here are Mark 7, 18 through 23.

And he said to them, of course that's Jesus, then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart, but his stomach, and is expelled? Thus he declared all foods clean. And he said, what comes out of a person is what defiles him? For from within, out of the heart of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. In our passage tonight, Jesus is going to take his disciples out of the country for some remedial training. That training will be interrupted, but even the interruption is part of the training. Tonight's passage is Mark chapter 7, verses 24 through 30.

Let's go ahead and read those verses now. Here are Mark chapter 7, verses 24 through 30.

Speaking about Jesus, Mark wrote, And from there he arose, and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house, and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him, and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And he said to her, Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. But she answered him, Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.

And he said to her, For this statement you may go your way, the demon has left your daughter. And she went home and found the child lying in bed, and the demon gone.

We've seen a lot of hard teaching as we've worked through Mark chapter 7, particularly in the passage that we studied last week. Jesus has been showing us that we can do nothing to earn our salvation.

[ 3 : 23 ] We're all corrupted from within, and that of course is some bad news. Tonight we'll see Jesus and his disciples going to the dogs, to an area inhabited by Gentiles whom most Jews considered no better than dogs. But in going to those dogs, Jesus shows us some good news. God saves unworthy people who come to him in genuine faith. That's the main idea for this week's passage. God saves unworthy people who come to him in genuine faith. We'll spend more time than usual tonight on some background before we get to our passage in Mark. We will do that to see how the Jews had missed a main point of the Old Testament.

God always had intended Israel to be the nation through which God's gospel would reach all other nations and people groups. By the time Jesus came along, however, most Jews felt that they were the only people blessed by God, and that Israel would be the only nation whose people would benefit from God's salvation. And that's why the Jews viewed Jesus' teaching as so revolutionary. However, Jesus was teaching what the Israelites should have known all along. The religious leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees, should have known the Old Testament even better than most because they were the experts in those scriptures. When you think about Israel, though, perhaps no biblical figure illustrates Israel's failure to willingly take the gospel to other nations more

vividly than the prophet Jonah, we know that Jonah preferred running away from God to preaching a message of repentance to the Ninevites. Rather than viewing the surrounding nations with compassion, the Israelites grew to despise foreigners, treating them as enemies instead of the mission field. And we know that when God saved the Ninevites, Jonah was angry about that. God's plan to build a nation to bless all other nations goes all the way back to when God called Abram the father of the Jewish people. Listen to Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 through 3.

Genesis chapter 12 verses 1 through 3 say, Now the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you, and I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. God restated the same thing in Genesis 22 verse 18, Genesis 26 verse 4, and Genesis 28 verse 14.

God also said the same thing in different words in other parts of the Old Testament. Psalm 67 only has seven verses, but listen to how many times the psalm talks about all nations or all peoples hearing about God.

[ 6 : 31 ] Let's go ahead and read all of Psalm 67. It says, May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity, and guide the nations upon earth.

Selah. Let the peoples praise you, O God. Let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its increase. God, our God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us. Let all the ends of the earth fear him. Isaiah wrote similar things in his prophecy. In Isaiah 42, verses 6 through 12, God starts out by talking to the Messiah, and he says, I am the Lord.

I have called you in righteousness. I will take you by the hand and keep you. I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

[ 7 : 58 ] I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare.

Before they spring forth, I will tell you of them. Then in the next verse, it switches a little bit, and Isaiah is back to writing. Here are Isaiah 42, verses 10 through 12.

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth, ye who go down to the sea, and all that fills it, the coastlands and their inhabitants.

Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice, the villages that Keter inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Selah sing for joy. Let them shout from the top of the mountains.

Let them give glory to the Lord and declare his praise in the coastlands. Here is Isaiah 49, verse 6.

[ 9 : 00 ] God again is speaking to the Messiah, and he says, It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel.

I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach the end of the earth. How much clearer can God get than what he said at the end of Isaiah 49, 6?

