

Title: The Book of Mark: Part 20, God cares for those in need.

Speaker: Kevin Norcross

Passage: Mark 7:24-37

Big idea: There are 4 biblical principles that you can apply to daily living.



We are continuing on in the book of Mark. Jesus is continuing on his journey doing miracles and impacting people. In this text, we are going to see to situations where Jesus had an impact on two individuals' lives.

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.

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."

Mark 7:24-37

There are two different instances here where Jesus has impact on people's lives. They are facing difficulties and struggles, and Jesus intervenes in their lives. There is a lot that we can learn from these stories and things that we can apply to our own lives.

Let's just start by looking at it verse by verse and then we will see how we can apply it to our own lives. Try and look for yourself in these situations. Look at the needs that these people had and watch how Jesus responds.

Mark 7:24, "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."

Jesus did not go there for public ministry, but he went to a house. Perhaps to rest and prepare for what was next, perhaps a break from the constant persecution from the Pharisees. Regardless of the reason He went there to get out of the public eye for a bit.

This detail shows the humanity of Jesus and how he was so busy and under so much pressure, he needed time to rest, to be away from the crowds. It is a reminder to us of the importance of rest physically, emotionally, and socially.

Yet people found out He was there, and they needed his help:

Mark 7:25-26, "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. The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter."

She would have heard about His fame and that He could perform miracles. She was a Gentile, and this interaction and miracle was a reminder that Jesus came for the sake of the Jews and the Gentiles. Gentiles did not have the social status like the Jews did, but thankfully Jesus does not see human status but human need.

Also, the woman did not care about her social status, but just knew that she needed Jesus' help. Her daughter was being tormented and she needed her to be set free.

Come to Jesus with your struggles and difficulties, know that Jesus is your source, and He can help you.

Despite what others may think of you, be reminded of what Jesus thinks of you. It does not matter about your background, past, social status, physical condition, emotional state, education, finances, or abilities, Jesus loves you and cares for you and says, "come to me".

So, she begged Jesus to heal her daughter and Jesus responded with a bit of a head scratcher:

Mark 7:27-28, "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.' 'Lord,' she replied, 'even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'"

At first glance this comes across as confusing. That is why it is vital to dig into the context and understand what it means.

Does that mean if my kids are sick, I should feed their supper to the dogs, and they will get better? What if I don't have a dog, is a cat okay, does it need to be bread, what about kraft dinner?

When something does not make sense, that should make you want to dig in a little more to find the truth. So, I read some commentaries of people much smarter than me, and after some time studying went "ahhhhh ... now I get it".

Jesus responds by comparing the children of the house and the dogs of the house. This contrast here is actually between Israelites and Gentiles. The Israelites as God's children was a common metaphor in the Old Testament. Jews did not view dogs as loving pets but as detestable scavengers and so the term "dogs" was commonly used in a derogatory way for the Gentiles.

Children = Israelites - the higher status position in that day
Dogs = Gentiles - the lower status position in that day

The woman's response to Jesus recognizes that the message of Jesus is not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. It is a response of faith recognizing that she can also receive the message of Jesus and the miracles of Jesus as a Gentile.

She admitted her lesser status in society but acknowledges that Jesus can help her. She knows that Jesus cares for her as well, even though society does not, and Jesus sees that as faith.

Isn't that cool?!?

Despite what others may think of you or your earthly status, know that Jesus sees value in you. There are promises in scripture that are for you. You do not deserve them based on your achievements or good works, and you are not discounted from them based on your failures or past mistakes. Jesus freely promises them to you.

Mark 7:29-30, "Then he told her, 'For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.' She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone."

Jesus was pleased with her reply. It showed her faith and her humility. And He responded to her cry for help by telling her that her daughter was healed.

The woman returned home and found that indeed Jesus had set her free and she was lying in bed probably exhausted and in recovery from being tormented by the demon.

We need to learn to have faith in Jesus and trust Jesus that He knows what is best for us and that He has the ability to help.

Then it goes on to tell another story of someone Jesus helped out. Look at the needs that these people had and watch how Jesus responds.

Mark 7:31-32, “Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. 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.”

The people brought the deaf man to Jesus. The word used here could mean deaf or could mean he had a speech impediment, but either way he could hardly talk. They advocated for the deaf man because obviously he could not advocate for himself.

Mark 7:33, “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.”

Jesus stepped away from the crowd to be with the man one on one. He wanted to have a personal encounter with Him.

What was the significance of the fingers in the ears and touching his tongue?

Jesus touched the organs that needed to be healed. Fingers in ears indicate that they were to be unblocked. Touching his tongue indicated that it was going to be restored to normal use. He could have simply prayed, or laid his hands on him, but he made it personal.

