

MARK 7

God's Commandment versus Man's Tradition

1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered together (συνάγω) around [Jesus], 2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 For the Pharisees—and all the Jews—do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition (παράδοσις) of the elders. 4 And they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it. And there are also many others that they observe—the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.¹ 5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition (παράδοσις) of the elders but eat with defiled hands?

6 He said to them,

Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites (ὑποκριτής), as it is written,

This people honors (τιμάω, pres.) me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 In vain do they worship (σέβω, pres.)² me, teaching (διδάσκω, pres.) as teachings (διδασκαλία) the commandments (ἐνταλμα, pl.) of men.

8 You abandon the commandment (ἐντολή, sing.) of God and hold to the tradition (παράδοσις) of men.

9 Then he said to them,

You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment (ἐντολή) of God in order to keep your tradition (tradition)! 10 For Moses said,

Honor your father and your mother, and,

Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.

11 But you say that if anyone tells father or mother:

Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban (that is, an offering to God)—

¹ This explanation shows Mark is writing to a Gentile audience.

² “[T]o express in gestures, rites, or ceremonies one’s allegiance or devotion to deity, *worship*” (BDAG, 917).

12 then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother,³ 13 thus making void the word of God through your tradition (παράδοσις) that you have handed on. And you do many things like this.⁴

Defilement from Within

14 Then he called the crowd (ὄχλος) again and said to them:

Listen (ἀκούω, aor.) to me, all of you, and understand (συνίημι, aor.)! 15 There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile (κοινώω), but the things that come out are what defile.⁵

17 When he had left the crowd (ὄχλος) and entered the house, his disciples⁶ asked him about the parable (παραβολή). 18 He said to them:

Then do you also fail to understand (ἀσύνετος)? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19 because it enters not the heart (καρδία) but the stomach (κοιλία) and goes out into the toilet (ἀφεδρών)?

Thus he cleansed (καθαρίζω, pres.) all foods.⁷ 20 And he said:

It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21 For it is from within, from the heart of men (τῆς καρδίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων), that evil reasonings (οἱ διαλογισμοὶ⁸ οἱ κακοὶ) come—fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.

³ So that the Jewish leaders may be enriched.

⁴ By confronting this type of Jewish tradition, Jesus is confronting the heart of Pharisaism. Think *Fiddler on the Roof*.

⁵ It's the internal the defiles, not the external.

⁶ As in Mt 13, Jesus tells a parable to the Jewish crowd and gives the explanation to his disciples.

⁷ This is an explanatory aside by Mark.

⁸ “[C]ontent of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason, *thought, opinion, reasoning, design*” (BDAG, 232).

The Wisdom of the Syrophenician Woman⁹

24 From there [Gennesaret]¹⁰ he [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre.¹¹ He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there,¹² yet he could not escape notice.¹³ 25 But a woman¹⁴ whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and fell down (προσπίπτω, aor.)¹⁵ at his feet. 26 Now the woman

⁹ Cf. Mt 15:21-28. That Jesus has made all food clean (v. 19) signals God's radically new approach that will in due time make possible the integration of Jews and Gentiles into a single community. This is the first pericope in a series of "Gentile-focused" ones. The Jewish messianic banquet is enjoyed also, on a slightly diminished scale, by neighbouring Gentiles (France, *NIGTC*, 294). This first Galilean act of Mark's drama ends with a deliberate extension of Jesus' activity outside the Jewish sphere.⁴² Possibly, Mk 6:45-8:26 contains five miracles all set outside Jewish territory, designed to balance five Jewish miracles in Mk 4:35-6:44, each group beginning with a sea-crossing miracle and including a feeding miracle (P. J. Achtemeier, *JBL* 89 (1970) 265-91 and *JBL* 91 (1972) 198-221). By Mark's time the issue of Jews and Gentiles in the Church was perhaps the most burning question in the development of the Christian movement. Granted that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel, what did this mean for his relevance to the rest of the world? (France, *NIGTC*, 295).

