

PREPARING AT HOME

September 3-9, 2018

Focus reading: Mark 7:24–37 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=393411352>)

Other lectionary readings: Proverbs 22:1–2, 8–9, 22–23; Psalm 125; James 2:1–13, 14–17

Theme: Be Opened

Mark is a brief Gospel where no word is wasted. Whenever the author offers details or descriptions, we can be assured that they are important to the story. One of the details that Mark invites us to pay attention to is geography. The first half of the Gospel takes place in and around Galilee, which is home territory for Jesus and the disciples - all of whom are Jewish. This week's focus reading invites us to journey with Jesus and his friends to Tyre, which is located in Gentile territory. By the end of our reading, Jesus and his traveling friends deliberately choose a longer route to reach their destination, going even further into Gentile territory than is necessary. On this journey, Jesus heals two Gentiles. First, despite his initial reluctance, Jesus heals a little girl in response to her mother's brash insistence and wit. In fact, Jesus' speaks rather harsh words to the mother. There were geographic, religious, and economic differences between the two. However, that does not stop a desperate mother from advocating for her daughter. After journeying further into Gentile territory, Jesus heals a deaf man. This time there appears to be no reluctance on Jesus' part, as he opens the man's ears. So are we called to be open to the welcome God extends to all people. So are we called to be attentive and responsive to the needs of all people. Sometimes the invitation to journey with Jesus is an invitation to cross boundaries that we may at first be reluctant to cross!

TAKE A JOURNEY

If you were to cross a boundary (geographic, religious, or economic), where might you go? Drive in the car or take an imaginary trip to a place you would otherwise not go. In what ways are the people different from you? In what ways are they the same? What kinds of needs do the people have there? How can you respond to the people and their needs?

EVERYONE WELCOME

Make a welcome sign for your home and place it near the door that guests would use. How can you help people to feel welcome in your home?

PRAYER

Loving God,
May our ears be open
to hearing the needs of others.
May our eyes be open
to seeing the needs others.
May our hearts be open
to loving others.
Amen.

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