Each one of us has a personal encounter with Jesus. He is the person of Jesus who knows you and understands you and cares deeply for you and cares about each and every detail of your life.

Know that Jesus cares deeply for you as an individual. He understands every hurt, pain, struggle. He sees every dream, desire, hope. He hears every prayer, petition, cry. He is personal, and caring, you are valuable to Him as an individual.

Mark 7:34-35, “He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, ‘Ephphatha!’ (which means ‘Be opened!’). At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.”

Looking up into heaven was an attitude or posture of prayer. Jesus is indicating that God the Father was the source of power. The sigh also indicated prayer and expression to God. This revealed Jesus’ emotion and heartfelt concern for this man.

It is a reminder that Jesus responds with heartfelt concern for you in your need. Both of these postures are indicators and reminders of the relationship that Jesus has with God the Father. And a good reminder for us to have a posture of prayer, and expression of prayer and be in constant communion with God the Father.

He spoke and the man immediately began to speak plainly. The word “loosened” is quite powerful in the original Greek, meaning “the chain of his tongue was broken”. This is a comparison to chains that would bind a prisoner.

Sometimes those things that we come to God in prayer about makes us feel like we are bound by chains like a prisoner. It could be a physical need, emotional, spiritual need. It could be a deep longing for something, a goal, achievement, advocating in prayer for someone or something. Again, it can make us feel like we are bound like a prisoner in chains.

God has the power to set you free from the very things that are holding you down like heavy chains. Just like he had the power to set this man free, he has the power to answer your prayer and set you free.

Mark 7:36-37, “Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. ‘He has done everything well,’ they said. ‘He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.’”

The people were overwhelmed and amazed. This is also a reference to the prophecies about Jesus like the one in Isaiah 35:5 “then the eyes of the blind will be opened and ears of the deaf unstopped.”

It is a reminder that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied about in the Old Testament. They recognized Jesus’ power to heal and his caring compassion for people.

These are two very similar stories. There is a bit of a process that occurs in each of the stories that we can apply to our own situations today. I’m not calling it a formula, or secret code, or transaction, but there are some principles in scripture that we can live by and apply to our lives.

BIG IDEA

There are **4 Biblical principles** that you can apply to **daily living**.



A simplified version of the process is this: there are people in need, they ask for help, Jesus has compassion, and Jesus responds.

There are people in need - *the woman and the man*.
They ask for help - *they both come to Jesus for help*.
Jesus has compassion - *he cares about them and their situations*.
Jesus responds - *he acts on their behalf*.

For us today, we have a need, we ask for help, Jesus has compassion, and Jesus responds.

We have a need:

There is the recognition that Jesus can help with that need. It could be a physical, emotional, or a spiritual need. This need could also be something you want to achieve in your life, in ministry, in your family, in your job, in your school, in your friendships, in your community.

We ask for help:

There is a recognition that Jesus can help, we can pray and look to Jesus for help. Put your faith in Him, talk to Him about the things that are eating you up inside, don’t stay silent but open your hearts to him. There is a step of obedience towards Jesus that we see in this scripture.

Be in the Word and understand the truth. Have a soft heart and be open to God’s leading and a willingness to walk in obedience and pay the price for your obedience.

Jesus has compassion:

Jesus acknowledges the need and responds with compassion.

This is a very critical step in the process because you need to realize that Jesus responds to you with compassion, empathy, and understanding. No matter how he answers your prayer or how he responds to you, know that it is out of love for you. Whether he answers your prayer in the way you want him to or not it does not mean your need is not valid, it does not mean that he doesn't care for you, it does not mean that he is not powerful enough to answer your prayer.

Jesus responds:

Jesus takes action. We see this in the text, that Jesus set the girl free from the demon and healed the man. Jesus will take action on your behalf, and be at work in your life, you just need to trust him with the results.

What an incredible way to live as you strive to put Jesus first, to bring your needs before him, to recognize how powerful and amazing he is, and to believe that he can do anything, leaving the results up to him.

Let's take these principles and see how they can apply to other areas of our lives. I have chosen three areas that of life where we can use these principles. There are other areas of your life that you are trusting God in, and you can use these principles in other areas as well.

Again, this is not a magic formula, but biblical principles that we can live by.

Obedience to God in your relationships

We have a need

We are in need of relationship with others. We need connection with friends, family, and small groups. There is the recognition that Jesus can help with that need. Trust God to provide those needs for you.

We ask for help

There is a recognition that Jesus can help. Pray and look to Jesus for help. Put your faith in Him. Talk to God about your relationships, struggles, difficulties, and desires. Don't be silent but bring them before God.

