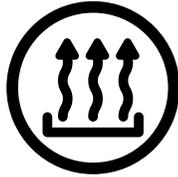




# The Gospel of Mark



## WARM-UP

What is a topic, that when brought up, instantly makes you open up around people?

*Read out loud as a group*

## MARK CHAPTER 6 RECAP

Previously in Mark Chapter 6, we saw Jesus sending out his disciples two by two, an account of King Herod and why/how John the baptist was sentenced to death, the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, and Jesus walking on water.

*Read out loud as a group*

## MARK 7:1-27 (NIV)

1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

9 And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother.

Read out loud as a group

## MARK 7:1-27 (NIV) CONTINUED

13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”



What stands out to you?

*Possible Answers: Answers will vary.*



The Pharisees are putting laws made by man at the same level as the laws made by God. What manmade laws are tempting for you to hold too high?

*Possible Answers: Answers will vary. Reading your bible every day, not doing yoga, not ever missing a church service, things we might feel convicted in but aren't outlined in scripture, etc.*



Healthy habits are great but sometimes we can just go through the motions instead of engaging our hearts. What are ways we can start to engage our hearts in our lives and spiritual practices, not just fall on mindless habits?

*Possible Answers: Answers will vary. Have margin in our lives so that we can rest and reset our intentions, having check in points throughout your day or week, pray before things asking the Lord to engage our hearts, seek to find one thing that reflects God's goodness, try to find one cool thing in nature and marvel at it with God, etc.*

Read out loud as a group

## MARK 7:24-30 (NIV)

24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. 25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. 26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

28 "Lord," she replied, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Read out loud as a group

"In that day, Jews often called Gentiles "dogs" in a very derogatory way. "To the Greek, the word dog meant a shameless and audacious woman; it was used exactly with the connotation that we use the word bitch to-day. To the Jews it was equally a term of contempt."....

Yet Jesus did not use the normal word for "dogs." Instead He softened it into **little dogs** – essentially, reminding the woman of her place as a Gentile, yet not wanting to push her completely away. "In Greek, diminutives are characteristically affectionate. Jesus took the sting out of the word."

- Study Guide for Mark 7 by David Guzik



List the reasons why Jewish leaders would be scandalized by Jesus actions in these verses.

*Possible Answers: Jesus was in a gentile land, rubbing shoulders with gentile people, staying at a gentile house, interacting not only with a gentile but with a woman, being around unclean people and practices, healed a gentile child which goes against the exclusionary ideology of the Jewish leaders.*



Compare and contrast Mark 7:1-23 with Mark 7:24-30. How does Jesus use these two occurrences to further the same point?

*Possible Answers: Compare: both have interactions against jewish customs/traditions, both unified in purpose, both include Jesus and his disciples.*

*Contrast: one is jewish leaders holding to ritual purity and other a woman holding to purity of faith. Religious leaders are rebuked and corrected while the gentile woman is praised and given her request.*

*Jesus is using this interaction with the gentile, Greek woman to further his point in Mark 7:1-22. At the beginning of Mark 7 Jesus was clarifying and wiping away the difference between clean and unclean food. Here he is starting to clarify and wipe away the difference between clean and unclean people. Jesus is redefining what it means to be pure. He is teaching this woman and the owners of the home but ultimately preparing the disciples for the ultimate plan: saving the world with the inclusion of the gentiles in which they will be the hands and feet.*

*Read out loud as a group*

“The Lord Jesus was charmed with the fair jewel of this woman’s faith and watching it and delighting in it, He resolved to turn it round and set it in other lights, that the various facets of this priceless diamond might, each one, flash its brilliance and delight His soul! Therefore He tried her faith by His silence and by His discouraging replies, that He might see its strength. But He was, all the while, delighting in it and secretly sustaining it. And when He had sufficiently tried it, He brought it forth as gold, and set His own royal mark upon it in these memorable words, “O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you even as you will.” I am hopeful, this morning, that perhaps some poor soul in this place under very discouraging circumstances may, nevertheless, be led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with a strong and persevering faith. And though as yet it enjoys no peace and has seen no gracious answer to prayer, I trust that its struggling faith may be strengthened, this morning, by the example of the Canaanite woman.”

- The Little Dogs, a sermon by C. H. Spurgeon



This gentile woman showed humility and perseverance in her faith. What helps you persevere in the faith when you faith disappointment, discouragement, or confusion?

*Possible Answers: Answers may vary.*

*Read out loud as a group*

### **MARK 7:31-37 (NIV)**

31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. 32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him. 33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then he spit and touched the man’s tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”). 35 At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. 36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”



List all the methods Jesus has used to heal people throughout Mark so far. Why do you think Jesus would choose to use so many different methods?

*Possible Answers: Jesus has healed with words, without words, in response to faith, in response to the faith of an intercessor, healed people in person, healed people from far away, he has commanded illness to leave and commanded the dead to rise.*

*Why? - Jesus shows us that it's not a magic formula to follow, but that it was him. He wasn't tied down to one method but rather tied to the sovereign power of God. He also chooses personal ties to the people he's healing.*

*Read out loud as a group*

“The ancient Greek word for impediment in his speech is mogilalon and is only used here in the New Testament. It is a word that is also used once in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, in [Isaiah 35:5-6](#): Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb [mogilalon] sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. Mark wants us to know that the Messiah was here, bringing the glorious benefits of His rule.”

- Study Guide for Mark 7 by David Guzik



With the physical representing the spiritual. What does this command to “Ephphatha” or “be opened” reveal about the nature of spiritual transformation?

*Possible Answers: implies that we are closed off, maybe even that we are personally and actively closing off our hearts to Christ. It has nothing to do with works. It's not: try harder or do more. It's not even: you open it/ you do the act of opening. It is: release, relent, surrender and let yourself be opened by the transforming power of Christ.*

## DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- In what areas are you tempted to rely on religious performance to feel right with God or others?
- Where might you be actively closed off to the Holy Spirit? How might you start to release and let yourself be opened by the Holy Spirit?