

Jesus Doeth All Things Well

Text: Mark 7:24-37

Introduction:

1. The Context: Christ leaves hometown Capernaum for non-Jewish territory. “This trip marked the first time during His ministry that Jesus actually penetrated recognized pagan territory. It foreshadowed the extension of the Gospel to the Gentile world.” (Hiebert) Christ journeyed to the ‘borders’ (boundaries, region, district, territory) of Tyre and Sidon situated to the northwest of Galilee and refers to the Gentile territory of ancient Phoenicia, which today is located in southern Lebanon. Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities, located about 20 miles (32 kms) apart along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Christ is now roughly 35 miles (56 kms) northwest of Capernaum.
2. The Content: Christ performs two miracles of healing. Both are rich in instruction for both the saved and the lost.
3. In this message, we will study these two miracles of healing in turn.

Consider firstly...

I. Christ’s Healing of a Demon possessed Girl (Vs. 24-30)

This troubled girl received healing largely on account of her mother’s unshakable faith. Look at four truths about her faith:

A. The Prompting of Her Faith (Vs. 25)

1. She had a grievous problem (Vs. 25a; 26a)
 - a. A parental problem (Vs. 25a)
 - i. “young daughter” = little daughter. The age bracket of the child identified. She was a young child. A family trial is sometimes used of God to draw the parent to saving faith in Christ.
 - ii. “an unclean spirit” = her daughter was possessed of an evil spirit. Matthew adds that she was “grievously vexed” by the devil. Satan’s true murderous and cruel character unmasked in his willingness and desire to possess and damage even little children.
 - iii. Note: This woman was from a pagan, idol worshipping area and it is therefore of no surprise that in that context her daughter was vulnerable to demon possession.
 - b. A personal problem (Vs. 26a)
 - i. Her nationality – she is described as “a Greek”. The title ‘Greek’ identifies her as a Gentile. It probably also implies she adhered to Greek religion, language and culture. Matthew describes her as “a woman of Canaan” (Matt.

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15:22) meaning she was a descendent of the Canaanites the ancient enemies of the Israelites.

- ii. Her locality - the word 'Syrophenician' identifies the geographical area.
- iii. Her religiosity – as a Gentile woman raised in an area steeped in pagan idolatry, it is safe to assume she was raised as an idol worshipper.
- iv. Eph. 2:11-13 *“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”*

2. She heard of a Great Saviour (Vs. 25b)
 - a. “heard of him” = good news of Christ reached her ears and faith was stirred. Romans 10:17 says, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*
 - b. There were others from this region who had come into contact with Christ’s ministry in Galilee previously and they were likely the ones who informed this lady about Christ (See Mark 3:7-8).

B. The Plea of her Faith (Vs. 26)

1. The perception of her plea – “Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David” (Matt. 15:22) She clearly understood that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah. Saving faith involves BOTH the Person AND work of Christ.
2. The posture of her plea – “came and fell at his feet”. Matthew uses the word ‘worshipped’ (Matt. 15:25)
3. The passion of her plea – “she besought him” Matt. 15:25 “...Lord, help me”
4. The point of her plea – “that he would cast forth the devil”

C. The Persistence of her Faith (Vs. 27-28)

This woman is a great example of importunate prayer. She kept on asking, seeking and knocking until the answer came.

1. Her test from the Lord (Vs. 27) The reason for Christ’s statement was twofold:
 - a. There was a dispensational reason – at this time Christ’s priority was to the nation of Israel. *“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”* (Matt. 15:24) He uses the word ‘first’ not the word ‘only’. We know our Lord came to die for all men, but His chosen people were to first be offered the opportunity to repent and receive Him as Lord and Saviour (See Rom. 1:16).

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- b. There was a practical reason – our Lord was clearly testing and refining this woman’s faith, something he often did when people sought him (e.g. the rich young ruler).
- 2. Her triumph with the Lord (Vs. 28-29)
 - a. “Yes, Lord” = the heart attitude of one who will prevail with God. She accepts the humbling position the Lord gives her in the proverb. This attitude essential for effectual prayer. We say “yes” to the Lord even if our understanding of His wisdom is limited.
 - b. “yet” = coupled with her spirit of submission is humble persistence. Matthew’s account records 3 separate appeals from this lady. She must have the answer to her request at all costs. She knew without a doubt that Christ had the power to meet her need.
 - c. Andrew Murray: “The blessing of such persevering prayer is unspeakable. There is nothing so heart-searching as the prayer of faith. It teaches you to discover and confess, and give up everything that hinders the coming of the blessing; everything there may be not in accordance with the Father’s will. It leads to closer fellowship with Him who alone can teach to pray, to a more entire surrender to draw nigh under no covering but that of the blood, and the Spirit.”
 - d. Maclaren: “What a constellation of graces sparkles in her ready reply! There is humility in accepting the place He gives her; insight in seeing at once a new plea in what might have sent her away despairing; persistence in pleading; confidence that he can grant her request and that He would gladly do so.”
 - e. “for this saying go thy way” = Matthew records our Lords words as “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt” This is a remarkable commendation from the Lord. Only twice did Christ call someone’s faith ‘great’. The other was the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:10). In both cases, they were Gentiles. Great faith brings great answers to prayer!

