

“In a World of Brokenness” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 16 September 8, 2024

- I. **Mark 7:24-37** – previously read.
- II. **Jesus is at the height of His popularity as He visits the outsiders.**
 - a. The outsiders were people who did not come from the Jewish faith and background... and they were called Gentiles, or sometimes pagans or Greeks.
 - i. For centuries the Jewish people were separated from those who were not Jewish by the laws that God gave them through Moses.
 1. These laws included marrying inside the faith, circumcision, ceremonial washing and cleanliness, certain types of foods that were off limits, and no touching blood or anything dead.
 2. It seems that God wanted to be sure His people were set apart from those around them – and the ceremonial laws were a clear example of the differences between a Jew and a Gentile.
 - ii. It wasn't that the Jews rejected people from joining them, but a foreigner would go through the necessary steps to become part of the Jewish people.
 - b. At the beginning of Mark chapter 7, Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are placing more of a burden on people than the law ever demanded – and they like to talk about God, but they don't love God or others.
 - i. The Pharisees and many Jewish people were prideful because they were God's chosen people, along with their righteous acts of following His law.
 - ii. Jesus points out the failures of the Pharisees to understand that faith and works come out of the heart and not by following the rules...
 - c. At this point in the story, we begin today's reading about Jesus traveling way out to the land of the outsiders... Tyre and Sidon.
 - i. Now, Sidon is notorious among the Jewish people because that's where Queen Jezebel came from... and even today, the name Jezebel is not anything we want to be called.
 - ii. Jesus goes out to the farthest reaches of His ministry in this story, as He goes to a place that the Pharisees would never go.
 - d. I'm not sure if Jesus was trying to just rest and get away from the crowds, but it says that He went into a house and didn't want anyone to know.
 - i. Sorry Jesus, but You are way too popular at this point... and a woman comes begging for help.
- III. **The exchange between Jesus and the woman challenges us.**
 - a. She comes begging for help with her demon-possessed daughter, and Jesus explains that He needs to take care of the Jews first.
 - i. It's difficult to understand why Jesus uses the example of feeding the Jewish children rather than giving those blessings to the pet dog.

- ii. The woman may know the difference between Jewish people and Gentiles... but instead of being offended by Jesus' statement, she responds in faith that God is big enough to grant healing even with the leftover crumbs that go to a pet dog under the table.
- iii. Jesus commends her faith and heals her daughter without even seeing or going to her.
 - 1. A woman and her daughter, living in a world of brokenness were given a new lease on life.

IV. **Jesus then travels to another Gentile area – the Decapolis.**

- a. Here Jesus is approached by some people who want to help their friend, who is deaf and cannot speak.
 - i. It's interesting how each of these stories start with people interceding for a friend or loved one – as they seek to help someone else.
- b. This time, Jesus is up close and personal as He puts His fingers in the man's ears and spitting, then touched his tongue... then He groans and says, "Be opened" – and the man's ears and voice were healed at once.
 - i. We might hear these stories and forget just how important and life-changing it was for this man to hear and speak again, but in a world of brokenness, this man was given an amazing gift!
 - ii. At that point even the people couldn't help but be so amazed that they quoted Scripture from Isaiah, and probably didn't even know it because they were Gentiles.
 - 1. Astonished beyond measure, they said, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." vs 37
 - 2. Isaiah 35:5-6 says, "⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy."
- c. God promised long ago that a Savior would come to restore and redeem all people and creation... and what a wonderful promise to have in a world of brokenness.

V. **Sometimes it's difficult** to apply the stories of Scripture to our modern lives.

- a. Yet, when we stop to think about the similarities, we are living in the same brokenness and sin that has plagued every generation from Adam and Eve.
- b. Modern medicine does so much, but it has its limits.
 - i. My aunt, who I visited in Colorado last week, had multiple procedures and still faces a surgery to repair a heart valve... she told me that all these things were beyond medical care not too long ago.
 - ii. In a statement of faith, she said that it's okay if the procedure isn't successful, because she will ultimately be healed in heaven.
 - iii. So many of you have dealt with the physical trials and troubles in life too – and some of those things were healed, and some of them could not be.

- iv. All of us face the breakdown of our bodies due to sin in the world, and the result is always death.
- c. If we aren't struggling with our bodies, we struggle with our minds.
 - i. Emotional brokenness can be worse than physical brokenness because it can stay with you for a lifetime.
 - ii. I'm not sure how people in Jesus' day dealt with these troubles, but today a large percentage use pharmaceuticals and therapy...
 - iii. I am the first one to tell people, real healing can only come through Jesus... yes, these other things may be needed or support a person in healing... but the real healing comes through a relationship with Christ.
- d. Finally, the spiritual brokenness people suffer is all around and within us.
 - i. Spiritual battles come from satan's attempts to keep us questioning God and His goodness in a broken world.
 - ii. When we suffer physically and / or emotionally, it's easy to suffer spiritually as sometimes we struggle with God.
 - iii. Paul pleaded with God to remove the thorn in his side (whatever that was), but he was told, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness," (2 Cor. 12:9) and Paul didn't turn away from God but praised Him and even boasted in his weakness.
 - iv. Any of us can find it challenging to trust in God above all things when the world around us seems to be so chaotic.
- e. Our stories in the Gospel today remind us of God's love for all people – Jewish or Gentile – and His willingness to enter into the brokenness.

VI. **The gift of Jesus our Savior is that He came into a world of brokenness.**

- a. The perfect person in every way, and fully God in human form, Jesus came to fulfill the prophecies of a Savior that would redeem and restore.
- b. He went about doing the work of God, restoring sight, opening the ears of the deaf, healing the disabled, and even raising the dead... but not for everyone... no, some of us must have faith that we will experience these things now... or on the Last Day.
- c. I wish I could promise that your suffering and brokenness would end now, but that's not for me to say – all I know is that God promises He will be there for us to the end.
 - i. No person is too far away or not the right type, because He gathers all people into His care.
 - ii. This is the message of the cross – that the suffering of Jesus brings us forgiveness and glory – and we are all equal at the foot of the cross.
 - iii. Jesus cares... He cared during His earthly ministry... and He cares for you now as He reigns from heaven.

- d. Through faith, hold fast to the hope that in His perfect timing, Christ will bring complete healing and restoration, but until that day, or the Last Day, we know that His grace and presence will carry us through. Amen.