

THE SURPRISING JESUS

Studies in the Book of Mark

~Week Eight~

“Good News Travels”

Mark 7:24-37



Life Groups

A reminder... This weekly Bible study is connected to the Sunday sermons at UPC. It includes a “Look Back” section to help you reflect on last Sunday’s sermon, and a “Look Up” section to take you through the NEXT passage in the book of Mark. If you miss a sermon, you can always listen to it online at www.upc-orlando.com.

LOOK BACK – Mark 7:1-23

Last Sunday’s sermon was entitled “True Spirituality.” That’s also a good title for this section of Mark’s gospel. The Pharisees wanted to define spirituality in terms of outward obedience to religious tradition. Jesus relentlessly kept the focus on the heart.

a) What did Jesus and His disciples do that bothered the Pharisees in this passage?

b) Why did the Pharisees think ritual cleansing was so important?

c) What did Jesus appeal to as the sole authority from which to determine God’s will?

d) Carefully re-read verses 9-13. Can you think of contemporary (even “religious”) ways that Christians sometimes justify disobeying the commands of God? When and how did you last do that?

e) How might you apply Jesus’ words about what makes a person unclean (vss. 18-23) to modern-day forms of legalism?

LOOK UP – Mark 7:24-37

Mark now tells us about two dramatic healings performed by Jesus. Interestingly, they both occurred outside the boundaries of Israel. First Jesus cast a demon out of a little girl, and then He enabled a deaf mute to hear and to speak. These miracles reveal Jesus' compassion and His intent to take the gospel to all the nations.

Mark 7:24-30 – A Daughter Restored

- a) What do you suppose motivated Jesus to travel beyond the border of Israel to the port city of Tyre (vs. 24)?

- b) Why couldn't Jesus remain secluded in Tyre?

- c) Jesus' reply to the little girl's mother in verse 27 seems harsh. What was He trying to communicate to her? Do you think He had anything "up His sleeve"?

- d) What do you learn about the woman from her reply to Jesus in verse 28?

- e) What is striking to you about the way Jesus cast the demon out of the woman's daughter (verses 29-30)?

Mark 7:31-37 – A Deaf Man Restored

- a) Do the deaf man's friends in verse 32 remind you of anyone else we have met in our study of Mark's gospel?

b) Mark takes great pains to describe how Jesus healed the deaf mute (vss. 33-34). Why these details?

c) Why did Jesus take the man aside, “away from the crowd” (vs. 33)?

d) Jesus seems determined in both these stories to keep news about Him from spreading (vss. 24, 36). Why is that? Do you think you would keep quiet about Jesus if you had been in one of these encounters?

LOOK IN – Reflect

a) Why does Mark continue to tell us about one miracle after another from the ministry of Jesus? What is his real purpose in doing so?

b) Jesus was intentional about taking the gospel to those outside the reach of the established religious structures. What groups of people in America today are usually neglected if not snubbed by the evangelical church?

LOOK OUT – Apply

Now that you have identified some people who typically fall outside the “borders” of evangelical Christianity, what do you think our church could do to reach out to one or more of these groups? What can YOU do, right where you are?