

To Shame or to Be Shamed

Mark 7:24-30

BK Smith, Guest Speaker, July 10, 2022

When the Lord called me to the pulpit ministry here at Grace Fellowship Church, it was about six years ago. It was in the fall of 2016, if you can believe that, some of you were here back then. And one of the first things I did was to contact other Master's graduates in the area of British Columbia, to ask them how they were doing, how their ministry was going. And just to give me some insight into what life was like in Canada, and one of them was a man named BK Smith, a BK and I went to seminary together about 20 years ago. And before coming to seminary, I was just a lonely single Tennessean; BK worked for the Canadian Intelligence Services, a little more impressive than my resume. But the Lord called him to ministry from Ontario originally, Plymouth Brethren, I believe, grew up in Plymouth Brethren Church. And since then he's pastored several areas. He's pastored on the island. You were in Illinois for a time when we were together in the states there. And then the Lord has recently called him to pastor Squamish Baptist Church. And we've been praying for them last month have asked him to come give an update on the ministry there before preaching to us. But why don't I give a word of prayer for the message this morning, we're looking forward to this, ask God to give him a grace and mercy.

Heavenly Father, we thank You, Lord, for the privilege of sitting under Your Word. We thank You for the messages we've heard these past several weeks from Quinton Smith on suffering. And this morning, we have the privilege of hearing on the topic of Your mercy in the midst of shame. And I know there's many in our church who are wrestling with that particular issue. They have guilt over sin, they have remorse over it, which is good, but they don't know what to do with it. They're struggling with what do I do with the sorrow that I feel and, Lord, I pray that the words we hear this morning would help us in that area, they would shepherd our hearts, point us to the cross, and point us to Christ. And so we pray for BK this morning. Help him to remember the words he's studied, Lord, and please bring this message home to us we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Good morning, everyone. Good morning, everyone. There we go. You're acting like a bunch of Baptists. I like that. We Baptists are loud hats. Well, those are my dreams. So as you guys know, I'm My name is BK. Ontario born and bred, moved out here in 2010. And just as Jeremy had pointed out, we trudged the same battlefields with the same professors, the same classes, we cried together, cheered together; he said he didn't cry, he's from Tennessee, he's lying. One thing that I wanted to bring you guys up a little to date on Jeremy, you guys probably do not know, but Jeremy used to belong to this club when we were at seminary. And it was called the SBC Club; it was the Southern Boys Club. And him and a couple of the other guys that were from the south, used to believe it or not, would kind of get together and make fun of us Canadians when we talked. So in God's providence, He has had the last laugh, and He's brought him here, right? So he gets to hear this beautiful accent that he used to mock all those years. So God's got a sense of humor. So we're glad to have Jeremy here.

I don't know if you guys know, I've actually visited a couple of times had the pleasure of worshipping with you. You guys know Dr. Lourens, I actually went to school with his brother Matt, if you've ever had a chance to know Matt, you would know that Lourens is the loud one of the family. And so it's a joy to just to get to know him a little bit because his brother made a great impact in my life, just praying for me caring for me, and being an absolute man of God, just as he encouraged us. Both Jeremy and I were just single young guys at seminary; we were definitely the minority at that time. So it's really good to see you.

Jeremy asked me to give you guys a quick update at SBC. So I've been there about four and a half years. Praise God, we survived Covid, right? You know, it was supposed to wipe out the world and here we are, who knew? Anyhow, but the church has bonded together very well during that time; we were able to progress, continue to meet, continue to grow, and we're very thankful for that. The biggest ministry right now is just raising up young men. If you know Squamish, anybody else been to Squamish around here? You know, it's an outdoor paradise, right? If you're into mountain biking, you want to ski at Whistler. Just as an example, how busy it's become, when I first moved, you could buy an empty lot for \$200,000. That same lot goes for 1.25 million now. So it seems like the whole world is moving. In fact on my street alone, everyone, the next four houses have all sold twice over. Just new people coming in, coming, going, realizing profit and going out. So it's kind of I don't know what to say. It's not a community in that you hang out with your neighbors much, a lot of the sports are trail running, mountain climbing, mountain biking, surf sailing, just some of those type of ideas. So it's not very inclusive, so our biggest hope as a church is just making inroads. The benefit that Covid has been for us is we've had a lot of non-Christians coming to the church, they're starting to question their faith, what's going on? How am I handling this? And just in case you don't know, a lot of Wickens are practicing in Squamish and several of them, we've had four of them show up at church, just sit in the front seat, don't say anything. Some of them have wept in the sermons; we don't know what's going on in their hearts, but God seems to be doing something. And our hope is one day that they would see the grace of God, accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and to be disciplined. So that is the biggest challenge that we have right now is just raising up enough people to do the work of the ministry. Amen. Is that a problem everywhere? It is, and we need to be continued praying that.