I will make you as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

Because Mark wrote his gospel for a Gentile audience, he was careful to highlight the fact that the message of salvation was not limited to Israel, but extended to the entire world.

For first century Jews, that notion was radical and revolutionary. Even in the early church, many Jewish believers initially struggled to accept the idea that Gentiles could be saved without first converting to Judaism.

Where Israel failed in its global witness, the Messiah would triumph. He would be the unfailing light to the nations so that the message of God's salvation would spread throughout the entire world.

[ 10 : 16 ] The prophecies of Isaiah were clearly fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Though the focus of Jesus' earthly ministry centered on the nation of Israel, his offer of salvation extended to every person, whether Jew or Gentile.

For example, Jesus revealed himself as Messiah to an outcast Samaritan woman. We know her as the woman at the well in John chapter 4, verse 26.

After his death and resurrection, Jesus commissioned his followers to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

Of course, that comes from Acts chapter 1, verse 8. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the early Christians turned their world upside down so that the light of salvation spread to engulf the world. The gospel's global reach is perhaps most richly expressed in Revelation 5. That's a passage that depicts the glorified church in heaven. And there the four living creatures declared to the Lamb, You were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

[ 11 : 32 ] That's Revelation 5, verse 9. For all of eternity, redeemed people from all ages and all nations will glorify and worship their Savior.

And the Messiah's salvation ministry to the entire world is previewed in our text tonight, Mark chapter 7, verses 24 through 30. We'll see a Gentile woman from Tyre demonstrate saving faith in the Lord Jesus.

This is part of a broader passage that goes through Mark chapter 8, verse 9, and the broader passage records three miracles that Jesus performed as he ministered primarily to Gentiles. Tonight's passage is the only recorded instance of our Lord leaving Palestine. He was practicing what he preached. He just taught the disciples that there's no difference between Jews and Gentiles, and he's showing them that all are sinners and all need the Savior.

We're going to break tonight's passage into five sections, starting with just Mark chapter 7, verse 24. And in verse 24, we see the doomed retreat.

[ 12 : 43 ] So the doomed retreat is your first set of blanks. Here is verse 24 again. Mark was speaking about Jesus when he wrote this verse, and verse 24 says, And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. This is a turning point in Mark's gospel.

After more than a year in Galilee, Jesus' extended ministry there had come to an end. Some believed that the majority of the people rejected him, including the residents of his hometown of Nazareth.

The Jewish leaders had grown increasingly antagonistic, and they sought to kill him. King Herod, fearful that Jesus posed a threat to Herod's political power, also wanted to execute Jesus. Aware of the mounting opposition against him, and knowing that the cross was still months away, Jesus left Galilee for a concentrated time of training with his apostles.

[ 13 : 51 ] He withdrew out of a deliberate desire to prepare the twelve for their coming apostolic challenges. Rather than traveling into Judea, which would be south, he knew that it would be nearly impossible to find the privacy he sought, so the Lord journeyed north instead.

And as Mark explains, Jesus went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Tyre was 20 miles to the northwest of Capernaum where Jesus had been laboring.

Sidon was even further north. Both were situated on the Mediterranean coast and had been part of the Phoenician culture. It was from that region that Jezebel had come and had tormented the prophet Elijah.

By the first century, like all of Israel was, Tyre and Sidon also were under Roman administration. The Jewish rabbis said that the region of Tyre and Sidon was committed to gross paganism and idolatry, and today that region is part of Lebanon.

Notice that Mark says that Jesus could not be hidden. Although Mark was speaking in a literal sense, that observation remains true in an ultimate sense.

[ 15 : 08 ] No matter how people try to hide Jesus, he cannot be hidden even in the darkest places of this world. The fact that the people of the region spotted Jesus is not surprising, especially because a delegation from Tyre and Sidon had earlier come down to see him.

We saw that all the way back in Mark 3, verse 8. Listen to Mark 3, verses 7 and 8. Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Edomia and from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon.