¹⁰ **Mk 6:53** 53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore.

¹¹ **Mt 15:21** 21 Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. This is the first of three events Mark recorded from Jesus' third excursion beyond the borders of Galilee (for the three excursions see Mk 4:35; 5:20; 6:32-52; 7:24-8:10)" (Grassmick, *BKC*, 2:135). Because of excellent, early Greek manuscript support, the words "and Sidon" should be included (Grassmick, *BKC*, 2:135). The excursion of Jesus into "unclean" Gentile territory shows his disregard for the concept of ritual defilement (v. 15). This pericope previews the future explosive spread of the Church among Gentiles. Mark's Gentile readers/hearers no doubt found in the account reassurance that they are part of the true people of God (Brooks, *NAC*, 120).

¹² Jesus went to the region of Tyre not to minister publicly but to instruct his disciples in private (cf. 6:32-34, 53-56).

¹³ Jesus was famous even in Tyre. **Mk 3:8** 8 ...And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that he was doing and came to him. This pericope is similar to others in Mark. Jesus wishes to get away from the crowds (Mk 1:35; 3:13; 4:10; 6:31-32) and uses a house for the purpose (Mk 1:29; 2:1; 3:20; 7:17), but he is unable to escape those in need (Mk 1:32-33, 36-37, 45; 2:2; 3:7-12, 20; 6:33-34)(France, *NIGTC*, 297).

¹⁴ In Matthew's account the woman is a "Canaanite," she cries out/shouts at Jesus, she calls him the Son of David, and she worships him. **Mt 15:22-25** 22 A Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying out saying: Have mercy on me Lord, Son of David (κύριε υἱὸς Δαυὶδ)! My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed! 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples approached and asked him saying: Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us. 24 But he answered and said: I was not sent (ἀποστέλλω, aor.) except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 But she came and began to bow down (προσκυνέω, imperf.) to him saying: Lord (κύριε), help me!

¹⁵ "[T]o prostrate oneself before someone, *fall down before/at the feet of* freq. in the gesture of a suppliant" (*BDAG*, 884). **Mk 3:11** 11 Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, You are the Son of God. **Mk 5:22** 22 One of the synagogue officials named Jairus came up, and on seeing [Jesus], fell at his feet. **Mk 5:33** 33 The woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before [Jesus]. **Lk 5:8** 8 When Simon Peter saw [the fish], he fell down at Jesus' knees. That the woman chose to approach a Jewish healer, and even fell at his feet, indicates her remarkable insight into the significance of Jesus' ministry and the biblical pattern of salvation history (France, *NIGTC*, 297).

was a **Gentile** of Syrophoenician origin.¹⁶ She kept asking (ἑρωτάω, imperf.)¹⁷ him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her:

¹⁶ **Mt 15:22** 22 A Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David. My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed. See *Tyre and Sidon*. This woman is Canaanite by descent and Greek by culture (Brooks, *NAC*, 121). From an orthodox Jewish perspective, the woman has everything against her. She is woman, a Canaanite, and her daughter is demon-possessed. She is also likely a widow (cf. 1 Ki 17:9). That Jesus responds to her request shows his typical unconcern for convention when it stood in the way of his mission (France, *NIGTC*, 297). Jesus is replaying Elijah's journey to the widow Zarephath, which is between Tyre and Sidon (1 Ki 17:8-24). Jesus had previously angered the Jews of Nazareth when he spoke favorably of Elijah's visit to the widow of Zarephath. **Lk 4:25-30** 25 In truth, I [Jesus] tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land. 26 But Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. ...28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up, drove him out of the town, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

¹⁷ The imperfect tense shows the woman. Kept asking. She was desperate and determined. **Mt 15:22-25** 22 A Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying out saying: Have mercy on me Lord, Son of David (κύριε υἱὸς Δαυὶδ)! My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed! 23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples approached and asked him saying: Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us. This widow is like the widow in Jesus' parable of the unrighteous judge. **Lk 18:1-5** 1 [Jesus] told [the disciples] a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Give me justice against my adversary. 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.