I'm very grateful you're praying for Scott Tucker up in Kelowna, I was gonna say Providence, his old church. But um, if you don't know him, he's a wonderful man, and they have been through many trials during this time period. And I pray that you continue to hold them. He's probably the best pastor that I know that walks the earth. He's just got a heart for his people. And he's just a wonderful man for the Lord just raising his kids; he just had another one. So I know the prayers will be appreciated.

Just a little bit about me, I've been married seven years. I married later in life to a wife with two kids, so I've got a 26 and 24 year old that I've inherited, and three dogs. So that's pretty much life for me in Squamish.

So please turn with me in your text to Mark 7. Currently, what I've been preaching through in Squamish is the life of Christ. And what I've been doing is kind of harmonizing all of the gospels together to give a chronological skeleton, should I say, of giving people an outline to the phases of Jesus Christ. You're gonna see in a little bit, but we've been finding as I go through, it adds a level of context that you don't always have when you're spending all your time in one of the gospels. Usually, when someone preaches they go through one gospel. So I'm kind of going through all four of the gospels all at once uncovering some of the stories that are going on. And this story that we're getting into here, the Syrophenician woman is an incredible story, and I'm hoping to bring something to light that maybe you haven't thought about, or perhaps haven't seen. And I say this not just so that you see with your eyes but see with your heart. Because it not only does it reveal the heart of this woman, but more importantly reveals to us, the heart of Jesus Christ, whom we worship, amen. So that's kind of where I'm going with you today.

I preach out of the ESV, which is the elected standard version. I didn't know if you guys know that. So there might be a little bit of difference as we go through the text as you guys are using the NASB, is that correct? Alright. Just so you know, I don't know if Jeremy knows this, you know, we went to school with a professor who was the editor of the NASB. And one day I saw him walking to class with an ESV, and he gave thumbs up approval for it. So we're on good ground, okay. So anyway, so we're gonna dig into this ministry.

Now this part of the story of Jesus Christ happens what I call the third phase of the life of Christ. I essentially divide up the life of Jesus Christ into four phases. The first phase is the call of ministry; the baptism, temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness, and the first four chapters of John, that is the first year of the life of ministry. The next phase to the life of Christ is what I call the Galilean ministry, which we're all familiar with. Jesus makes Capernaum, Galilee, his main home base; and He spends a year and a half traveling, basically blanketing the land with the call of the gospel of the ministry. And if you guys know in Mark 4, you guys remember the parable of the sower and the seeds, you remember? That is Mark's switch over from the second phase to the third phase, because the phase in Galilee, I call it the time of public proclamation, Jesus preached as much as He could to everyone who would hear. He would heal, He would just do all these things, demonstrating that He is indeed the Messiah. And in this phase, He's switching over His emphasis, not so much to public proclamation, but to private instruction. At this point, He has not revealed to the disciples that He's going to be dying, He's going to go to the cross that has not been revealed to Him.

So I actually believe at this stage, Jesus Christ is trying to get away to take His disciples away from all the distractions of life. Because you have to understand, I totally believe that when Jesus Christ was walking this earth thousands and thousands of people were following him everywhere. When He was in Galilee, just constant masses, so much so that they couldn't even meet in cities, right? That's why he's always down by the lake, that's why He's got to feed 5000, which we know is probably around 20,000 people. So there's always this mass of people that are with Him, following Him, bringing the blind, the

deaf, the paralytic, right. So that emphasis has now switched to He knows He's going to be going to the cross in about a year, and He's got these 12 guys that he has got to fully prepare. And we know the question that He has to ask them is, "Who do you say that I am?" Right? He has to make sure before He leaves, these 12 guys get exactly who He is. So there's these kinds of stories that Jesus, I believe, uses as illustrations, as He's trying to get away to sit down with His men and ask this very important question.