When the great crowd heard all that he was doing, they came to him. Going back to our text tonight, consider how Mark 7, verse 24, sets the scene.

Many Jews, including the rabbis, considered the region of Tyre and Sidon to be the most pagan region imaginable. Yet that is a place where Jesus chose to take his disciples.

It would be similar to us choosing to go to a place like Iran on vacation. The retreat for Jesus and his disciples was doomed from the start because Jesus could not be hidden, but the doomed retreat was exactly what Jesus had intended all along.

[16:35] Jesus and the apostles doomed retreat was doomed by a pushy lady, and we first meet her in verses 25 and 26 where we see the desperate request.

So the desperate request is your second section. Look again at Mark 7, verses 25 and 26.

But immediately, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth, and she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

Though the Lord had intended this trip for rest and private instruction for his disciples, he also knew of the divine appointment that awaited him. In fact, that planned encounter was a critical part of the apostles' training to be Jesus' witnesses.

Jesus' meeting with the Gentile woman provided the twelve with a vivid example of true faith and a preview of what was to come when those twelve would begin to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

[17:46] We'll see that preview as we go along, but let's first consider the audacity of this lady. The lady has several things working against her.

First was just the fact that she was a lady, and in that time, proper ladies never approached Jewish men. Second, she was a Gentile. Gentiles rarely associated with Jews, and we saw in earlier verses that according to tradition, an encounter with a Gentile rendered a Jew unclean.

And third, she was a pagan Syrophenician. Matthew's account of this same event sheds even more light on just how much of an outcast this lady was.

Listen to Matthew chapter 15 verses 21 and 22. Matthew chapter 15 verses 21 and 22 say, And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

[19:01] On top of everything else, the pushy lady was a Canaanite. The Canaanites were some of the original inhabitants of the promised land. As far back as Exodus chapter 23, God had commanded the Israelites to utterly destroy the Canaanites.

Listen to what Moses told the Israelites in Deuteronomy chapter 7 verses 1 and 2. Moses said in Deuteronomy 7 1 and 2, When the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more numerous and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must devote them to complete destruction.

You shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them. The Israelites failed to obey God's command. Some Canaanites remained and now a descendant of one of those Canaanites was brazen enough to approach Jesus, God himself.

Mark 7, 26 in the ESV said that she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. That translation fails to give us the true sense of desperation in her situation.

The original Greek indicates that she begged Jesus and that she kept begging him over and over and over again. The New American Standard and the New King James give us a better sense of what was happening.

[20:44] Here's Mark 7, verse 26 in the New American Standard. It says, Now the woman was a Gentile of the Syrophenician race and she kept asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

So notice that it says she kept asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter. The lady had an urgent problem and that's why she kept asking Jesus to do the demon casting out.

Demons are fallen angels who operate in the kingdom of darkness. And in this horrific instance, a demon was cruelly possessing a little girl. So picture what she must have been going through as a mother.

Her heart had to be aching for her daughter. With her life and home in satanic turmoil, she likely had performed whatever ceremonies she thought would appease her false gods, but none of those things worked.

When it became obvious that idols of stone could not deliver her child, she abandoned her pagan practices and turning away from her impotent idols, she came to Jesus hoping that Israel's Messiah

could rescue her daughter.

[ 21 : 58 ] We know from Matthew's account that the lady knew that Jesus was Israel's Messiah. Going back to the ESV, listen to the last part of Matthew chapter 15 verse 22 again.

The lady said, Have mercy on me, O son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon! Despite her pagan background, she had heard of the Jews coming Messiah who was called the son of David and she reverently addressed Jesus as her sovereign and omnipotent Lord.

She'd heard of the Messiah's great power and also had sensed his great goodness. She treated him with both dignity and expectancy. She approached him in the same reverent, trusting spirit as the leper who met Jesus and bowed down to him saying, If you will, you can make me clean.