Let the children [Israel] be satisfied (χορτάζομαι)¹⁸ first (πρῶτον),¹⁹ for it is not good to take the children's bread (ἄρτος)²⁰ and throw it to the "dogs" (κυνάριον) [Gentiles].²¹

28 But she answered him,

Yes, Lord (κύριος). Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.²²

29 Then he said to her,

¹⁸ "[T]o experience inward satisfaction in someth., *be satisfied*" (*BDAG*, 1087). This word indicates to eat one's fill, not just have a taste (France, *NIGTC*, 298). **Mark 6:42** 42 They [5000 Jews] all ate and were satisfied (χορτάζω). **Mark 8:8** 8 They [4000 Gentiles] ate and were satisfied (χορτάζω). And they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

¹⁹ See *The Priority of Israel*. The children (Israel) must be fed first (the Messiah's mission). Israel's bread (special privileges from the Messiah's ministry) must not be thrown to the "dogs" (Gentiles) because their time for feeding (worldwide proclamation of the gospel) has not yet come (Grassmick, *BKC*, 2:135). The Gentiles are at the end of the queue (France, *NIGTC*, 298), but at least they're in the queue. It's better to be last in the right queue than first in the wrong one. Don't be upset the Jews are first in line. Just be happy there is a line. **Ps 84:10** 10 I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

²⁰ The word "bread" is found 18 times in chs. 6-8. These are the "bread" chapters. The mention of bread again (cf. 6:35-44, 52), shortly to be taken up in a further feeding story, this time for the benefit of Gentiles (8:1-10), and then made the subject of Jesus' rebuke of his disciples' lack of understanding in 8:14-21, suggests this pericope is part of a developing bread motif. Bread is an image for the blessings of the Messiah's ministry to his own people and, following on from this incident, among the Gentiles (France, *NIGTC*, 296).

²¹ "[A] house-dog or lap-dog in contrast to a dog of the street or farm" (*BDAG*, 575). **Mt 15:26** 26 It is not good to take the children's bread (ἄρτος) and throw it to the dogs (κυνάριον). Biblical references to dogs are always hostile (2 Sa 16:9; Ps 22:16; Phil. 3:2), and Jews typically referred to Gentiles as dogs. It is language a Gentile would expect from a Jew (France, *NIGTC*, 298). Jesus is parroting the belief of contemporary Jews, so "dogs" should be in quotes. He is acting out a parable (Brooks, *NAC*, 121), a dramatic theodicy. He is simultaneously testing the woman's faith while teaching the disciples about their eventual mission to the Gentiles. The Gentiles are not de facto unclean. All foods are clean, and all people are able to be clean through faith in Messiah. **Mk 7:19** 19 Thus [Jesus] declared all foods clean. **Ac 10:14-17** 14 Peter said, By no means, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, What God has made clean, do not call common. 16 This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. 17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate. Dogs came into being through Jesus. **Jn 1:3** 3 All things were made through [the Word], and without him was not any thing made that was made.

²² **Mt 15:27** 27 Yes, Lord. But even the dogs (κυνάριον) eat from the crumbs (ψιχίον) that fall from the table of their master (κύριος). The woman agrees with Jesus but still persists. She calls him "Lord," admits she is a "dog under the table," and acknowledges Israel's priority, but she still wants his crumbs. She does not deny the priority of Israel, but she suggests this does not exclude the Gentiles (Brooks, *NAC*, 121). She understands the nations will benefit from the Jewish Messiah. The woman's response demonstrates her knowledge and understanding of God's salvation plan through Israel to the nations as well as personal humility. Dogs, too, must have their day. Messiah's mission must begin with Israel, but it cannot be confined there. The Gentiles may have to wait, but they will not be excluded from the benefits Messiah brings to the world (France, *NIGTC*, 299). **Ge 12:3** 3 In you [Abraham] all the families of the earth [including this woman] shall be blessed. Although her faith in Jesus is not explicit in Mark, it is certainly implied. In Matthew's account, her faith is explicit. **Mt 15:28** 28 Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith!