So let's take a look at your text. So this is what's going on. Notice verse 24, it says, "and from there," from there, as we heard from today, he's in the area of Galilee. And it says, "there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon." It's kind of funny when you read that in the text, right? We think that's no big deal. It's like, hey, you know what, He just went to the market or whatever, He's going to pick something up. No, Tyre and Sidon is far far away. In fact, scholars believe it would take probably two weeks to a month to get there. So what He's got to do, He's got a head dead west to the Mediterranean, there was a highway that went there, and then He's got to go north along another highway. So He's making an investment of time to take His men. It's also the first time in the text that we read, that Jesus is actually leaving the land of Galilee. You remember the Legion when God, Jesus Christ healed the man Legion from all the demons in Mark 5. He went across the land. and they said that was like an area of the Decapolis, that was kind of the first time He's outside of Galilee, but this time, He's really, really outside. So we believe it's about 120 miles. He's now northwest, and He's up there.

And two questions invariably, we ask about this. First of all, why did Jesus leave Galilee? I've already given you the answer to that one. The first one is He wants to get his disciples alone, where He can start training them, equipping them, making sure they fully understand who He is, and what's going to happen. The second thing is, why would He choose Tyre of all places? So let's take a look at verse 25. "And He," being Jesus "entered a house and did not want anyone to know." This is the first time we read this in the Gospel of Mark. At no time is Jesus going in anywhere except when Jesus went to pray to the Father, right? Those were the times He'd kind of sneak off in the wilderness. He wanted that time in the early morning, but He had never ever gone purposely with the idea of purposely hiding Himself. So He wants to be away from the crowds. He wants to be away from the religious leaders. He wants to get away from it all. So what we know and understand is this is a very purposeful decision.

Now, what is so significant about Tyre? Tyre is like a modern-day Jew saying, "I'm going to Mecca for the holidays." Just something that just doesn't happen. A Jew who would want to go to Tyre, is like an American in the 80s saying, "I'm gonna go to Moscow for my summer vacation." If you remember the 80s, right, Cold War, last place you'd ever be. The third idea was trying to think about what Canadian would go down to Tennessee to vacation, right? Like it just wouldn't happen unless you're from Nashville. Anyway, so it's just one of those things that if you would have heard that Jesus is going to Tyre, why Tyre? Well, let me just tell you a little bit about Tyre. Tyre was known as an evil city. It was bad, as it was denounced by the prophets Ezekiel and Zechariah. You guys remember Jezebel from the Old Testament? She was married to Ahab, who was the man the Bible tells us did more evil in the eyes of God than anyone who had ever come before him. It was known as the place where they tormented the

prophets. It was the centre and the source of Baal worship, the false worship that corrupted and polluted Northern Israel, to the point that God had to bring in the wicked country of Assyria to wipe them out. So as the Jewish historian Josephus said, "They were notoriously our most bitter enemy." So it's not a place that's friendly to Jews, is it? It's no place that we mark on our calendar, this is somewhere we want to go and experience our heritage. By this time, it was Greek in culture, but it was ruled by Rome. But obviously, Jesus had a very purposeful intent in going there. So if you wanted to choose a place that you could get away from the Jewish crowds, the Jewish leaders, that's the kind of place you want to go. There's a place where no other Jew would be. But as we read from the text, Tyre does not bring that peace and quiet. Let's take a look again at verse 24. "And He entered a house," we don't know if Jesus used Airbnb or VRBO, but somehow, He reserved this house, and He went and "He didn't want anyone to know, yet He could not be hidden."

And it's interesting because earlier Mark 3:7 says, it says "Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a great crowd followed, from Galilee and Judea and Jerusalem and Idumea," if you don't know where Idumea is, it is very south of Jerusalem. "And from beyond the Jordan and from around Tyre and Sidon. When the great crowd heard all that He was doing, they came to Him." So just think of that region. Jesus Christ isn't just known in Israel; the fame of what Jesus Christ has been doing. And if you know Galilee, in the map, there's an international trade route which goes through. If you know anything about Galilee, and it's a lot mixed up, a lot of bunch of Gentiles up there. And when Jesus was healing, Jesus was healing everybody. You know that right? Matthew tells us there was not one person Jesus did not heal. Anybody who came, He healed. And you know, people would just continue to bring the sick, the weak, the blind, the lame, their loved ones. Wouldn't you bring your loved ones? How far would you go? People knew about Jesus, they would go hundreds and hundreds of miles as they understood there was this great incredible healer, this great incredible speaker, one who spoke like no other. So His fame is gone so far that even in Tyre and Sidon, they know about Him.

Verse 25. The NASB does add to something it says, "when the woman heard," "Immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of Him and came and fell down at His feet." We do know what the word immediately means, don't we? It means there's no hesitation, no thinking about it, no going over to see your sister. "Hey, do you think this is a good idea?" No, as soon as she heard, she went to Jesus right away. So here's Jesus, trying to get away from the crowd. He's in this no name house, to get away from the Jewish leaders, the distraction of ministering, guess who shows up at the door? This woman who somehow got word that Jesus was local, shows up with a daughter who had an unclean spirit. Verse 26 tells us a little bit more about her. She's a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. One commentator says on this woman, he says, "All the people that we read in the Gospel of Mark to approach Jesus, this is the one that has the most going against her."

