

The Gospel According to Mark - The Shock Treatment

The Shock Treatment Mark 7:24-30

How do you fight your battles? Do you fight them in your own power or do you understand that a believer is surrounded by the very presence of God and our strength comes from the One who lives in our hearts, but who is so great that our hearts could never contain all that He is! I've said it before and I'll say it again. He is within us, but He is also above us because He is greater than us, He is beside us because He holds our hand and walks with us, beneath us because when our strength is gone He carries us, He is behind us because He's got our back, and He's out in front of us because He is leading the way! And if you are not a believer and feel that you are an outcast and could never have this kind of relationship with God, I'm here to proclaim to you today the Gospel, the Good News that Jesus left the splendor of heaven, which we can only imagine the splendor, Jesus left that place to come to this fallen earth knowing His destiny was an old rugged cross, and we can't even fathom the pain of that sacrifice, but He did that so that all who would believe, all who would call upon His name, all who would repent and turn away from the wickedness of this world would find forgiveness and salvation! Our text today teaches us in a very shocking way that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved! Let's pray and ask God to teach us powerfully today!! Pray!

Have you ever heard these words...

Are you listening to me?
Do you hear what I'm saying?
Are you deaf?
Are you paying attention?
Why do you have to be so hard-headed?
Can you hear me now?

Sometimes it takes a jolt to get our attention! We need to be . . .

Jolted out of our prejudice (I'm better than them)
Jolted out of our pride (I know all I need to know)
Jolted out of our complacency (I'm fine just the way I am)
Jolted out of our hard hearts (non-caring spirit)

Jesus is about to jolt His disciples with some shocking words! But first the background...

Mark 7:24 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.

Let me just point this out...Jesus was tired. We've been studying how Jesus had been so busy with ministry! Not much real rest. Now we all know Jesus was God in the flesh, but He was in a human body. That body got thirsty, hungry and tired! So Jesus was looking for a little break. But there was so much need and so much hunger for someone who was real and not fake...someone who spoke truth and someone who could really help! People were in constant pursuit of Jesus. Jesus was physically tired, but His sense of mission was spiritually very much awake! As I thought about this, I wondered how many of us are living lives that cause others to seek us out? How many of us are tired because we've been pouring our lives into others and seeking to speak God's truth and God's love into the lives of people who don't know Jesus? If you allow the presence of Jesus to flow through your life into the lives of others, they will sense something's different about you and they may at some point, ask you what makes you tick! Be ready to give them an answer! Jesus said this in Matthew's Gospel...

Mat 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.

Mat 5:15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

Mat 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Peter would later write these words...;

1 Pet 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone

who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 1 Pet 3:16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Let's continue with our text with a little more background before the shock treatment...

Mark 7:25 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 Gentile woman did something we should all take note of! She fell at Jesus' feet! While you don't have to kneel, or fall on your face, for God to hear you, I believe we have forgotten or lost the beauty of humility and the power it brings into our lives. It's not the position of the body in prayer that matters the most, but the attitude of the heart, but here's something to think about. Sometimes the position of our body in prayer reflects the position of our hearts and sometimes the act of being on one's knees can direct the heart to take up a position of humility! And what happens when we humble ourselves before The Lord? The Psalmist puts it beautifully...

Psa 18:27 You save the humble but bring low those whose eyes are haughty.

Psa 18:28 You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.

Psa 18:29 With your help I can advance against a troop ; with my God I can scale a wall.

Psa 18:30 As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

Psa 18:31 For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?

Psa 18:32 It is God who arms me with strength and makes my way perfect.

Okay, now the shock treatment! This woman comes to Jesus and falls on her knees in humility and what Jesus says to her is truly shocking! Prepare yourself! You will be taken back! But don't get up and walk out because there's a reason Jesus says what He says...

Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

Mark 7:27 "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."

Mark 7:28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Mark 7:29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

Mark 7:30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Why would Jesus say what seems to be such harsh words to this lady?

First, Jesus knew her heart and faith were strong enough to be used as an example!

Second, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that He had not abandoned the Jewish people!

Third, Jesus wanted the disciples to realize He loved the Gentiles too!

Fourth, Jesus wanted to confront the disciples with their own prejudice!

The disciples needed a shock treatment! Let's dig a little. Biblical scholar, Frank Stagg, put it this way...

"It is striking that this story follows the account of Jesus' rejection of external tests for what is clean or unclean. On the surface, this story of at least a momentary rejection of a Canaanite woman on the basis of her being non-Jewish seems to contradict the principle just given, namely, that the condition of the heart, not externals, determines whether one is defiled or not." Frank Stagg

Let me remind you of the words we studied last week...

Mark 7:5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"

Mark 7:6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: "'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

Mark 7:7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.'

Mark 7:8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

Mark 7:9 And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

We must understand . . .

While Jesus rejected the legalism of the Pharisees, and the hypocrisy of the religious rulers, He had not rejected the Jewish people! God had chosen the people of Israel not because they were better than other people! God had chosen the people of Israel to be an example of His love and concern for all people. Including the Gentiles. Listen to Isaiah 42, written to the Jewish people in the Old Testament...