D. The Profit of her Faith (Vs. 29-30)

- 1. The promise of Christ (Vs. 29)
 - a. “the devil is gone out” = perf. Tense in the Greek signifying a permanent change.
 - b. Christ had already answered her request before He confirmed it with her verbally.
- 2. The peace of Christ (Vs. 30)
 - a. “to her house” = what a transformation took place in this home by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. “she found the devil gone out” = the evil spirit was gone and now Christ’s presence filled the void.

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- c. “her daughter laid upon the bed” = a state of peaceful repose in contrast to her former possessed state. (Hiebert)

Consider secondly...

II. Christ’s Healing of a Deaf & Dumb Man (Vs. 31-37)

A. His Conveying to the Lord (Vs. 32)

1. Their compassion for this man – “they bring unto him one that was deaf”
 - a. Matthew 15:29-31 makes it clear there were multiple people healed during this time – the lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others. Mark focuses upon this one man as an example.
 - b. In Bible times, people with these sorts of conditions were often looked down upon as if they were that way on account of sin and therefore under God’s displeasure.
 - c. These men were moved beyond prejudice by compassion for this man’s need.
2. Their supplication for this man – “they beseech him”
 - a. ‘beseech’ = to beg, intreat. They sought the Lord’s healing touch for this needy man.
 - b. Challenge: What a challenge to us in the area of soul-winning! We cannot save the sinner. But we can seek to point them to Christ and to pray earnestly for their salvation.

B. His Condition for the Lord (Vs. 32)

1. He was deaf – he could not hear. What a picture of the lost sinner whose ears are only able to comprehend natural things.
2. He was dumb – he had an impediment in his speech. This was on account of his hearing problem. Because he could not hear, he could not speak properly. So with the lost sinner, their tongues can only speak the foolishness of this world.

C. His Cure by the Lord (Vs. 33-35)

1. The Lord’s Method (Vs. 33-34)

Christ’s actions preceding the cure appear to be tailored to the man’s unique condition. There are 7 steps the Lord takes...

 - a. He took him aside from the multitude – his dealing with the man was personal. He removed him from the distraction of the crowd.
 - b. He put his fingers into his ears – to draw attention to the area that required healing and to quicken the man’s faith. He used sign language.
 - c. He spit – to draw attention to the tongue and mouth. “It conveyed the thought that the power to deal with them came from Jesus.” (Hiebert)
 - d. He touched his tongue – to draw attention to the area of need

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- e. He looked up to heaven – a common prayer posture of the Lord indicating His dependence on the Heavenly Father to do the miracle through Him. It would also draw the man's attention to the Divine Source of the healing.
 - f. He sighed – word means 'groaned'. Reveals His deep emotional sympathy and compassion for the man. Twice in Mark's Gospel it is recorded that Christ sighed (see also Mk. 8:12). Oh, the wonder of the Saviour's sighs for sinners! What infinite love and compassion is within our Saviour's heart for the lost.
 - g. He said to him "Eph-pha-tha" – a simple Aramaic word that this man could likely lip read. Mark quickly interprets the meaning for us, "Be opened". Romans 10:17 says, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Observe the sequence in the verse. Faith is a result of hearing and hearing is produced by the Word of God. What power there is in the Gospel to open the ears to the truth!
2. The Lord's Miracle (Vs. 35)
 - a. An immediate transformation in his faculty of hearing
 - b. An immediate transformation in his faculty of speech
 - c. J.C. Ryle: "Here we are meant to see our Lord's power to heal the spiritually deaf. He can give the chief of sinners a hearing ear...Here also we are meant to see our Lord's power to heal the spiritually dumb. He can teach the hardest of transgressors to call upon God. He can put a new song in the mouth of him whose talk was once only of this world. He can make the vilest of men speak of spiritual things, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

D. His Command from the Lord (Vs. 36-37)

1. The requirement – to not spread the news. This seems to contradict other clear Scriptures that command us to go and tell. The context brings clarity to this. Christ was seeking to discourage the tendency of the crowd to respond to miracles like this with attempting to make Him a political Messiah. Christ also discouraged miracle made converts. What a contrast to the modern "faith healers" who advertise and promote their so called "healings".
2. The response – the more He commanded them the more they published it. There was zeal and excitement which was admirable but it wasn't exercised within the realm of obedience. That aside, their testimony of Christ was true – "He hath done all things well".

Conclusion:

1. Has your life been transformed by the power of Christ?
2. Are we being faithful in prayer as believers despite the obstacles?
3. Are we seeking to bring others to Christ for salvation?