Let me break it down, first of all, and no offense to you ladies, but she was a woman. And if you didn't know in that time, women were considered property. In fact, Roman law allowed you if you wanted to divorce your woman you didn't need an excuse. If you wanted to put your wife and kids to death, there

was no penalty. So these were hard times to be a woman. So here's this woman coming and making a demand of Jesus Christ. We read that she's a Gentile, meaning she is not a Jew. She is not a child of the Promises. She is Syrophenician. So what does that mean? It means that she is a native of Phoenicia. Matthew, in the parallel passage states that she was a Canaanite. Do you know how many Canaanites that are supposed to be? Zero. Israel's command was to kill all the Canaanites in the land. Obviously, we know that did not happen; Israel disobeyed God, so they continued to flourish and torment God's people. So here's a woman who's showing up whose people tormented and killed the prophets. Their ancestor was Jezebel. And not only that, she had an unclean spirit in her home, a daughter probably around the age of 12 years old. Now, ask yourself this question. How on earth did a 12-year-old get possessed by a demon? Remember, this is the place where Baal worship began. How do you think this young girl was exposed to demons? Her mom. It would have been her mom who would have exposed her to demonic spirits, to the point that they overtook her child.

So this is the woman that is coming to Jesus. She is a Gentile. She is a race of people that should not exist. She's a race of people that tormented the prophets, God's people. Created so much havoc in the land, that God had to go through and even punish Israel for not doing what they were doing. And here she is, notice at verse 26, begged Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter. The fact that word, "beg" carries forth the understanding to demand. She's essentially on her knees, demanding Jesus to cast out this demon. Matthew 15 carries the parallel story and it says she came out and was crying. Mark's rendering tells us that she's essentially begging, begging, begging, begging, begging, like a rooster who doesn't shut up in the morning. Or a donkey on the farm that just doesn't stop going hee haw, hee haw, hee haw. What does it become? It becomes irritating, right? This is not "Hey, I'm a nice Canadian. I'm sorry that I'm here. Sorry for knocking on your door. Jesus, sorry if I've disturbed your figs and stuff." But you know, we Canadians are real polite. I know my daughter's in a big time, but you know, probably having dinner right now. Right? I don't want to disturb that. No, no, no, this woman's desperate. This is a big thing that she wants to deal with. There's a knocking, there's a crying, there's a knocking.

Matthew 15:23 tells us how Jesus responds. It says, "but He did not answer her a word." How bad is her begging? Matthew 15:23 says, "And the disciples came," and get this, "and they begged Jesus saying, 'Send her away for she is crying out after us.'" Get that word beg? It's the same idea. They're begging, she's begging. "Jesus. Would you just shut her up? Jesus," You know she's just nagging nagging, nagging and guess what they're doing? Nagging, she goes away, nagging she's going away. Get her out of here. Stop it. Please do something now.

Here's the question you need to be asking. Why don't the disciples simply ask Jesus to heal her daughter? Right, wouldn't that be the easy thing? Remember when, Mark 2, the paralytic comes to see Jesus and they cut the hole in the roof, and they drop him in? Did they object to that? That was Peter's home. You think if anybody's going to object it's the people who's cutting into the guy's roof, right? But they don't object to that, but there's some reason they're objecting. If they just said, "Jesus heal her," it

would be the easy way out. The fact of the matter is they know Jesus can do this. They've seen Jesus not being able to heal anybody. Jesus healed everyone, everywhere; we see no part in Scripture where Jesus Christ turned anybody away by the thousands to heal. So why don't the disciples simply ask Jesus to heal this woman's daughter? Let me tell you the reason why. She didn't meet their standards. She's not their type of people. I think we need to understand that point. I do not think it's any accident that Matthew and Mark record this encounter after the last encounter, which Quentin read to us. Remember, those were the religious leaders, the most qualified religious authorities came to Jesus with a question. Did the disciples at any point say, "Why are you meeting with them? We have no time for them?" In fact, those would be the people that they would have encouraged them. What was interesting, you know, the topic was about food unclean. It's not what goes into a man that makes them unclean, but what comes out of a man's heart. So they were more concerned about the things of this life that could make you unclean. You never ever considered that the uncleanliness could come from who you were. Guess what the disciples think about this woman? She's unclean because of who she is.

