

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: The Bible and the Church

Pray for all those who work in translating, publishing, printing and distributing the Bible throughout the world. There are still many languages into which the Bible has not been translated, and many parts of the world where it is difficult for the Bible to be distributed. Pray for any people or organisations which you know of or support who are engaged in this work.

Meditation

I claim my salvation through Christ on the Cross

The only place where sin is dealt with once and for all,

And no other place will do.

The world asks me to believe that every religion is just a cultural choice,

And begs me compromise my beliefs to be 'nice' for the sake of world peace.

Whilst so called religious maniacs send videos via the media saying,

'I am a martyr; God will reward me if I kill you' – and they believe it!

A bomb says religious terrorists rule the world! Lord, save us!

I am lost for want of true religion; there's no-where left to go,

Except the only place a man or woman can go to find real peace;

It is the Cross of Christ, where true religion is no manipulation

But a divine tragedy with a miraculous and glorious ending!

God, who made all things, has redeemed all things through Christ!

And now He comes to save Creation, save everything, save even us

Because He is Love, and one day, yes one day, all will know He died for all

His death was no religious suicide, no selfish, suicidal martyrdom,

But the only sacrifice for everlasting peace a man – the Son of Man – could make

To trounce all evil and hand the victory to God, and through Him, to us!

Bible Study - Mark 7:24-37

²⁴ Jesus left from there and set out for the region of Tyre. He went into a town and did not want anyone to know He was there, but He could not escape notice. ²⁵ One day, straight away, a woman heard about Him whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, and she came and fell down at His feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Greek, of the Syrophenicia origin. She begged Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁸ But she replied and said to Him, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' ²⁹ Then He said to her, 'Because of this, you may go; for the demon has left your daughter.' ³⁰ So she went home and found the child lying in bed, and with the demon gone.

³¹ Then He returned from the region of Tyre, and went through Sidon into the region of Galilee. ³² They brought to Him a deaf man who had a

this section of the Gospel must be interpreted with this in mind, as we v
The first healing is remarkable (7:24-30). It is the story of Jesus cas' child some unknown distance away (7:25) through the faith of th
pleaded with the Lord. This is incredible enough, but, this rather un
distributed, the Bible has not been distributed because of the even more extraordinary encounter b
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which led to the deliverance of the child (7:26-29). The dialogue
distributed. Pray for Jew (7:27). However, it was quite usual for Jesus to say somethin
because it seems to show Jesus as hard, initially refusing to help a w
Jew (7:27). However, it was quite usual for Jesus to say somethin
healing which was unexpected or apparently strange (see Jesus' wor
Gerasene demoniac -5:8,9f.); but what He said had the effect of dra
person concerned, or of obtaining some other significant response.
discover whether they were in the right place before God, and there
from the healing or deliverance they sought. In this case, the resp
incredibly astute and lowly (7:28), and this dominates the story. The
The table eat the crumbs ...' is now a proverbial saying which describ
grace of God.

The second healing took place outside of Jewish territory as Jesus Galilee from Tyre, heading south east towards the Decapolis (7:31). who was deaf and had a 'speech impediment'. We do not know a except that he had companions with sufficient faith in what they knew heal their friend (7:32). There are two interesting things about this n highly demonstrative methods Jesus used to heal the man (7:33,34) vocal, and secondly, the enthusiastic response of the people presen man with speech and hearing difficulties that Jesus was 'loud' and h certainly effective! However, when the people said 'He has done eve compliment. Later in the study, we will look at two passages of Scrip and both of them show that the crowds were beginning to co they expected of the long expected Messiah.

This raises a significant point. What was the makeup of the crowds v simply congregate from the local people wherever Jesus went? How the countryside wherever he went, just to see what he could do. We can know the precise answer, and it is probably a combinator
ive can know the precise answer, and it is probably a combinator
Mark presents Jesus as having great difficulty in
that Mark presents Jesus as having great difficulty in
for those moments when He felt it necessary to be private (as here in
though Jesus was ministering in Gentile territory.

Going Deeper

We will now study each of these stories in turn and see how they ill
Because of this, you may go; for the demon has left your daughter.' ³⁰ So she went home and found the child lying in bed, and with the demon gone.
Greek (Romans 1:16), but it is how this works out as a realistic plan v
His disciples which is of interest to us. Especially at times lik
understanding of Jews by Gentile Christians, and of Christian Jews by
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had this connection with Elijah in mind? In Luke 4, after Jesus had stirred up trouble by preaching in the Capernaum synagogue, he said; 'there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, he called the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon' (Luke 4:25-26). By quoting this Old Testament story, Luke tells us that Jesus justified ministry to Gentiles. God's power, and healings were given for a reason. He was rejected by His own people. Although Jesus always maintained that His call was first to His own people the Jews, and to be their Messiah, he knew full well that the reason for this call was an echo of the famous line in Genesis 1, that God's plan was for grace to be made available ultimately to all people.

