

MARK 7 : 24 -31
FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE

From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

If it's an epidemic and you go to someone's house which is under quarantine—sneezing, coughing, blowing, fever, body ache, upset stomach—to visit for an hour, what happens? You take the illness from their house to yours—house to house.

Jesus had just had a sharp discussion with His enemies. They had demanded to know how His disciples dared to eat with unwashed hands. For them this was not an issue of hygiene or germs, but an issue of right and wrong before God. God had never given such a command; but their forefathers had, and these men held to it rigorously. Jesus answered, It is not what goes into a man's mouth and stomach that makes him a sinner before God, but what comes out of his heart. *Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man (Mark 7:21-23).*

At this point, Jesus needed to get away for a time. Although He was true God, He was also true man. Dealing with people can be very fatiguing. Ask a doctor, counselor, or teacher. What if you have been out visiting all day? It's exhausting. In Jesus' case, couple that together with full days. Jesus went out of the Jewish territory to *the region of Tyre and Sidon*, cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, cities of Syria and Phoenicia. He *entered a house* where He could be secluded, hidden away, from crowds. Peace and quiet. Don't ever think Jesus doesn't understand your situation. Not only does He know, but He's "been there," your brother also with Adam and Eve's genes. He understands your situation. He knows how it is, when you are stressed or fatigued.

Jesus, however, could not remain hidden. Somewhere, somehow, word about His presence had gotten around. Was there a flaw in God's working here? Not at all. It was not by accident that someone was able to find Him. First, His reputation had gone out ahead of Him. People there knew of Him. The woman was presented with an opportunity to search him out. She did not say, "Well, if Jesus wants me, He'll come to me." She searched for Him. It's the same with you. God's Word of forgiveness, resurrection, life, and eternal salvation is in the Bible, which does not implant itself into your heart! "Search the Scriptures." Dig into it, read it, learn it, and take it to heart—whether at home or at worship. It is precious. The woman would not miss this opportunity, letting the wonderful, merciful, loving Jesus of whom she had already learned stay hidden and out of her life. A second reason that she was allowed to find Jesus is that by it Jesus demonstrated that He never shuts out anyone—not one. Nor you.

She knew she had no outward connection to Jesus or outward reason to expect His help. She was a Gentile, a non-Jewish woman of Syria and Phoenician, a Canaanite. In the Old Testament God had forbidden the Children of Israel to intermingle with Canaanites and other idol-worshipping Gentiles. She was in great need. Her young daughter was—not just sick, but—possessed by a demon, an unclean spirit. ("Unclean" in the sense that you tell your children, not to use "dirty" language, words that do not reflect the heart of a rescued, a redeemed, child of God saved by the blood and death of Jesus—words that misuse God's great Name, or dishonor personal private matters.) She came to Him, seeking His love and His help.

The woman fell—literally, “fell forward,” meaning on her face—at Jesus’ feet. She was not too proud to come before Him as dust and ashes. Are you ever too proud to come before God as dust and ashes? Do you ever get down on your hands and knees and pray earnestly to your most gracious Creator, Savior, and Counselor—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? “Gracious” meaning God grants to you that which you have no basis to claim, namely forgiveness and everlasting life. She asked for His help repeatedly. Jesus, the gracious Lord was the only avenue of rescue for her daughter from demon possession. She did not give up.

A side Note: Can you, the Christian, be possessed by a demon? Answer: Only in body, but not in soul. The soul that clings to Jesus is safe from having faith snatched away by Satan. The devil can certainly physically afflict you, but not spiritually. Jesus said, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish. Neither shall any man* [literally “any”] *pluck them out of My hand*” (John 10:27-28). Do you remember the account of the woman crippled by a demon for eighteen years? Jesus cast out the demon. When He was challenged for healing her on the Sabbath, He replied, *Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath? (Luke 13:16)*. She was a “daughter of Abraham,” a believer, through it all. Satan could only possess her body, not her soul. The same is true for you. (Do not choose to run after him.)

The Syro-Phoenician woman was persistent in her faith, pleading for Jesus help. God has promises, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee” (Psalm 50:15). In your humility don’t hastily give up on God. Pride leads you to say, “Ok, fine. If I’m not good enough for an immediate answer, I quit.” Don’t buy into that line.

Jesus answered appeared to rebuff her. *“Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”* In other words, “I’m here for the Jews, not for you.” Was He being rude and unkind to her? Not so. He was providing an opportunity for her simple child-like faith to blossom forth more than ever before. Sometimes does God seem to rebuffed you? It’s an opportunity for your faith in His mercy to grow and to be bigger than your pride in yourself. She said, *Yes, Lord. Yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.* In other words, “Right, Lord, I’m not a Jew. But in Your mercy, grant me a few crumbs of compassion.” She was honest and yet persistent in her trust.

Jesus praised her, *For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.* By faith in Him, not by any qualifications of her own, her request was granted—immediately. *The demon has gone out of your daughter.* He always answers in his best way, at His best time. She went home in peace. *When she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.* At home she did not find her daughter thrashing around on the floor under the cruel influence of the demon. She was lying peacefully in bed. Healed. The woman had gone to Jesus’ seeking His rest and peace. She returned home and had that same peace and rest at her house. Her sins of the past and her young daughter’s sins were forgiven. Jesus drove the demon out.

It’s the same with you. The devil seeks to dominate you. He seeks to possess your life and tries to possess your soul, but in Jesus you are safe, well loved, at rest in His arms.

The rest and peace that you seek at His house this morning, is a rest and peace that you take home with you. The rest and peace you receive at the Lord’s Table this morning, goes home with you. In peace, follow Him with your words and actions. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7) Through Jesus, the devil and his demons are thrown out. In your Christian baptism, the devil is drowned by daily sorrow for sin and repentance seeking God’s forgiveness. You are at rest and peace in Jesus. Relish that peace.

It’s just the opposite of Quarantine, isn’t it? Instead of taking sickness home, take home rest and peace before God!—from His House to yours!

Amen! So be it!

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