So I want you to imagine with me for a second, you are this woman or perhaps you are a father, you pursued after other gods. Because of your wrong evil pursuit, your child is now paying the price of this pursuit and is possessed, is in pain, is in a wretched situation. The text says "daughter," it means not just my kid or my progeny, but it means my little girl, one who we would have great affection for. This child, this one that you love is possessed, oppressed, tormented by demons. How would you think you would feel at such a thing? I'll tell you how she feels. She feels shame. Right? Ever feel shame? Many of you have felt ashamed. What about gut wrenching shame? You see, the shame that this woman is experiencing is the type of shame that she will do anything in her power to get rid of. If you're familiar with the writings of Ed Welch, he's a well-known Christian counselor, and he defines the word shame for us. He says, "Shame is the deep sense that you are unacceptable because of something you did, something done to you, or something associated with you. You feel exposed and humiliated." Another way to say it, is you are disgraced because you acted less than human. You were treated as if that you were less than human, or you associated with something less than human. Anyone here ever feel this type of shame that you're unacceptable? Perhaps it was something you did. Perhaps it was something done to you. The fact of the matter is we deal with shame in a variety of ways.

When I was in university, I went to the University of Western Ontario and I was a part of a ministry called Athletes in Action. You guys know, Athletes in Action? It's a part of Campus Crusade for Christ. We went on a very difficult missions trip. We went down to Daytona, Florida. And our job, it was hard ministry I'm telling you, it's called Operation Sunshine. Our role was to go around and share Christ with the rest of the university kids goofing off on the beaches in sunny Daytona. All right. It's hard to get people to sign up for that kind of a mission trip, let me tell you, but there was a couple of hundred of us. So anyhow, we're kind of doing that and I used to play beach volleyball quite a bit and I get to know some of these people, and I'm having a great time, able to share Christ with a lot of good things, I'm feeling pretty good about myself. And then on the way back, one of the leaders goes, "Hey, I want you to," I'm single at the time and my wife knows I'm telling the story. There's this girl that's kind of

interested in me. He says, "I really want you to meet her, I think you guys would be a really good match." So, you know, I'm not bragging, she's a seven or eight because we all know my wife is a nine or ten, right? That's the right answer; so she's at least three digits down. But anyway, she's a beautiful girl. And she'd like to sit with you on the back of the bus ride home, get to know you. So you know. So I'm thinking, you know, I wonder if she saw my great athleticism on the volleyball courts, or maybe my leadership with the other students, or possibly even she finally figured out about my rugged good looks. So when I asked her the question, what is this all about? She answers me the question. "The reason I like you is because your parents are divorced." She said she had never met another Christian that came from a divorced family like hers, and that's why she was interested in me. So my parents got divorced when I was in grade five around that time. Now you need to understand I was child of the 80s. No parents in churches ever got divorced, right? So I was, I hold the record of the first one of my church; that's my badge of honor. So you need to understand, liking me because I came from a divorced family is liking or having a crush on the Hunchback of Notre Dame because he has that hunch. You know, he lives in dark places away from people, keeps to the shadows and wears a cowl. You see, this was my shame like no other. And the reality is, my close friends knew that this was my major dysfunction. If I ever met a new girl and any of my friends knew her, they'd say, "Be patient with him. Give them time, give him a chance." As much as I wanted to hear, because he's a really great guy, he really loves Jesus, he's got great potential, the idea that someone would tell me that I am divorced, was a sense of shame.

Now, it's interesting when you come from a church, and you're the first one to come from a divorced family, you're all of a sudden, unlike everyone at church, and not in a good way. And you guys would know this, but there was this popular Bible teacher at the time, started doing these conferences and people in our church and started going to these family conferences. And these conferences taught that Christian families always have five kids in their quiver, right, you know, holiness, you got to have five kids. And there was one section in the conference, that they said, "If you want to protect your kids, and safe proof them from ever being divorced, you know what you do, never let them marry a kid who's from a divorced family." Right? That's what they would tell you because apparently, because of their divorce, they inherited the sins of the father. So here I am, I'm just in my teens, I already have my own sin to contend with as a teenager growing up. I am now the kid of divorced parents. You then tell me that I have to pay for the sins of my father, that I have no hope for a healthy marriage because the only kind of woman who's going to be interested in dating me comes from a divorced family. So we're now combining two really messed up people telling them that the only chance they have really is none. No matter who I am, or who I become, or what I do, I am now cursed. This may surprise you when I was at TMS, a professor during my first year made the statement that he said "Yes, I would never let my daughter date you or marry you." Now to his credit upon graduation, he asked for my forgiveness for making that statement. You see, the point is it's so very easy for our shame to be our identity. Because that's all it was for me if you'd asked who I was, I'm the divorced kid.

