

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith

Part 7D

G.H. Elliott, Pastor

Introduction: Jesus' teaching makes it clear that sin's corruption does not come from external things, and now He shows this includes people's external differences.

**One of the most appalling manifestations of an external/outward abstracting of sin into things applies to excluding people as unclean based on their outward differences, e.g. how they look, the way they speak, what they eat, or where they are from.*

Chapter 7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith.

vv. 1-16, Jesus preached the law-word of God and applied the New Covenant Gospel by first clarifying that sin is sourced in the human heart...

- Man-made rules and rituals of outward washings cannot purify the corruption of the sin-hardened heart shown in all manner of self-righteousness disguised as religious piety, cf. Exodus 20:12, et al., the 5th Commandment.

vv. 17-23, Jesus protested against His disciples confusion over the basics of the New Covenant Gospel clarifying the need for heart purification effecting the supernatural essence of the soul...

- Sin's corruption is not in outward things, e.g. food or drink, personal and household items, clothing and furniture, but sin is sourced in the human heart caused by original and actual sins revealed by God's Law, e.g. re: the 10 Commandments //v. 21, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-27, et al.

vv. 24-30, Jesus commends the faith of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Syrian, around modern day Lebanon), a Greek speaking gentile, outside of Old Covenant Judaism, as an outward demonstration of her inward grace-faith...

v. 24, Jesus secretly retreated from the Jewish borders for Gentile territory with the desire to remain secluded, but His notoriety was not limited to Jewish communities (cf. Mk. 3:8)...

**Christian ministers and believers in the Church should take encouragement from this example in Jesus' life trusting the Holy Spirit's secret work in witnessing to the Gospel without trying to make it culturally "contexted" or nuanced...*

vv. 25-26, An unnamed non-Jewish woman with the same human compassion for her little daughter as the Jewish synagogue ruler Jairus (cf. Mk. 5:22-23ff.) fell at Jesus' feet pleading repeatedly for her daughter's deliverance from an unclean spirit...

- Although unnamed, this woman is described in terms of Jewish traditions at the time as being unclean by her birth/ethnicity, i.e. Syro-Phoenician, Canaanite (Matt. 15:22), cultural/social identity, i.e. Greek, and by her daughter's condition, i.e. afflicted with an unclean spirit.

**Christian ministers and believers in the Church need to be reminded and warned that purity and uncleanness in Biblical soul-terms of the moral Law of God must not be confused by supposed human superiority of ethnicity, cultural/social identity, or spiritual and physical afflictions, but the New Covenant Gospel preaches the purifying power of Jesus for all kinds of people from sin's dominion and death. The idea that Christianity makes for a better world is only valid by the internal changes to the heart and soul of individuals collectively living Christ-like lives through the ethical indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their various relationships—family, social, vocational, political, economic, etc.*

vv. 27-28, Jesus does not immediately respond to this woman, so even His disciples are aggravated by her pleading (Matt. 15:23), but eventually He answers her with a humanly humiliating comparison between children and pet dogs, however the woman's answer is an astounding confession of faith (Matt. 15:28). Therefore do not call unclean what God has cleansed (cf. 7:19 // Acts 10:15)...

- This exchange must be synthesized and noticed (7:18) by this woman's Gospel transformation in heart and mind and not a game of wits.
- Is Jesus' comparison to be understood in historical-cultural terms that the Jews have a guaranteed ethnic superiority by birth-right from Abraham? Absolutely not, but in Biblical covenantal terms that by salvation history privileges were previously revealed and believed to the Jews first and also to the Gentiles, (cf. Romans 3:2//9:4-9, et al.).

**This Scripture passage has caused much discussion and dispute trying to soften Jesus' shocking words to this woman which are extremely offensive to human attitudes of assumed superiority or expected partiality rooted in and cultivated by fleshly pride. Christian ministers and believers in the Church must continually seek to speak God's Word after Him with understanding and compassion in the courage of faith that the offense of the cross never goes away, but the renaming of sins to avoid human humiliation can obscure the Gospel.*

vv. 29-30, This episode of Jesus giving the New Covenant blessing of salvation—delivering the woman and her daughter from sin's uncleanness—to a gentile woman represents the heart of the Gospel as expounded by the Apostle Paul, cf. Romans 1:13-3:31,

- The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only salvation good news from the holy wrath of God for all kinds of people in the world, 1:16, 18, 32...
- The knowledge and judgment about sin is not a comparison of person to person, but personal accountability to God's conscience-encoded and revealed law, 2:1, 7-11. 14&15, 17 & 23...
- As all people are judged guilty before God, so the only way of redemption from sin's guilt is the same for all people, 3:9&19-20, 21-26, 27-29...

The New Covenant Gospel of Jesus Christ makes it clear that sin's corruption does not come from external things including people's external differences, and by His blessing the faith of this gentile woman and her daughter, Jesus gives a living object lesson of the Gospel.