

### Mark 7 New King James Version

In Mark chapter 7, Jesus confronts the Pharisees and scribes who prioritize tradition over God's commands. He exposes their hypocrisy and teaches that it's not external rituals that defile a person, but the condition of their heart. Jesus then casts out an unclean spirit from a Canaanite woman and performs a miraculous healing on a deaf and mute man in the region of Tyre and Sidon. This demonstrates His compassion for all people, regardless of their background or social status. Through these events, Mark highlights the importance of genuine faith and Jesus's power to transform lives.

***We will cover the following areas:***

- (1) Defilement Comes from Within
- (2) A Gentile Shows Her Faith
- (3) Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute

#### **A. Defilement Comes from within (Verses 1-23).**

Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. <sup>3</sup> For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding to the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. <sup>5</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

<sup>6</sup> He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

*'This people honors Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.  
<sup>7</sup> And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'*

<sup>8</sup> For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

<sup>9</sup> He said to them, “*All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.* <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ <sup>11</sup> But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that is, a gift *to God*), <sup>12</sup> then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, <sup>13</sup> making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

<sup>14</sup> When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: <sup>15</sup> There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. <sup>16</sup> If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”

<sup>17</sup> When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. <sup>18</sup> So He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, *thus* purifying all foods?” <sup>20</sup> And He said, “What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, <sup>22</sup> thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

**We will cover four (4) stages in this passage:**

- Accusation from the Jewish leaders (verses 1-5)
- Condemnation toward the Jewish Leaders (verses 6-13)
- Declaration of defilement (verses 14-16)
- Explanation of defilement (verses 17-23)

**Stage 1: The Accusation (verses 1-5)**

The religious Jewish leaders were now openly hostile toward Jesus and His ministry. It was not unusual for them to follow Him from place to place, watch what He did, and then criticize Him. The Jewish leaders are accusing the disciples of failing to practice the Jewish ceremonial washing. These washings had nothing to do with personal hygiene, nor were they commanded in law.

They were part of the tradition that the scribes and Pharisees had given to the people to add to their burdens (Matthew 23:1-5).

**Matthew 23:1-5**

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, <sup>2</sup> “The teachers of religious law and the Pharisees are the official interpreters of the law of Moses.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>3</sup> So practice and obey whatever they tell you, but don’t follow their example.*

*For they don’t practice what they teach. <sup>4</sup> They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. <sup>5</sup> “Everything they do is for show.*

To these leaders, the Lord had already violated the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:5). So, these religious leaders were ready to accuse and criticize Jesus when they saw the disciples eat with unclean hands. Why would this matter to these leaders?

Having already hassled Jesus about eating with sinners ([Mark 2:15–17](#)), fasting ([Mark 2:18–22](#)), and "working" on the Sabbath ([Mark 2:23–28](#); [Mark 3:1–6](#)), the Pharisees now challenge Jesus' disciples for not washing their hands before they eat. The Pharisees are experts at the Mosaic Law—the law that God gave Moses for the Israelites to follow. Their criticisms of Jesus, however, center around His disregard for the **manmade traditions** the elders added to the Law.

The exile of the Kingdom of Judah to Babylon marked a significant change in the way Jews interacted with the Mosaic Law. God exiled them for their idolatry ([Jeremiah 9:13–14](#)) and refusal to observe the Sabbath ([Jeremiah 17:27](#)). In the years after their return to Jerusalem, the Jews made it a priority to follow the Law. To help that endeavor, scribes codified the oral law, which they claimed Moses—and others—received from God along with the written law.

The oral law is a long list of regulations that spell out exactly how the written law is to be followed. It is from these regulations that the Pharisees claim the disciples broke the Sabbath by picking off heads of grain ([Mark 2:23–24](#)). Here, the charge is that the disciples do not wash their hands before they eat.

Jesus attacks their argument on two levels, neither of which addresses hand-washing. The Pharisees honor these rules as the "tradition of the elders." Jesus points out that the "elders" were men ([Mark 7:8](#)) and their traditions are nothing compared to God's Word. In fact, sometimes their traditions go so far that they annul God's commandments ([Mark 7:6–13](#)).