We saw him back in Mark chapter 1 verse 40. Matthew's account again fills in some gaps for us about what happens next. Here are Matthew chapter 15 verses 23 through 25.

But he, that's Jesus, did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him saying, Send her away for she is crying out after us.

[ 23 : 18 ] He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but she came and knelt before him saying, Lord, help me. Does Jesus' behavior in these verses strike you as being out of character for him?

Picture the scene here. This desperate Gentile pagan lady just correctly identified Jesus as Israel's Messiah, something most Israelites fail to do.

Instead of commending her for that, Jesus ignores her. Apparently emboldened by Jesus' silence, the disciples show their lack of compassion.

They say, Send her away for she is crying out after us. The disciples want Jesus to get rid of this nuisance lady so that they can get on with their vacation. The Lord, however, intended to teach those disciples a valuable lesson about the character of genuine faith.

In response to the disciples' request, but within earshot of the woman, Jesus answered and said, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

[ 24 : 28 ] Jesus' words reminded the disciples that his initial mission was to the Jewish people and that the time for them to be witnesses throughout the whole earth had not yet arrived.

His statement also tested the woman's faith. It sounded as if he might not help her because she was a Gentile. Those with lesser faith might have erupted in anger or walked away in dejection. Instead, she came and knelt before him saying, Lord, help me. The phrase knelt is from a Greek word that's often rendered as to worship. So the woman's behavior here underscores her reverential attitude toward Jesus.

Knowing Jesus was her only hope, she humbly refused to be dissuaded from coming to him. The lady's desperate request sets the stage for the next section of our passage.

In Mark chapter 7, verse 27, Jesus finally speaks to the woman and we see the direct response. So the direct response is your next set of blanks.

[ 25 : 35 ] Look at what Jesus said in Mark 7, verse 27. And he said to her, Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.

This sounds like an insult. It sounds like Jesus is calling the lady a dog. A Jew calling a Gentile a dog was common in those days. Most dogs back then were wild mongrel scavengers, unlike the pet dogs that we have today.

Jesus' words here actually are a parable, though. Jesus does equate the lady to a dog, but his words are a little nicer than how they first sound. The New Testament uses two different Greek words for dogs, and one refers to the feral mongrels that roam the streets in packs and scavenge for garbage.

The dogs referred to here in Mark 7, 27, use the Greek word sometimes translated as little dogs or even puppies. These dogs were household pets that were cared for by the family.

So Jesus used a term for dogs that was far less harsh than most first century Jews would have applied to the Gentiles. Those beloved pets will be fed, but they are not going to be fed first.

[ 26 : 58 ] The pets typically were fed the table scraps, but only after the family had eaten. We see here that there's an order to Jesus' mission. He came to show Israel that he's the fulfillment of all that God promised to Israel.

After his resurrection, Jesus will send his disciples to make disciples of all the nations. But not yet. Right now, the Gentiles have to wait their turn. Our pushy lady friend was undeterred by Jesus' direct response.

In Mark chapter 7, verse 28, we see the determined retort. So the determined retort is your next set of blanks. Look at verse 28 again.

But she answered him, Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Notice what the woman says here.

She says, Yes, Lord. She heard the parable and she understood it. She's not hardened or blind or deaf. This woman actually is the first example of someone who actually understands a parable and responds rightly to it.

[ 28 : 12 ] No one else so far has really understood Jesus' mission. She understands it after hearing only one sentence in the form of a parable. And she not only understands it, she does not argue against it.

Her point was that the dogs get some food at the same time as the children and thus do not have to wait. All she humbly wanted was a crumb, a small benefit of Jesus' grace for her desperate need. In essence, she said, Yes, Lord, I understand. I have no prior claim to your mercy. I'm not numbered among the children. I have no right to sit at the table and feast on the food that you set before your children.

I do not want that. I'm satisfied, Lord, with the crumbs. All I'm asking is that you will let me have one crumb from your table, then I'll be satisfied.

