

Jesus Goes Global

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[0 : 00] going to be reading and Kirsty, so if you'd like to come up and maybe just give the reference and page numbers, that'll be helpful. Thanks very much.

It's page 1010 in the Church Bible, Mark chapter 7 from verse 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. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil 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. 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 their dogs. Yes, Lord, she replied, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Then he said to 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.

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 him to place his hand on the man. After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, Ifatahata, which means, be opened. At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak plainly. 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.

Continuing on in chapter 8. During those days, another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I have compassion for these people.

[2 : 30] They have already been with me three days and have had nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way because some of them have come a long distance. His disciples answered, But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them? How many loaves do you have?

Jesus asked. Seven, they replied. He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and they did so. They had a few small fish as well. He gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. The people ate and were satisfied. Afterwards, the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. About 4,000 men were present, and having sent them away, he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha. The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. He sighed deeply and said, Why does this generation ask for a miraculous sign? I tell you the truth, no sign will be given to it.

Then he left them, got back into the boat, and crossed to the other side. As I'm getting sorted here, there's notes and pens if anybody would like to avail of that.

You can just ask for it. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thanks very much.

[5 : 05] Okay, well, let's pray. Our Father God, we ask that you would answer the prayer that we sung a moment ago, that you would come.

Holy Spirit, come. Breathe life into these words so that we hear your voice speaking to us.

So that the words that we hear from your word change us, transform us, and help us to understand who you are, the kingdom that you have come to build.

That we would leave as a people who are on board with your mission, with hearts that are aligned to your priorities.

Please do a work amongst us, we pray in Jesus. Amen. Well, we reach a turning point in Mark's gospel where Jesus is moving towards a different people and into a different place.

[6 : 31] Up to this point in Mark's gospel, Jesus has been primarily located around the Lake Galilee with primarily Jewish people.

And as he was preaching that they should repent and believe the good news. And also proving through his miracles that he is God's king who has come to renew this disordered world and restore broken lives.

But now, look at verse 24, it tells us Jesus left that place and he went to the vicinity of Tyre.

This is a decisive and a deliberate move by Jesus. Jesus leaves and goes to a different people. He goes to the Gentiles and he goes to a different place to Tyre.

Jesus is on a mission to expand and to see his kingdom grow. So, verse 31. Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and he went down through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

[7 : 45] It seems a straightforward journey that Jesus goes out, he does his work and he comes back again to Lake Galilee. But the way that Jesus went, and if we had a big map here you'd be able to see it, it would be like us going to Limerick via Dublin.

He makes this massive big detour, this big huge horseshoe all the way out. And it's telling us that Jesus is decisively and deliberately moving out to new people and he's going to new places because his kingdom is to go to all people.

His mission is that his kingdom would expand and that people would know about him. So the question that we want to ask in all of this as we look through these three stories is to ask how does his kingdom expand?

How will we see it grow in places like Carigaline? Well, firstly, it's an open kingdom. The grace of Jesus is open to all.

Jesus may be going to a different place and to a different people, but the offer of Jesus remains the same. Look at verse 24. He entered a house and he did not want anyone to know it because he's always wanting to show who he is.

[9 : 07] He doesn't want other people trying to figure it out. He wants to tell them who he is. But he couldn't keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet.

Now, this is normal ministry for Jesus, isn't it? We've come across this before time and time again in Mark's Gospel. It happened all the time. But this time it's meant to shock us.

The last person who fell at Jesus' feet was Jairus. He was a well-respected man within his community, president of his local church, a man with clout and influence, and he took his religion seriously.

But here, look at verse 26. We have a woman who was a Greek. That is, she's a Gentile. She's unclean.

Born in Syrian Phoenicia, they were enemies of Jews. But more importantly, they were pagans. She didn't go to church.

[10 : 13] She didn't have a Bible. They weren't into religion. All her credentials that we have before us basically disqualify her from coming to God.

But this woman is not going to be disqualified. She is both determined and courageous. Look at the rest of verse 26. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

This is like an illegal immigrant in Ireland, bursting into the offices of Enderkenny, demanding that he give them a job right now.

But they have no rights. They disqualify at so many levels. And it's the same with this woman. She's got no rights. But she does understand the generosity of God's grace.

Jesus' answer is somewhat confusing and it almost seems quite harsh. Verse 27. Jesus said, Now Jews were considered God's children.