For this reason, it is entirely right for us to be careful not to jump to the wrong conclusion as we read what Jesus said to the woman. It sounds dismissive for Him to say, 'Let the children be fed first, but it is not right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs'. Now, although calling someone a term of abuse, the word Jesus actually used was a diminutive term for a dog, perhaps even a puppy; and this means that we must consider the possibility that Jesus' words were not at all as harsh as they seem. The response from the woman was certainly not sharp; 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs'. Now, once we have stripped away the veneer of insult which initially appeared to be present in the conversation, we can more easily see that the woman's reply was one of considerable spiritual insight. She accepted her place before Jesus as a Gentile woman, and yet persisted in good faith to ask for His help, showing an insightful belief that the good things known to her were not limited. The woman certainly knew what she was saying; she was determined to get the job done. The result of this exchange was extraordinary. Mark does not tell us that Jesus considered the woman's faith (whereas Matthew does – see Matt 15:28), but he says that Jesus delivered the woman from her unclean spirit as a direct result of her humility and insight. Mark did not mention this because He was looking for these precise qualities in her reply. The woman undoubtedly did not care for her unclean spirit was right to allow his story to speak for itself. After she had spoken, Jesus then delivered her unclean spirit (7:29) when the child concerned was nowhere near Him! This was a demonstration of Jesus' power and authority, but for Jesus, distance was no object to His power, and His authority was in Gentile territory was highly symbolic. Jesus had the power to command the unclean spirits wherever they were, in Jewish territory or Gentile.

In this way Jesus showed His complete and ultimate authority over all things. He showed Himself to be the Messiah of the Jewish people, but was also beginning to demonstrate, before His death and resurrection, something of His Pentecostal power and authority as the Saviour of all people. When the Spirit of the abandoned Almighty God in the days of Elijah, God's mercies poured out over the boundaries of Israel, and came in grace to ordinary people who lay beyond the confines of God's chosen territory (Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17). This ancient story was a prophecy of what would happen when Jesus came, as our story shows.

The healing of a deaf and dumb man

Jesus appears to have been constantly on the move at this time. Mark tells us that after this incident, Jesus moved back towards Galilee, but keeping in Gentile territory rather than Jewish. We know nothing about the man who was brought to Jesus, and it is futile for us to wonder whether he was Jewish or Gentile. Perhaps, after the previous incident, Mark intends us to keep our minds irrelevant! Certainly, the early church and its leaders felt able to declare that Jesus was neither Jew nor Greek ...' (Gal 3:28, Col 3:11). We are told that the man brought to Jesus was deaf and that he had a speech impediment. The

... ministry. After this remarkable healing, Jesus yet again asked for privacy (7:31-32). Jesus was not shy about people's ability to follow Him for the wrong reasons. His call was first to His own people, but the people recognised at the end of the passage that this call was an echo of the famous line in Genesis 1, words 'God saw that it was good' after each of the days of creation (recorded in English, but it is traceable from the Greek through the Hebrew of Genesis. So those who knew the Hebrew would be aware of the work of God. This is further amplified by the words 'Let the dumb hear and the dumb speak', which is a quote of the powerful work of redemption.

Application

The reason why we make these points at the end of the study is because we can see in the same way. It is reasonable to expect that people of both Jews and also others who lived in that region of Israel that had existed there, centuries before Jesus was because they knew Scriptures. To make connections' and conclude important things about Jesus from the Old Testament. Christians can have a fruitful evangelism by doing their best to ensure that they are doing so in a way that is culturally and educationally appropriate. The nature of these healing miracles is also something that we should encourage us to have faith that God will do great things and trust Him for such ministry. We do not have to parade great feats of our own testimonies; but we should be prepared to pray for people who are in need. It is the golden rule of ministry; if people ask for a prayer, pray for them in Jesus' name. Then follow the leading of the Spirit and do good counsel!

Questions for use in groups

1. Discuss in your group the significance of Jesus' casting out demons. Have you ever come across anything like this? What does it matter whether we use 'techniques' or not? It might be possible to get more people to receive the Kingdom of God if it were possible to get more people to receive the Kingdom of God. It is the golden rule of ministry; if people ask for a prayer, pray for them in Jesus' name. Then follow the leading of the Spirit and do good counsel!

Discipleship

Jesus' work of healing and casting out of demons is a profoundly important part of the church to accept as part of what we should be doing. We are told that the man brought to Jesus was deaf and that he had a speech impediment. The