Heal my daughter, please. I know she's not in your family. I know she's not numbered among the children. We are the dogs who wait for the crumbs, but one crumb is all that I'm asking for.

[ 29 : 21 ] The context here suggests that her faith was more than just a nominal belief in Jesus' healing power. Her humble, reverent, and persistent appeal to Christ implies that God was at work in her heart drawing her to salvation.

Had her faith remained in the pagan deities of her Canaanite culture, it would have been empty and worthless. True faith sets its hope in the one true God and fixes its eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

It would have been easy for this woman to walk away in bitter disappointment, but she fires back with a flurry of boldness. She uses wit, courage, and faith, and she responds in a way where she does not take offense.

She doesn't question the accuracy of Jesus' words. She simply and humbly carries his analogy one step further. So think about the insight, humility, and faith that that shows.

the greatness of this woman's faith is magnified when compared to the little that she knew. Born and raised in a pagan culture, she did not share in the privileged heritage of the Jewish people.

[ 30 : 37 ] She was removed from the temple, the sacrificial system, and even the scriptures. Yet even though she had received only a little revelation, she believed.

The magnitude of her faith was evidenced by her willingness to turn from the pagan deities of her upbringing and embrace Jesus Christ in faith. Her response stood in stark contrast to the Jewish religious leaders who arrogantly condemned their own Messiah as a blasphemer, a friend of sinners, and an ally of Satan.

Think about Matthew 11, verse 21, where Jesus offered this severe warning to the Israelites who rejected him. In Matthew 11, verse 21, Jesus said, Woe to you, Chorazin, woe to you, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Here was a real-life pagan woman from the region of Tyre who proved the truthfulness of Jesus' words. What a rebuke she was to apostate Israel, a Gentile who embraced the Messiah when so many self-righteous Jews rejected him.

For her, just the crumbs were enough. A tiny fragment of Jesus' power could heal her daughter, and that was all she wanted. Though the priority of Jesus' earthly mission was to the children of Israel, the crumbs of the gospel did fall from their table to satisfy humble Gentiles who hungered for true righteousness.

[ 32 : 14 ] The covenant, scriptures, and the Messiah may all have been given to Israel, but God intended for the Gentiles to receive the overflow. The message of salvation that first came to the Jews is the same gospel message that was and would be given to the Gentiles.

The several Gentile conversions in the gospels are previews of the future salvation of souls from all nations. so far we've seen the doomed retreat, the desperate request, the direct response, and the determined retort.

We have two more verses to cover, and in those verses we see the desired result. So the desired result is your last section. Check out Mark chapter 7, verses 29 and 30 again.

And he said to her, For this statement you may go your way, the demon has left your daughter. And of course that was Jesus speaking.

And then verse 30 says, And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. Jesus prolonged his interaction with this woman to put the nature of genuine faith on display.

[ 33 : 33 ] He knew all along what he was going to do. Jesus never refused anyone, Jew or Gentile, who approached him with sincere faith. Because the woman possessed true belief in him, the process of being tested only strengthened her belief.

Her resolve did not waver, but intensified. And Jesus was highly pleased with her response.

Matthew's account shows us that Jesus called her faith great faith.

Here is Matthew chapter 15 verse 28. Matthew chapter 15 verse 28 says, Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith.

Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly. Two times in the gospel record, Jesus commended great faith.

faith. Both times he was responding to the faith of Gentiles and not Jews. The two cases are here with the Syrophenician woman and the Roman centurion in Matthew chapter 8 verses 5 through 13.

[ 34 : 48 ] In both situations, Jesus healed at a distance, perhaps suggesting the spiritual distance between Jews and Gentiles at that time. The people of Tyre and Sidon were not known for their faith, yet this woman dared to believe that Jesus could deliver her daughter.

Look again at Mark chapter 7 verse 30. It says, And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. The little girl had no rest when the demon was in her.