[11 : 44] They were the insiders. God's special people. And they had rights to God. Gentiles, on the other hand, were seen as dogs. Outsiders.

Unclean. You didn't have anything to do with those people. They had no rights. So Jesus is saying, You can't take what rightfully belongs to the children.

You can't take what belongs to the Jews and give it to the dogs. The Gentiles. The Messiah. God's King who's come to renew and to restore this broken world and disordered life.

Well, he was sent to the Jews, not to the Gentiles. So who are you coming to me asking me to do something? Seems quite harsh, doesn't it? But she is determined to receive God's grace.

Her answer is spectacular. Verse 28. Yes, Lord, she replied. But even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Look, Jesus.

[12:49] You know what it's like when kids have their dinner. There's a mess all over the floor. And the dogs come in and they clear up the leftovers. They also get to eat, don't they? Literally, the dogs eat as much as they like.

In other words, she's grasped the fact that she knows the grace of Jesus is so deep that there is an overflow.

His generosity spills over to people like her. Verse 29. So then he told her, for such a reply, you may go.

The demon has left your daughter. In other words, she has received his grace. And she went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

This woman here shows us how God's grace is open to all. He has no favourites. He makes no distinction between people. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, whatever you've done, whatever you've done this week, the reservoir of God's grace is so deep, it's so wide, it's so long that everybody is welcome to come and drink and be filled and be satisfied from his grace.

[14:17] But why did Jesus speak in parables to this woman? Why did he not say, as he had done so many times before to other people, why didn't he just say, go, your daughter is healed?

And that was the end of it. It seems that Jesus is deliberately making it difficult for this woman to receive grace. Why is he doing this? Well, the grace of Jesus is open to everybody.

However, we must really want it. We must be both courageous and determined in our request and our desire for God's grace.

Like this woman, we too have no rights to God's grace. We don't deserve God's grace. However, God's grace, because of his character, it is so deep that there is this overflow.

His generosity spills over to people like us on a daily basis. And so, the invitation here is to come demanding that he pour his grace on us without measure.

[15:28] We can come to him insisting that he fills us and he satisfies us with his grace. Not because of who we are, but because of who he is, his generosity, his kindness.

So, the kingdom of God is going to expand, it's going to grow when we come like this woman and receive the grace that Jesus has to offer.

The second, the kingdom will expand because it's going to be revealed. The touch of Jesus is needed by all. Jesus may be going to different people and to different places, but the work of Jesus remains the same.

Look at verse 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 the man just to touch him, to heal him.

Now, the place where this is happening and the kind of person that's described here is full of significance. We've got to understand and to know our Old Testament to grasp what is going on here.

[16:54] So, keep your finger there in Mark and jump back to Isaiah chapter 35. Isaiah chapter 35.

35. The first 34 chapters, this is just generally, but generally, the first 34 chapters are all about God's judgment on rebellious people and on the nations.

And included is, in chapter 23, is this lengthy judgment on Tyre and Sidon, the place where Jesus was doing his work, his ministry. And then we get to Isaiah chapter 35 and we get a glimpse of the work that God has promised to do in the future.

And this is what we read, Isaiah 35, verse 1. He says, the desert and the parched land will be glad. The wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom. It will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. This is a wonderful picture of God's promised restoration and renewal.

[18:06] Instead of judgment, he said, there's a time coming when salvation is going to come to all people. And the sign that that time has come, look at verse 5.

How do we know that salvation has come? He tells us, verse 5, then the eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped, the lame will leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout

for joy.

In Mark, and let's go back there, we find Jesus walking through the region of Tyre and Sidon and what's he doing as he's walking around this area once it had been told a place of judgment? He's now healing a deaf and a mute man. The significance is crystal clear. Jesus is doing the work that God had promised all those years ago.

Jesus is God's king who's invaded, who's intervened into the world and he's come to restore the disordered world and to renew broken lives, to bring salvation, to bring grace, to bring mercy and he's right there on their patch.

[19 : 25] No wonder the people went celebrating verse 37. People were overwhelmed with amazement. He has done everything well, they said.

He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak. Jesus has reached into these people and he's touched their lives and he's revealed the kingdom to them.

They understand who Jesus is. But why did Jesus heal in this way?