For me, I covered it up just like the Hunchback of Notre Dame. I wouldn't let anybody in because they would just learn the ugly truth and I'm from a divorced family and therefore hopeless. How did I cover it

up? Two greatest things in the world, pride and judgmentalism. I tried harder to be better than the undivorced kids. I attended every Bible study, every training, every leadership training that was offered at church or on Campus Crusade, I wanted to be a good Christian man, and I wanted to be a good leader. I wanted to be identified by my good works. You know what I really did well at is I judged others. I would judge you kids if you came from a good Christian home and you did not know your Bible, you weren't listening in church, or you were not paying attention, I thought low of you. In fact I'd go to the Bible study with the other guys and say, "Can you believe that guy Kurt over there? He actually had a look up Habakkuk in his table of contents, what kind of guy is that right? Let's pray for whatever woman marries that guy. That's gonna be a world of pain." You know, that's how I thought, right? Look down on these guys.

Let me tell you something about a judger. They have no room for grace. Why? Because they believe grace is too good for them. You see, this is what shame does to you. Today, we judge all the time. It might not be that you come from a divorced home, but what I see at our church sometimes is maybe some kids are homeschooled, some kids are at Christian school, some kids are at public school. Judge, judge, judge. Today the culture says "I recycle. I only eat free range chickens. I don't water my lawn, like the heathen over there with the green grass," right? We've changed our ways, but we're always virtue signaling to something to make us feel better. What does feeling better do? It covers shame. You see, the fact of the matter is Satan wants you to feel shame because shame makes us feel unworthy. It makes us feel broken. It makes us feel we have no hope. And here, one of the most trusted men in my life, is trying to set me up with this girl because of my shame. And it's the shame I had done nothing to deserve. Imagine if it were my fault, though. How would I feel?

See there's other ways we handle shame. We accept that we have no value. We accept the lies that we're no good. We self-destruct. We turn to drugs, alcohol, gambling. We ignore close relationships. We go hobby to hobby. We find our identity elsewhere. We feel sorry for ourselves. We don't care. All the while, we blame others. And sadly, all too often we give our bodies and our emotions away to others just hoping somewhere as we go relationship to relationship, someone will find some sort of value in us.

Here's my question for you. Do you feel sorry for this woman who approached Jesus on that day? I mean really, her people did horrible, wicked things to God's people. Can you really blame the disciples for wanting to turn her away? She played around with the devil, and she got what was coming to her, right. Now let me ask you a question. Let's just say in this church, there's a lovely woman who is a mom, who happens to get cancer. She's got three kids, and she's very well loved. And we start to ask the question, "Why, oh God, why? Of all the people here, why would this person get cancer? Everybody asked that question? We do, right? When some good people get bad things, we start to ask that question. We say of course she was such a wonderful mom. She loved her kids, loved her husband, loved the Lord. We think she is so undeserving. Now what if I told you about my uncle Doug, who died of lung cancer after smoking about 10 packs a day? Do you ask yourself, "Why, oh God?" See, we feel badly

for both, but let's be honest, for the 10 pack a day smoker, nobody claims that God was unjust. Why do we think so differently? I believe it's because we think that grace is something to be deserved. You might say no, but really deep down, we believe we've been saved by grace; but do we truly understand that we are to live by the same grace that saves us?

You see the Jews they deserved God's grace and mercy; He was their people. This woman, she deserved justice. She deserved that Jesus would ignore her. And you want to know something? She knows it. Matthew 15:22 says "She came out and was crying. 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.'" She is not crying as in sniffling and shedding some tears; this woman is wailing, shouting, demanding. This woman knows that she has no religious credentials to offer Jesus. She's certainly got no cultural credentials. She's got no moral credentials. She's got no gender credentials. In fact, demonically speaking, she's doing the exact opposite. But what I find interesting and compelling about this story is she doesn't say, "Have mercy on my daughter." She says, "Have mercy on me." Let's be honest, if she said, "I'm gonna go see this healer, Jesus," she came up and talk to you. "I'm gonna go see him about my daughter." Let's just call her Emma. "I want I want to go see Him about my daughter, Emma." What kind of advice would you give her? Like, cover up the tattoos, right? Quit whatever drink you're involved with. Clean yourself up for a couple of weeks, and then maybe go see Him? Or start with her, right? Take a picture to Jesus. "Hey, look at this. Isn't this cute? She made you a little picture. And I know when you look at the picture of her, she's burning a cat, but she's really a good girl." You know? Like, yes, she's possessed, but she was a good, nice girl before, right? You know? Sell your daughter, the innocent one; don't sell yourself because you're the guilty one. And this is what she says. "Have mercy on me."