That demon continually agitated her. So lying on the bed was great evidence of the miracle. Verse 30 also gives us even more evidence of the mother's faith.

She'd been persistently begging Jesus to heal her daughter. After Jesus told her that he had healed her daughter, the woman believed and went home. Jesus' word was enough for this woman.

If the Lord said that her daughter was set free, that was all she needed to hear. And similarly, Jesus' word ought to be enough for us as well. So remember the main idea.

[ 36 : 03 ] God saves unworthy people who come to him in genuine faith. We've seen evidence of that in our passage tonight. By the standards of that day, the woman in Mark chapter 7 verses 24 through 30 appeared to be as unworthy as someone could be.

She knew that and she also knew enough to understand that only one person could help her. She ran to Jesus when she had no other hope. The daughter's healing, though wonderful, is not the primary point of this passage.

Rather, the focus instead centers on both the substance of the woman's faith being characterized by humility, penitence, reverence, and persistence, and the object of that faith, namely the Lord Jesus Christ.

The woman's story is a magnificent illustration of the fact that genuine faith forsakes idols, abandons pride, and reverently yet persistently begs for divine mercy and grace.

In some ways, the woman is like Job, whom God tested to demonstrate the genuineness of his faith. True faith persists and endures until it receives the grace, that it seeks.

[ 37 : 20 ] All of us are unworthy dogs who have committed sins against the Holy God. Our actions deserve eternal punishment, but God has provided a way of reconciliation.

John 3.16 is simple, but it's true. Listen to what Jesus said in John 3.16-18. Jesus said, For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only son of God.

The woman in Mark chapter 7, verses 24 through 30 illustrates those verses. She believed in Jesus, and she also believed Jesus.

In Jesus' time, this Gentile woman would have been regarded as an unclean dog, yet this story turns the tables on all of that. The inside makes someone clean, and she is clean because she is full of faith on that inside.

[ 38 : 45 ] Contrary to religious and racial bigots, no one is so unclean that they cannot receive the blessing and the touch of Jesus Christ, the God who astonishes. And we'll see that again next week as we look at verses 31 through 37 of Mark chapter 7.

For now, remember this. True believers all should say, yes, Lord, we are all dogs under the table with no rights whatsoever as members of the family.

Each individual believer should be able to say, I acknowledge that I don't deserve a place at the table, but I believe that there is enough even for me on the table. Just a few crumbs will be enough, that I believe.

Then, in amazing grace and mercy, our Savior lifts us up, no longer a dog who is a sinner, but a child who is saved. no longer under the table, but now a member of the family at the table.

Several places in Scripture illustrate the principle that we see in Proverbs chapter 29 verse 23.

Proverbs chapter 29 verse 23 says, One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

[ 40 : 04 ] In Matthew chapter 23 verse 12, Jesus said, Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

We don't have time to look at all the cross references, but Luke chapter 14 verse 11, Luke chapter 18 verse 14, James chapter 4 verse 6, James chapter 4 verse 10, and 1 Peter 5 verses 5 and 6 all reiterate the same principle.

And if that's not enough for you, another Old Testament reference is Ezekiel 21 verse 26. The woman in our passage tonight was a true life example of humbling yourself and then later being exalted.

So here's a question for you. Are you willing to see yourself as the dog you are so that you might be transformed into the child that you might become?

Perhaps your sin is greater than you realize, but God's grace is greater than you could ever imagine. Let that sink in.

[ 41 : 13 ] Perhaps your sin is greater than you realize, but God's grace is greater than you could ever imagine. In our passage tonight, the healed girl finally found rest.

When we come to Jesus in true saving faith, Jesus promises to give us rest. Listen to Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 11 verses 28 and 29.

In Matthew 11 28 and 29, Jesus said, Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the reminder that although you first came to the Jews, you always intended for your salvation to spread to Gentiles like us and every other non-Jew around the world.

Help us take that seriously and be willing to share the gospel with everyone we encounter. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I'm I'm I'm I'm I'm