I mean, it's very strange, isn't it? We don't read about this all the time. Coming along, sticking his fingers in somebody's ears and then spitting on his fingers and touching somebody's tongue.

It's all rather gross, isn't it? why does he heal in this way? Well, we've got to remember where the disciples are at.

[20 : 32] Ironically, the disciples still don't get who Jesus is. The woman who we've met, she knows who Jesus is. She knows that he's overflowing with grace.

That the people here who he's just healed, well, they've grasped who he is. He's God's promised king. The disciples, however, they've seen Jesus do lots of miracles. They've heard him teach all over the place, but they still don't get who he is.

They still don't understand. In fact, at the beginning of chapter 7, Jesus said to them, why are you so dull? Why are you so thick? What have I got to do for you to understand?

So it seems that this healing here pictures what needs to happen to us all. If people are to understand who Jesus is, then the kingdom has to be revealed to them.

It has to be opened up to them. They must experience the touch of Jesus in their lives. So let's look at this healing in verse 33.

[21 : 37] After he took him aside, away from the crowd, this is something very personal and intimate, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears.

Then he spat, and the translation there is on his fingers, and then touched the man's tongue. You see, he can't hear Jesus, he can't respond to Jesus and talk to him, so Jesus communicates by touch.

Verse 34, he looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, Ephasa, which means be opened. At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was opened or loosened, and he began to speak plainly.

Now, reading this, I couldn't help but make comparisons. Rebecca, our daughter, as you know, is deaf. She can't speak very well.

She's just like this man in this story. And like the man's friends who bring him to Jesus, well, we've brought Rebecca to Jesus, and we asked that he would heal her, that he would touch her.

[23 : 07] but over time, we've learned to ask for a different kind of healing for our daughter. Of course, it would be great if Rebecca could physically hear, but God has chosen not to do that, and that's okay, we've worked through all of that, and we're content.

In fact, we're probably glad that he hasn't, and you can ask us about that afterwards. But of far greater importance is that Rebecca can hear spiritually.

So we now come to God and we ask that he would reveal the kingdom to her. Jesus, will you put your fingers in Rebecca's ears and say, be opened, so that she can understand who you are and trust you and love you?

Jesus, will you put your finger on Rebecca's tongue and say, be opened, so that she can begin to sign to others who are deaf the abundance of your grace so that they can be welcomed in too?

Now, I know that's very personal for us, but I think it illustrates the prayer prayer of every single one of us here. Isn't that what we ask for our own children?

[24 : 41] Isn't this what we want for our own family and for our own friends who have not come to experience the depth and the wonder of God's grace, that he would put his fingers in their ears and say, be opened, so that the kingdom is revealed to them, so that they can experience his grace?

The kingdom of God will expand and it will grow when we experience the touch of Jesus in our lives.

God will do that in people's lives, around our community. Well, it's an open kingdom, it's a revealed kingdom, but it's also a future kingdom, the feast of Jesus celebrated by all.

Jesus may be going to different places and to different people, but the promise of Jesus remains the same. Look at verse 1 of chapter 8, he says, during those days, another large crowd gathered, this time it was 4,000 people, that's just the men, maybe there are women and children there. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, I have compassion for these people. I want to meet them in their need. They have already been with me for three days and have had nothing to eat, and if I send them home hungry, they're going to collapse on the way because some of them have come a long distance.

[26 : 28] Now what follows in this story, and we know it all so well, is quite remarkable. It's nothing short of a feast. Look at verse 5, how many loaves do you have?

Jesus asked seven. He told the crowd to sit down on the ground and when he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to set before the people and they did so.

And they had a few small fish as well and he gave thanks for them also and he told the disciples to distribute them. And the people ate and they were satisfied.

And afterwards the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. Now we live in an age of plenty, don't we?

It's normal for us to have three good meals a day. In fact, we've got so much food in our cupboards and our fridges, we throw it away. These people that are with Jesus are used to one basic meal and even that was rationed.

[27 : 34] In fact, we're told here they haven't eaten in three days. So they're pretty hungry guys. So you could imagine what this would have been like.

Bread and fish, as much as you wanted. All you could eat, seconds and thirds and as much as you liked. To the point of where it says they were completely satisfied.

They even went home with a doggy bag. There was so much left over. And to top it all off, this feast was free, provided completely by Jesus.