## **History of washing**

When God gave Moses instructions to build the tabernacle, He included a large bronze basin filled with water. Aaron and subsequent priests are to wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle or approaching the altar to present a food offering ([Exodus 30:17–21](#)).

The scribes' and Pharisees' hand-washing tradition is based on [Exodus 30](#), when it comes to priests. However, they disregard the intended application of [Leviticus 11](#), regarding kosher laws (foods permissible for Jews to eat). The religious leaders want a ceremonial cleanness that approaches that of a priest entering the temple, so they symbolically replicate the priests' hand-washing before eating food purchased at the marketplace. They wash their hands and wash the food, in case they have accidentally touched something or someone unclean. They expect the same diligence from other devout Jews.

## **Stage 2 Condemnation towards the Jewish Leaders (verses 6-13):**

**Summary:** Jesus defends His disciples and exposes the hypocrisy of their accusers. The first thing He did was to quote Isaiah 29:13, and then He brought in the law of Moses (Exodus 20:12; 21:17; Leviticus 20:9). How could the Pharisees argue with the law and the prophets?

**Exodus 20:12** “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

**Exodus 21:17** “Anyone who dishonors father or mother must be put to death.

**Leviticus 20:9** “Anyone who dishonors father or mother must be put to death. Such a person is guilty of a capital offense.

## **Deep Dive of the Scriptures:**

**Isaiah 29:13 (verse 7):**

**Hypocrites:** Jesus spoke so strongly because these leaders were far too concerned with trivial matters like ritual washing. When they focused on these trivial traditions, they excluded everyone who didn't follow them, discouraging them from coming to God.

**These people honor Me with their lips:** Yes, they honored God **with their lips**; but in fact, God said of them, **their heart is far from Me**. It is possible to have the *image* of being religious or spiritual but be far from God. This was exactly the case with these religious leaders.

This is the whole idea behind the word **hypocrite**. The word in the ancient Greek language referred to “an actor” or “someone who wears a mask.” The image they promote is more important to them than who they are.

What would God say to the church today?

- They attend church, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They read their Bible, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They pray eloquently, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They contribute money, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They do ministry, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They love to sing, **but their hearts are far from Me.**
- They talk to others about Jesus, **but their hearts are far from Me.**

**Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men:** This is one of the pillars of legalism. Taking a commandment or opinion of men and teaching or promoting it as a doctrine from God is what supports legalism. It gives man's word the same weight as God's word.

Not everything in the Christian life is a matter of right and wrong. Some things – many things – are simply matters of personal conscience before God. The Scriptures do not command ritual washing before meals. If you want to do it, then fine.

Do it unto the Lord and without a sense of spiritual superiority before your brothers and sisters. If you decide not to do it, don't look down upon those whose conscience compels them to do the ritual washing (Dave Guzik).

The Pharisees were destroying the influence and authority of the Word of God that they claimed to defend. Note the tragic sequence:

- Mark 7:7 – teaching their doctrines as God’s Word
- Mark 7:8 – laying aside God’s Word
- Mark 7:9 – rejecting God’s Word
- Mark 7:13 – robbing God’s Word of its power

People who revere man-made traditions above the Word of God eventually lose the power of God’s Word in their lives. No matter how devout they may appear, their hearts are far from God.

**You reject the commandment of God (verse 9):** This is another pillar of legalism. It would be bad enough to *add* the commandments of men to the word of God. But almost without fail, the legalist or religious hypocrite goes the next step – to **reject the commandment of God** and to **keep their tradition**. In doing this, they *subtract* the real essence and focus of God’s word.