Verse 27, of Mark. "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.'" Anybody else have trouble with that saying? You know, scholars try to demonstrate that this is a passage where Jesus sins. He sins. He disrespected this woman by calling her a dog, but that's not what Jesus is doing. First of all, if you understand what a dog is, a dog to a Jew is a mangy dirty mongrel. Right? They were wild. They were scavengers, they fed on dead things. They lived in the dumps. That means if they came in your house, you brushed against them. You were rendered unclean and have to miss worship. And I just broke your podium, anyway. But this woman is not a Jew, she's a Gentile. And the word that is used is, do you guys have "little dog" in your translation? It actually means, King James Version actually interprets it, it's a little dog. It's basically a cute loving, furball. A faithful ball of fur that brings joy to everyone, right? It's just a cute dog that you have for companionship in your home. It wasn't insulting for a Gentile. So obviously Jesus is not hurting her or insulting her.

But there's a lesson Jesus is teaching the disciples here. This is the whole reason why Jesus comes to Tyre to teach the disciples here and here he is with this living teaching moment. And it's to hear Jesus say, "I love these people too. My Blood is red enough for these religious outsiders. My Blood is red enough for the ignorant, the enemies, the shameful, those that are ashamed. Yes, even those that did

shameful, sinful, embarrassing act. Yes, even those that had shameful acts done to them. I am here to give them mercy.” In case you didn't know, this has been God's plan since the very beginning. Genesis 22:18 says all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through Abraham, Joel 2:32 says, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” That everyone is not just Jew. You guys know the story of Jesus cleaning out the temple. Everybody fixated on that they were selling bad sheep, and they were the money chambers. Do you know why I really believe that Jesus Christ cleans everybody out of the temple, because the area that He cleaned it out of was called the Court of the Gentiles. Did you know that the Gentiles were expected to come to the temple to worship God, and that Jews had turned it into a market, selling animals, and money changing, and a whole bunch of crooked stuff, giving no care for the outsider. In fact, Mark tells us that He goes, “My house of prayer should be called a house of prayer for all nations.” And as you study the life of Christ, you will see more and more, especially this last couple of months. I see Jesus beating into them, the Jews, that I'm here to love the outsiders. Do you remember Jonah? He did not want to bring God's message to Nineveh because he did not want them to repent. Have you ever felt that way that someone wasn't worthy? They're not like us enough. Hey, they're crude. They swear. They go to movies. Maybe they don't recycle. They don't do family like I do family. They do not live a good enough life, so why would we bother to share the message of Christ with them?

Then again, maybe it's you. Maybe it's you doing that right here. You will do all the religious things. You come to church, attend all the prayer meetings, Bible studies, but you still feel like an outsider. You feel like a hypocrite. Even when you condemn the hypocrite, you know that you're one too. There's a part of you that never feels worthy. You just keep thinking if I can just do this little much more, I will be made worthy. And it's not because you believe God is a holy God and you're aware of how sinful and messed up you are. You just feel not worthy. You feel shame. You know what I say? Good. Because that's the way you're supposed to feel, and instead of trying to justify yourself with whatever lie you keep telling yourself, you will finally get to a point where you will beg Jesus for mercy. Isaiah 45:5 says,

I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides Me there no God; I equip you, though you do not know Me, that people may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides Me.

God just isn't the God of the Jews or the Insider. God is the God over everyone. Amen? God is the God over everyone. Amen? Let's get your Baptist on. You guys know Mark Jones, the Presbyterian guy? Sometimes at his church, I usually warm them up on amens before I preach there to get them out of the Presbyterian and into a Baptist world. But anyway. You see, the way he is the God over all and Saviour over all, is that He's all those things to the Jew, the Gentile, the outsider, the insider, the hypocrite, the legalist, the shameful, the shamed, the divorced and even the children of divorced parents. So this woman who understands that Jesus is Lord recognizes Him as the son of David, the Promised Messiah, shows Jesus great understanding and her response, verse 28. “Yes, Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.” You guys have dogs? You know where they hang out at dinner time, right?