So what's going on? Is Jesus trying to get on to MasterChef or something? Well, I don't think so. Again, we've got to understand our Old Testament.

So jump back to Isaiah chapter 25. Again, this is one of these little pictures amongst all the kind of the judgment that's going on that God is pronouncing.

[28 : 45] And we get this wonderful picture of the new creation of heaven itself, something that God is going to do. And look how he describes it. Isaiah chapter 25 verse 6.

On this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats and the finest of wines.

And here we are in Mark's Gospel. Jesus has just prepared a feast for all these people, 4,000 of them. And okay, it's bread and fish, it's a little bit different to fine wines and roast beef, but my word, this is still a feast for these people, isn't it?

It's almost like an appetizer, the first course for what's to come. It's a foretaste of this much greater promise, the promise of heaven itself, the new creation, where God's people will live forever and ever and ever and be eternally satisfied satisfied.

But why does Jesus repeat this same miracle? Only recently in Mark's Gospel, we read of the miracle of feeding the 5,000.

[30 : 13] Okay, there was a bit of difference, there were five loaves and two fish there, but it's pretty much the same, isn't it? Why does he repeat the same miracle again? well, the one big difference between these two miracles is his audience.

Earlier, the people were all Jewish. This time, he's in a different place with different people. They're all Gentiles, they're all outsiders, they're all unclean, they're all pagans, they're people who don't go to church and they don't read their Bible.

In other words, he's saying to them, I am providing a feast. The feast of heaven which is promised for you is open to all people. I don't care who you are or where you come from, it's open to you all. In fact, it's the kind of feast that we all long for. Again, look at Isaiah chapter 25 verse 7. He says it's a feast for all peoples.

On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all people. This blanket if you like that covers people with darkness.

[31 : 24] The sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all their faces.

He will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. This promised feast will include people of all nations regardless of race or religion.

And he's making it crystal clear that it's for people like you and me who mess up and who fail all the time. And it's going to be a feast that's going to be celebrated with life.

Because he says here death is going to be swallowed up forever. forever. And living in a broken world where death sometimes invades not just to old people but as we were reminded today sometimes to little people.

But the promise in the midst of all the brokenness that we are surrounded with day in day out. Here is a feast where he will swallow up death forever and the sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all their faces.

[32 : 54] A feast filled with joy and happiness because there is no more pain and no more heartaches. And this is the Jesus who has come into this world who has invaded into our lives to offer this future feast promised to all his people.

The kingdom of God will expand when we anticipate and look forward to the feast that Jesus has to offer.

This is three stories combined combined together showing us that Jesus is continually moving out to different people and different places.

We're never meant to be stuck in the one place and with the same people. We've got a kingdom to build. A kingdom where the grace of God will flow.

The kingdom that is going to be revealed as Jesus touches people alive. The kingdom will grow as this feast is being celebrated right now by people like you and me.

[34 : 08] We need to pray that God will build his kingdom through us and be pleased to see many people welcomed in.

Let's pray together. Our Father God, we thank you that in your generosity and in your goodness you have reached out to people like us.

Different people represented here from different places. But yet you have made it your business to reach out to us. To welcome us into your kingdom.

To be satisfied with your grace. To be filled with it. Thank you that you have revealed the kingdom to us. That you've opened up our ears to understand.

And please would you open up our mouths and our lives so that we will speak the kingdom to other people. And we thank you that we have a future to look forward to.

[35 : 40] A great feast. We long for that day. And please keep us faithful and please help us to be about your work and the building of your kingdom until that day comes.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to sing something that reflects really what we've been looking at.

Your glorious cause, oh God, engages our hearts. It's all about the kingdom growing, the kingdom expanding, and God using people like us who have experienced it in our own lives, that we would go and be about his work.

Let's stand together as we sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Your glorious Father God Engages our hearts
May Jesus Christ be known Wherever we are We ask not for ourselves For your renown The cross
was made So we pray So we are not Let your kingdom come Let your will be done

[37 : 47] That every heart might know your name Let your song be heard Everywhere I heard But
your song be On this gift of life And the kingdom come The kingdom come Give us your strength
Give us your strength Oh God The will you do Perform your wondrous deeds

And also our will be Lord Jesus Lord Jesus Lord Jesus Lord Jesus Lord Jesus Lord Jesus Lord
Jesus Lord Jesus