Because of this statement (λόγος),²³ you may go your way. The demon²⁴ has left (perf.)²⁵ your daughter.

30 And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.²⁶

The Deaf and Mute Man in the Decapolis

31 Then he returned from the region of [Tyre](#) and went by way of [Sidon](#) towards the [Sea of Galilee](#), in the region of the [Decapolis](#).²⁷ 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears. And he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him:

Ephphatha, that is, Be opened!

35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one. But the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 They were astounded beyond measure saying:

He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.

²³ The woman has out-parabled Jesus and is richly rewarded. She has done something no one else has been able to do. She has “bested” Jesus in argument, just as Abraham and Moses “bested” Yahweh in argument. She understands the character of God and the basics of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. She believes Jesus is the Messiah. **Mt 15:22** 22 Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! Jesus is not disappointed to be “defeated” in argument by this Syrophoenician woman (France, *NIGTC*, 296). He is immediately ready to grant her request. The woman’s “victory” is a watershed. The whole future course of the Christian movement is based not on Jewish exclusivism but on sharing the children’s bread (France, *NIGTC*, 296). In Messiah Jesus, hostile Jew-Gentile relations are overcome. **Eph 2:11-22**.

²⁴ The woman’s surprising understanding of Jesus is the focus of this story, not Jesus’ casting out of the demon (Brooks, *NAC*, 120; France, *NIGTC*, 299).

²⁵ This is the only miracle in Mark that Jesus performs at a distance without a vocal command (Grassmick, *BKC*, 2:136). Previous exorcism stories in Mark focus on Jesus’ authority as he directly confronts the demons. But here the cure is effected at a distance and without any personal contact between Jesus and either the demon or the possessed person (France, *NIGTC*, 296-97).

²⁶ This pericope foreshadows the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world. **Mk 13:10** 10 The gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. **Mk 14:9** 9 Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what [this woman] has done will be told in memory of her. **Mk 16:15** 15 [Jesus] said to [the apostles], Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. **Mk 16:20** 20 [The apostles] went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. Mark deliberately places this incident as the opening up of Jesus’ ministry to the Gentiles (France, *NIGTC*, 299). As the gospel spread beyond the Jewish world to the Gentiles, the apostles likely often thought about Jesus’ encounter with the woman in the region of Tyre.

²⁷ This is a distinctively Gentile area to the east of the Sea of Galilee (France, *NIGTC*, 294).

Even the Dogs Eat the Children's Crumbs (Mk 7:24-30)

1. **Jesus purposefully takes the disciples from a Jewish region to a Gentile one.**
 - a. **Mk 7:24** 24 From there [Gennesaret] he [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre.
 - (1) **Mk 6:53** 53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored to the shore.
 - (2) **Mt 15:21** 21 Jesus went away from there and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.
 - b. This isn't the first time Jesus has purposefully taken them to a Gentile region.
 - (1) **Mk 4:35** 35 On that day, when evening had come, [Jesus] said to [the disciples], Let us go across to the other side.
 - (2) **Mk 5:1** 1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes.
 - c. To our knowledge, this is the farthest from Jerusalem Jesus ever goes.
 - (1) The other occasion was Peter's Great Confession at Caesarea Philippi.
 - d. Mark previously mentioned that people from Tyre and Sidon were coming to Jesus.
 - (1) **Mk 3:8** 8 ...And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that he was doing and came to him.
2. **Jesus has an appointment with this Syro-Phoenician woman. He is fulfilling a type.**
 - a. Jesus is motivated by fulfilling Old Testament types.
 - b. In this case, Elijah is the type. Jesus is the antitype. See 1 Kings 17.
 - (1) In 1 Kings 17 and this pericope, a Jewish prophet purposefully leaves the land of Israel to go to the region of Tyre and Sidon to see a widow. In both cases, God provides much-needed bread to the widow through the prophet. Finally, in both cases the widow's child is miraculously healed by the Jewish prophet.
 - c. Elijah and Jesus are operating on the same wavelength, with the same motivation. The same point is being made in both instances.
 - d. Elijah's trip to the widow of Zarephath was on Jesus' mind, as seen from Luke:
 - (1) **Lk 4:25-30** 25 I [Jesus] tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land. 26 But Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.
3. **The woman exemplifies what Jesus wants from us...desperation that drives us to him.**
 - a. **Mk 7:25-26** 25 But a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and fell down (προσπίπτω, aor.) at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile of Syrophenician origin. She kept asking (ἔρωτάω, imperf.) him to cast the demon out of her daughter.
 - b. To the Jews, this is the last person Jesus should have anything to do with. She is:
 - (1) A woman;
 - (2) Canaanite by descent (Mt 15:22);
 - (3) Greek by culture (Mk 7:26);
 - (4) With a demon-possessed daughter;