My dogs are all underneath the dining room table just hoping something is going to fall. See, the fact of the matter is the disciples did not understand what this woman understood perfectly. Sometimes it's the same way with us. God's love and forgiveness is not just for the just, the ones who have it together, who follow all the laws. God's love is for the shameful, the shameless, the outsider, the one who desperately cries out, "Give me mercy." The great reformer Martin Luther echoed, "You are more wicked than you ever believed, but at the same time, you are more loved and accepted than you ever dared hope."

And Jesus said to her in Mark 7:29

"For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." and she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

Matthew 15:28 says, "Then Jesus answered her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed instantly." Pay attention to how her faith worked. She wasn't trying out Jesus. She doesn't believe in Jesus because of what He does. She believes in Jesus because of who He is. She's not asking Jesus to try and free her daughter. She heard, she believed, and she came.

It's interesting in my church, I don't ask you to believe in Jesus. I will implore you to believe Jesus. I want you to believe not only who Jesus was, but everything He ever did and ever said, because of who He is. Not because His teachings were right and just but because He is indeed the Son of God. See, this woman persisted when Jesus was silent, she reasoned when Jesus spoke, and she believed when Jesus delivered. She knows as if it was a mere crumb from the table, that Jesus Christ had enough abundant power and blessings even for her. It's like she said, "Your crumb is enough to fill my life with everlasting love and goodness." You see, my friend, salvation is dependent on two things. You have nothing of value to offer to God, and that you are lost without Him. The second thing is Jesus Christ is your only hope. And what you need to do is cry, "Mercy." If you understand these things, you are in a good place, a great place of faith.

The great preacher and hymn writer John Newton once said, "Think not enough of your sin, it will lead you to legalism. Think too much of your sin, it will lead you to despair." He concludes, "It is just as much rejection of the love of God, to refuse to seek Him, to refuse to come after His mercy, to refuse to accept Him, to refuse to be content with it, as if to say 'I'm too good for it.'"

This woman comes to the right God with the right humility, the right brokenness, the right penitence, the right desperation, the right respect, the right persistence, the right shame. The only question you need to ask yourself this morning is will you? Will you let Jesus begin the transformation process in your heart to cover your shame and allow God's mercy and mercy alone to do it? Let's pray.

Lord, I confess, I have tried so hard to cover up my shame. Even though I knew you were there for me, I wanted to show myself strong, I wanted to show myself right, I wanted to clean myself up. The only

problem is when I try to clean myself up, I just spread the dirt over more places. I might rub a little on my ankle, then move to my shoulder, and all I've done is I've spread the dirt from my ankle to my shoulder. Then I spread it all over my arms and my hands and then all of a sudden everything that I touch is tainted. Father, there's only one person who can cleanse us from head to toe and that is through you, Jesus Christ. Father, I pray that we would indeed cry "mercy." To know that we cannot save ourselves, that we cannot make ourselves righteous in your eyes. It doesn't matter if we're religious or not. Or sinful or not. Rebellious or not. We all carry this shame card with us because we are indeed tainted with sin. We are all sons and daughters of Adam. Before you called us, we were enemies with You. We played in this world and we did shameful things, but You bled and died on that cross so that we may be forever clean, that we have no right to feel ashamed because Your righteousness now stands in our place.

Father, I just pray that the message that comes forth here will rejuvenate that shameful soul, that one who is still considering themselves not good enough for the gospel. It's great that they think that because the truth of the matter is, we all aren't. Ephesians 2 talks about Your great love is the reason why Christ died on the cross for us. It wasn't because we were such lovable people, such wonderful people, such thoughtful and shameless people. That had nothing to do with that. It had everything to do with God loving us in such a way that we would never understand. And instead of sitting underneath the table, collecting the crumbs of the table, as children of the high one, we now can sit eating and drinking of the finest wines and the richest foods that you have to offer us.

Father, I pray as the testimony of this church brings the gospel to those who are ashamed; they're not difficult to spot. They're usually self-destructing or living with so many rules that they're paralyzed. I pray we would come to understand the gospel so much that it is a freeing gospel that releases us from prisons and slavery to sin. We are no longer children of this world, but we're children of the great High God. So Father, I pray that if those that deal with shame would do as I did, as I finally gave up, I finally confessed my unworthiness and my shame to God, and He renewed my spirit in a way that I can never understand; but I feel no shame from being from a divorced family. And in fact, I've seen God use it over and over and over to minister to people who come from divorced homes. My greatest shame God has somehow turned into my greatest blessing. I pray it would be for You here today as well. In Your most holy precious name, amen.