Isa 42:5 This is what God the LORD says-- he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it:

Isa 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,

Isa 42:7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Now we know this passage was also a prophecy about Jesus, but it also had meaning for the people of Isaiah's day. God wanted the Jewish people to be an example to the world of what a relationship with God looked like. He wanted them to be a light for people living in darkness. However, the Jewish people consistently rejected the call of God to be His missionaries to the world. They believed it was already decided and they were the chosen people and all others had no hope! What a tragedy! It was this attitude that caused the Jewish people to abandon the very mission that God had chose them to accomplish! Listen to these words penned by Dr. Frank Stagg...

"Jesus went to Israel not to reward righteous people but to rescue lost people. Had Jesus turned from the Jews and gone at once to the Gentiles, this would almost certainly have closed all doors between Himself and the Jews. The larger world was, from the first, included in His mission, even as the nations were included in God's covenant with Abraham. But there were important reasons for offering Himself 'to the Jew first' and then to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:16).

Rom 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

The Jews were best prepared to receive and understand Him; they could have received Him and shared Him with the world; and there were no major barriers to Gentiles' accepting from Jews a Jewish Savior." Frank Stagg

The tragedy is that their pride caused them to reject the calling that God had given them and eventually they rejected the Messiah that was sent to save them. The disciples were in danger of making the same kinds of mistakes! It's now the disciples who are being a little snooty in their handling of this woman. Jesus lets them look at themselves in a mirror. How so? Let's look at Matthew's account of this story . . .

Mat 15:22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."

Mat 15:23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

Notice . . .

The disciples didn't ask Jesus to grant her request

The disciples were irritated (rather than heartbroken) by her crying

The disciples asked Jesus to send her away

The disciples were still dealing with hardness of heart

They needed to be awakened...

From their pride

From their prejudice

From their complacency

From their non-caring spirit

Jesus shocks the disciples by insinuating that the lady and her daughter were like dogs and not children! In

other words . . .

Jesus talked to the lady like the disciples treated her!

Can you imagine what the disciples were thinking! "Wow, that's kind of harsh! Jesus ignored her at first and didn't answer a word and then seems to put her down on the level of a dog." But here's what Jesus was doing...He's holding up that mirror! Jesus was letting the disciples see that they were no better than the Pharisees and religious rulers who thought they were more righteous than everyone else! Jesus' words were uncharacteristic of Him, but He was doing this to teach a lesson. I believe the lady may have understood what was going on and she played along with Jesus and answered His question so wisely! Jesus honored the faith and wisdom of the woman! Let's look at it again...

Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

Mark 7:27 "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."

Mark 7:28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Mark 7:29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

Matthew put it this way. . .

Mat 15:28 Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted."

Paul said . . .

Rom 1:14 - 15 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome.

Rom 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Rom 1:17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

And then we see these words in Romans 10:12...

Rom 10:12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

Rom 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

How in the world does this apply to me Pastor Larry? Well, if you've become a follower of Jesus and have turned from the ways of the world, be careful that you don't become conceited and prideful and think that you are now better than those old sinners at work, or at school or in the family! Because, let me remind you of this truth,

Your not any better than any body else on the planet! If you've accepted the grace and mercy of Jesus, then you are certainly better off, but you are not better than!

You all know by now that the following is one of my most favorite passages in all of the Bible, and I'm going to read it to you again...

Eph 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

Eph 2:2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

Eph 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

Eph 2:5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.

Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

Eph 2:7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

Eph 2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

Eph 2:9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

Eph 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in

advance for us to do.

And what are the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do? I believe with all my heart that it has to do with sharing the gospel by letting God show the incomparable riches of His grace expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus! And how does this happen? I believe it happens when get so excited about what Jesus has done in our lives that our life's mission becomes the same mission Jesus had when He lived on this earth. The mission that led to your salvation. We've just come full circle in our message! Remember how I said Jesus was physically tired but His sense of mission was very much awake? Here was His mission...

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Let's read the context of that statement from Luke's Gospel...

Luke 19:1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.

Luke 19:2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

Luke 19:3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd.

Luke 19:4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

Luke 19:5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."

Luke 19:6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

That's called "accepting Jesus!"

Luke 19:7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

Luke 19:8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

That's called "repentance!"

Luke 19:9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

This mission was also given to Paul. Remember, we talked about Paul last week and how he was one of the Pharisees who accepted Jesus and allowed Jesus to change his life and his mission. His mission went from persecuting followers of Christ to trying to get others to become followers of Christ, both Jew and Gentile! Listen to these verses from the book of Romans.

Rom 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ--I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit--

Rom 9:2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart.

Rom 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my own race,

Rom 9:4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises.

In other words, God had done so much to reach out to the Jewish people so they could reach out to the world, but many of them had rejected that mission. Paul was broken over that. He goes on to say in chapter 10...

Rom 10:1 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

Rom 10:2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

Rom 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Rom 10:4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

And then he says in verse 14...

Rom 10:14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the

one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?
Rom 10:15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Rom 10:16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"

Rom 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Northshore Church's Purpose is...

To see the One who gave His life for us exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed!

Our mission is...

Transforming worship, people and the world!

And what do we hope to accomplish by doing our mission? Well that would be our vision...

To raise up a healthy church that will impact the north shore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!

I pray those three things will remain the passion of Northshore Church until Jesus comes back. But here's the key to this and it may be a shocking revelation to some of you...

Northshore Church is YOU, so if YOU don't have this purpose, this mission and this vision, then it will not happen!

Let's pray!