

1. **GOD REGRETS:** Read Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 6:5-8
2. **GOD CHANGES PLANS:** Read Genesis 18:23-26; *Abraham continues to bargain. Would you destroy if there were forty-five righteous people? Suppose there are forty righteous, he continues, thirty? Twenty? Suppose ten? (which is the number of Lot's family living in Sodom.)* Read Genesis 18:32-33
3. **GOD REPENTS:** *While Moses is getting the "Law" from God on the mountain, he has been gone for so long (40 days) the newly freed Israelites think he is dead, and are building a golden calf to worship.* Read Exodus 32:9-14
4. **GOD RELENTS:** *After Jonah finally goes to Nineveh and delivers the message of God's coming judgement and wrath, the King calls for repentance.* Read Jonah 3:6-10

Read Luke 18:1-8

1. What are the similarities Mark's story about a bold woman to Jesus' parable about another bold woman?
2. How do you feel about the notion that God repents, or relents?
3. How has this lesson influenced you to "think differently" about prayer?
4. How has this lesson influenced you to "think differently" about God?

1 Jesus Sees Women, Session 3, (p.2, column 1, para. 1)

2 Map Skinner, <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-23-2/commentary-on-mark-724-37>

3 *The New Interpreter's Bible – Mark*, pg. 610.

4 J. Davis Syrophenician Woman, Sermon on Mark 7:24-37, September 8, 2024

5 Jesus Sees Women, Session 3, (p.2, column 2, para. 4)

Next week's lesson:

"The Woman Who Had Five Husbands"

Mark 5:24-34



TALKING POINTS

Lesson 3

"The Woman Who Claimed Her Place"

Mark 7:24-30

Focus scripture

Mark 7:28

"But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'"

Food for Thought:

Think of a time, when you had to advocate for someone other than yourself.

“Attention is the beginning of devotion.” Mary Oliver

Review:

What do you recall of God's nature in Jesus' encounter with the bleeding woman?

This is a different story.

Some historical, cultural and Biblical clarification:

In this story, Jesus comes to new sight through the instruction of a woman. Today's scripture has left scholars perplexed for generations. There will always be certain scriptures that elude us. Our goal is to allow the Spirit to lead us to open hearts and minds to ways of “seeing” these stories in a new light.

You recall from our study of Mark, how Jesus was surrounded by crowds seeking to just touch him, and then continually interrogated by the religious leaders concerning various laws.

"After having a heavy conversation about purity, battling (again) with the Pharisees, and having to explain (again) to his disciples, Mark tells us that Jesus set out and went to the region of Tyre. That is a journey of at least thirty miles, and Jesus was traveling on foot. He was intent on getting away—far away, (see map). Jesus was looking for some down time apart from the sniping of religious leaders and the failure to comprehend exhibited by his followers. In traveling to a Gentile area, Jesus was, in mind and body, stretching toward a long-needed break in a place where no one would approach him for help, healing, or instruction. Jesus was not looking for opportunities to proclaim the good news, heal, or do miracles. He was seeking rest."¹

"The Syrophenicians have not always been the best neighbors to the Jewish people, and the people of Tyre had recently oppressed them as well.²You see, the nearby Jewish region produced and exported food for coastal towns like Tyre and areas like Syro-Phoenicia. These rich and powerful cities depended on poor Jewish farm land regions to make food for them, and in times of crisis or famine, it was the wealthy cities (like Tyre) that took all the food. So there are years and generations of resentment built up between the Jew and the Syrophenician, and so no wonder why Jesus might say something like, “It's not fair to take the children's food and to give it to the dogs.” The wealthy were the dogs who took all the resources and the Jewish people were tired of it.³ (continued)

"I mean, that would be like a wounded Israeli soldier today asking for a bed in one of the few hospitals left in Gaza. You can imagine a world where the Palestinian would say, 'It's not fair to take a hospital bed from our children and give it to you, the one with all the bombs.'"⁴

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHY? Read Mark 7:24

1. What is Jesus doing?
2. Where is he?
3. Why?
4. Who is there?
5. Consider how Jesus might be feeling?

HOW DID JESUS DO? Read Mark 7:25-30

*In both the Old and New Testaments, when people are referred to as dogs, it is deeply rude and denigrating. The goal of such a statement is to ensure that the person addressed knows their place—that of an animal, not a person—a station from which they cannot rise.*⁵

1. How do you take Jesus' first response to the woman?
2. Explain the metaphor she used in response to the “insult?”
3. What clues does her metaphor reveal about:
 - a. Her rights?
 - b. Her understanding of Jesus' power
 - c. Her understanding of Jesus' ultimate mission
 - d. Abundance and scarcity?
4. How do you see Jesus relenting/repenting/changing his mind?
5. Did Jesus learn something from this encounter?

THINKING POINTS

Does God change, or relent, or repent?

Hebrew: nâcham - to be sorry, console oneself, repent, regret, comfort, be comforted

Greek: metanoëō - "think differently *after*," "after a change of *mind*"; to *repent* (literally, "*think differently afterwards*").

Read the following four stories about God's willingness to "think differently" and discuss the following questions:

1. What are God's plans in the beginning of each story?
2. What motivates God to "think differently?"