- (5) Likely a widow (cf. 1 Ki 17:9);
- (6) And very annoying (Mt 15:22-23; Mk 7:26).
- c. This widow is like the widow in Jesus' parable of the unrighteous judge.
 - (1) **Lk 18:1-5** 1 [Jesus] told [the disciples] a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. 2 He said, In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. 3 And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, Give me justice against my adversary. 4 For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, Though I neither fear God nor respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.
- d. Jesus responds to her desperation. Convention won't deter him from his mission.
 - (1) We must not let Kiwi convention deter you us your God-given mission. Our mission is greater than Kiwi convention.
 - (2) Satan loves to use convention to stall us in our mission.
 - (3) "God's mission, not Kiwi convention."

4. Israel takes priority in God's plan.

- a. **Mk 7:27** 27 And he said to her, Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.
 - (1) **Mt 15:24** 24 I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - (2) **Mt 15:26** 26 It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.
- b. Since Noah, it's always been God's plan for Shem to shelter Ham and Japheth.
 - (1) **Ge 9:26-27** 26 [Noah] also said, Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant.
- c. It's always been God's plan to bless the nations through the seed of Abraham.
 - (1) **Ge 12:1-3** 1 Yahweh said to Abram, Go from your country, your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. 2 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
- d. Early in his ministry, Jesus was almost exclusively focused on Israel. This was right!
 - (1) **Mt 10:5-7** 5 These twelve [disciples] Jesus sent out, instructing them, Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And proclaim as you go saying, The [Messianic] kingdom of heaven is at hand.
 - (2) **Mt 15:24** 24 I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - (3) **Mk 7:27** 27 Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.
 - (4) **Ro 1:16** 16 I [Paul] am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
 - (a) As he traveled from city to city, Paul always went to the synagogue first.
- e. In all four gospels, when Israel begins to reject Jesus, he begins to train the disciples for their eventual Gentile mission.
- f. Application.
 - (1) Respect the priority of Israel in God's salvation plan.

(2) Understand that the Church does not replace Israel in God's plan.

5. The word “bread” is found 18 times in chs. 6-8. These are the “bread” chapters.

- a. Bread is a metaphor for all the blessings humanity receives through Messiah.
- b. Jesus wants to satisfy both Jews and Gentiles with bread.
 - (1) **Mk 7:27** 27 Let the children [Israel] be satisfied (χορτάζομαι) first (πρῶτον), for it is not good to take the children's bread (ἄρτος) and throw it to the “dogs” [Gentiles].
- c. The feeding of 5000 Jews and the feeding of 4000 Gentiles bookend Mark 7.
 - (1) **Mk 8:16-21** 16 [The disciples] began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. 17 And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? They said to him, Twelve. 20 And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? And they said to him, Seven. 21 And he said to them, Do you not yet understand?

6. Jesus is playacting. He's being deliberately offensive to make a point. He is engaged in a dramatic theodicy for pedagogical purposes.