This is a step of obedience towards Jesus. Seek him in the Word and keep a soft heart open to God's leading. Look to God's Word and model your relationships after what scripture commands.

Jesus has compassion

Jesus acknowledges the need and responds to you with compassion. Jesus sees your need for healthy relationships.

Understand that Jesus is your ultimate relationship, and your hope needs to be in Him first and foremost. Pursuing a deeper relationship with Jesus will have an impact on every other one of your relationships. Trust that He will provide for you in the area of your relationships.

Jesus responds

Jesus will take action on your behalf, and be at work in your life, you just need to trust him with the results. Trust that He will do what is right, and just in your life. What an incredible way to live as you strive to put Jesus first to bring your needs before him to recognize how powerful and amazing, he is to believe that he can do anything and to leave the results up to him.

Obedience to God in your finances

We have a need

We need finances to live and eat and provide and be generous. There is the recognition that Jesus can help with that need. The Bible teaches that God provides for us, and we are stewards of those finances. The Bible teaches us to manage our finances well and to put God first in our finances. The Bible also teaches that we are to be generous with our tithes and offerings.

We ask for help

There is a recognition that Jesus can help. So, look to Jesus for help in prayer. Trust Him to provide for you financially. If you are in a tough financial situation, talk to God about that. If you have financial goals, talk to God about that. If you have difficulty trusting God with your finances, be honest with Him about that.

If you are wrestling with whether you should be tithing or should be generous with your offerings to the church, be honest with God and ask Him for guidance. We are living in very unpredictable financial times and some of you are feeling overwhelmed. Talk to him about your needs.

Understand what the Word says about managing your finances and giving and generosity and soften your heart to God's leading.

Jesus has compassion

Jesus sees your financial needs and he cares about your finances. Jesus wants to be a part of your finances and help you manage your finances. He wants you to be free financially so that you can be generous to others and accomplish things in your life. Jesus wants you to be free financially so that you are not controlled by your finances and held back by them. Jesus wants to help you to steward your finances well. He wants to help you put good practices in place and be biblical about it.

Jesus responds

Trust God with your finances and watch him at work in your life. Follow biblical teachings about your finances and seek God to help you on that. Look for Jesus at work in your life, responding to your needs and helping you manage your finances.

Take the step of faith and be generous in your tithes and offerings, get help in managing your finances if you are not already, and trust God with your finances. What an incredible way to live, striving to put Jesus first, to bring your needs before him, to recognize how powerful and amazing he is, to believe that he can do anything, and to leave the results up to him.

Obedience to God in your life goals

We have a need

We have been given time and energy and a purpose here on earth by God. We have the need for purpose and fulfillment in life. There is the recognition that Jesus can help with that need.

We ask for help

Seek Jesus through prayer, trusting God with your dreams and aspirations and goals. Talk to him about the things that are deep down in your heart. Ask Him to lead you and guide you and put His goals, purpose, and dreams in your heart. Don't stay silent but open your hearts to Him.

Be in the Word so that you do not have goals and aspirations that are contrary to scripture. Have a soft heart and be open to God's leading for your future. God created you unique and put gifts and abilities in you, and He has a purpose for your life. Don't go chasing after the things of this world but chase after the things of God because they are only what will bring you true fulfillment.

Jesus has compassion

Jesus acknowledges the need and responds with compassion. Jesus cares about your future and wants you to do great things with your life. Be reminded that Jesus understands it is tough to follow Him, but He wants to pour His love and strength into you.

Jesus responds

Jesus will take action on your behalf, and be at work in your life, you just need to trust him with the results. Leave your future goals and dreams in His hands, trust Him to provide for you and make a clear path for your future. Know that He holds those dreams, and goals, and aspirations close to His heart. Even if things don't turn out the way you had hoped, know that Jesus has a plan and trust Him.

What an incredible way to live as you strive to put Jesus first, to bring your needs before him, to recognize how powerful and amazing he is, to believe that he can do anything, and to leave the results up to him.

We only looked at three areas as an example, but it can be applied to other areas of your life.

We talked about how Jesus healed the man and loosened his tongue. Again, this was a symbol of his tongue was like a prisoner in bondage and Jesus set him free.

Can you take a moment to think about your own life, are there areas of your life that are wrapped up in chains? Do you feel the heavy burden of bondage in your life? Are there areas of your life where you are desperately praying for freedom?

I challenge you to take these principles that we learn today and put them into practice this week. Take some time this week to review your notes and do some journaling, or prayer time, or deep thinking. Look at these four steps and invite Jesus into those areas of your life.