

Begging for Bread  
Mark 7:24-30

*God in Christ readily gives what he has promised. Therefore, we must know Jesus Christ in order to receive God's promises.*

**I. A surprising place: Jesus' mission leads to surprising places. Therefore, we must expect him where we don't.**

Why is the region of Tyre and Sidon a surprising place for Jesus to go?

What places, at home and abroad, do we think Christ wouldn't go? Those places which are not worthy for him to in our minds? How does Jesus make you think differently about those places?

*But Jesus didn't just go there for the place. He went to the place for the people, and one person in particular. Therefore, Jesus also goes to...*

**II. A surprising person: Jesus' mission blesses surprising persons. Therefore, we must see the people that Jesus sees.**

Why is the Syro-Phoenician woman a surprising person for Jesus to help?

What in the woman's response to Jesus caused him to help her?

What people do look at who we think are not deserving of God's help?

How does Jesus' action toward the woman require us to reassess ourselves. Do we think we might be beyond God's mercy? Alternatively, do we think that we somehow deserve God's mercy?

*The woman's answer to Jesus revealed an understanding of "bread" that would have been shocking to many Jews of the day. This helps us to see finally that Jesus' fulfills...*

**III. A surprising promise: The scope of God's promises have a surprising reach. Therefore, we must never presume upon God's favor.**

The woman's response showed that she understood that the "bread of Abraham" – i.e. the promises of God made to Abraham – were for those outside of Israel as well as for Israel.

They were not only promises *to* Abraham, but promises *through* Abraham.

How do the differences between the two feeding episodes demonstrate this?

What healing story was really a parable about the disciples who at this point only partially understood Jesus and his mission?

Those who opposed Jesus, particularly the religious leaders of Israel, saw God's promises as strictly national promises and therefore resisted the scope of his mission. The parable of the vineyard later makes clear that they wanted to control things rather than be stewards of God's work in the world.

What specific temptations are before us as American Christians in a time of political upheaval that tempt us to see the gospel through a national lens rather than as good news for all?

The scope of God's promises encompasses all peoples. As universal king, there is no place for nationalism. Since Christ's crown comes through the cross, there is no place of triumphalism.

Since Christ came for the nations, there is no room for tribalism.

**Conclusion.**

Consider how this passage might

- 1) help you look at others differently;
- 2) help you look at yourself differently;
- 3) help you look at cultural turmoil differently; and
- 4) pray differently as a result.