- a. **Mk 7:27** 27 Let the children [Israel] be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the “dogs” (κυνάρτιον) [Gentiles].
- b. Biblical references to dogs are always hostile (2 Sa 16:9; Ps 22:16; Phil. 3:2).
 - (1) Jews typically referred to Gentiles as dogs. It is language a Gentile would expect from a Jew.
- c. Jews considered all Gentiles unclean.
 - (1) **Mk 7:19** 19 Thus [Jesus] declared all foods clean.
- d. Jesus is parroting the belief of contemporary Jews, so “dogs” should be in quotes.
- e. Jesus simultaneously tests the woman's faith while getting the disciples' attention.
- f. Jesus is a master teacher. He is an expert in pedagogy.
 - (1) The fact Matthew and Mark remembered this conversation tells you the lesson stuck.
- g. In Acts 10, Peter is re-taught this same lesson in dramatic fashion.
 - (1) **Ac 10:14-17** 14 Peter said, By no means, Lord. For I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, What God has made clean, do not call common. 16 This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. 17 Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate. Dogs came into being through Jesus.

7. The woman believes in Jesus as the Jewish Messiah. She is a believer.

- a. In Mark, her faith is implied. In Matthew, her faith is explicit.

- (1) **Mt 15:22** 22 A Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying out saying: Have mercy on me Lord, Son of David (κύριε υἱὸς Δαυίδ)! My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed!
 - b. Her personal justification is actually more important than the healing of her daughter.
 - (1) Whatever our background, personal history, or current problems, Jesus welcomes us to believe in him as the Jewish Messiah who came to save us.
- 8. The woman understands God’s salvation plan as it relates to Israel and the nations.**
- a. **Mk 7:28-29** 28 But she answered him, Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs. 29 And he said to her, For this statement you may go your way. The demon has left your daughter.
 - b. The woman agrees with Jesus about Israel’s priority and her status as a “dog,” but she still wants his crumbs.
 - c. Since the days of Adam and Eve, it’s always been God’s plan to conquer sin, death, and Satan through the seed of the woman.
 - (1) **Genesis 3:16** 16 To the woman [God] said, I will surely multiply your sorrow in conception. In sadness you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your man, and he shall rule over you.
 - d. The Gentiles are at the end of the queue, but at least they’re in the queue.
 - (1) **Isaiah 49:6** 6 It is too light a thing that you [the Messiah] should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel. I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation (ישועה) may reach to the end of the earth.
 - e. It’s better to be last in the right queue than first in the wrong one.
 - (1) **Psalms 84:10** 10 I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
 - (2) Don’t be upset the Jews are first in line. Just be happy there is a line. Be content with being a dog, as long as you can get to Jesus’ crumbs.
 - f. The woman’s surprising understanding of Jesus is the point. The exorcism is secondary.
 - (1) Increase your knowledge and understanding of God’s salvation plan for history.
- 9. Mark’s literary craftsmanship is seen in how he organizes all these pericopes.**
- a. This pericope is preceded by a discussion of outer and inner cleanliness.
 - b. It is followed by a series of miracles in which Jesus “feeds” Gentiles with “bread.”
 - c. This pericope foreshadows the proclamation of the gospel to the Gentile world.
 - (1) **Mk 13:10** 10 The gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations.
 - (2) **Mk 14:9** 9 Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what [this woman] has done will be told in memory of her.
 - (3) **Mk 16:15** 15 [Jesus] said to [the apostles], Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
 - d. Likely, the apostles thought back to this occasion many times as the years went by.
 - (1) Jesus, the master Teacher, had left an indelible impression on their minds.
 - (2) When your students remember what you taught 20-30 years earlier, you know you’ve done well as a teacher.

- (3) When *Mark* is written, the issue of Jew-Gentile relations in the Church is perhaps the most important question being asked in the Christian community.
- (4) Mark's Gentile readers no doubt found in the account reassurance that they are truly part of God's people.
 - (a) **Ephesians 2:11-22** 11 Remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Messiah, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. 13 But now in Messiah Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Messiah. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are co-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Messiah Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

Notes