Their attitude towards God's commandments is in stark contrast with King David's. The longest chapter in the Bible, [Psalm 119](#), is David's declaration of devotion to God's law. David has no wish to add to the law, but to keep it. He sees that the law brings life and requires his heart and soul. But he also knows that when he sins against that law, the answer isn't more laws, but God's grace. He knows God will heal him ([Psalm 41:4](#)) and make him clean ([Psalm 51:4–7](#)). Over a thousand years before the Pharisees and scribes condemned Jesus' disciples for making themselves unclean by eating with unwashed hands, David writes that only God can make our hearts clean ([Psalm 51:10](#)).

The word “legalism” does not occur in the Bible. It is a term Christians use to describe a doctrinal position emphasizing a system of rules and regulations for achieving both salvation and spiritual growth. Legalists believe in and demand a strict literal adherence to rules and regulations.

The apostle Paul warns us of legalism in Colossians 2:20-23 NLT:

<sup>20</sup> You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as <sup>21</sup> “Don’t handle! Don’t taste! Don’t touch!” <sup>22</sup> Such rules are mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. <sup>23</sup> These rules may seem

wise because they require strong devotion, pious (religious) self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

Legalists may appear righteous and spiritual, but legalism ultimately fails to accomplish God's purposes because it is an outward performance instead of an inward change. To avoid falling into the trap of legalism, we can start by holding fast to the words of the apostle John, "For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" ([John 1:17](#)), and remembering to be gracious, especially to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

**For Moses said (verse 10):** The Old Testament clearly laid out the responsibility of children to **honor** their parents. When children are young and in their parents' household, they are also responsible for obeying their parents. But even when they are no longer responsible to *obey*, they are still responsible to **honor**. The duty of honoring one's parents includes treating them with respect, love, reverence, dignity, and assisting them financially.

Jesus sets the stage by quoting the Mosaic Law that the scribes and Pharisees claim to honor. By beginning with "For Moses said," Jesus offers two important insights. First, He affirms Moses as the primary author of the Torah. Second, He refers to the highest source of authority among the Jewish religious leaders, something greater than the traditions of the elders ([Mark 7:5](#)).

**Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban (verse 11):** In this practice, a son could say that his possessions or savings were **Corban** – that is, especially devoted to God – and therefore unavailable to help his parents.

**Corban:** A Hebrew term meaning "given to God."

It refers to any gift or sacrifice of money or goods that any individual vowed to dedicate specifically to God. As a result of such dedication, money or goods could be used only for sacred purposes.

**Making the word of God of no effect through your tradition (verse 13):** Through this, a son could completely disobey the command to **honor your father or mother** and do it while being ultra-religious. Jesus called this, **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition**.

If a son became angry with his parents, he could declare his money and property "Corban." Jesus' quarrel was not with God's word, but with human misuse of it.

Today, people are getting away from the teachings in the Bible by saying, "That was a long time ago, not our day." Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The truth never changes.

### **Stage 3 Declaration from Jesus on defilement (verses 14-16):**

**Summary:** Jesus announces to the whole crowd that the source of holy living is from within, not from without. He was declaring null and void the entire Mosaic system of "clean and unclean" foods, but at that time, He did not explain this radical truth to the crowd. Later, He explained it privately to His own disciples.

### **Deep Dive of the Scriptures:**

**Hear Me, everyone, and understand (verse 14):** "Hear" is from the Greek root word *akouo* (a-ku-o) and means to pay attention and learn.

"Understand" comes from the Greek root word *sunemi* (su-na-me) and means to fit all the little pieces together until you comprehend the main idea and how to apply it. Jesus wants the people to really understand what cleanness and uncleanness mean and how the scribes and Pharisees show hypocrisy in their definitions and applications.

Their teaching disrespects God and harms the people both physically and spiritually. Physically, their added traditions impose a burden on time and resources that God never intended ([Matthew 23:2-4](#)). It is spiritually harmful because it teaches people that following extra-scriptural traditions is more important than their heart attitude ([Matthew 5:21-48](#)).

**There is nothing that enters a man from the outside which can defile him (verse 15):** Jesus was speaking, here, of eating and drinking, not defiling you. This whole statement was to tell them that the things that are in a man's heart, which bring words out of his mouth, tell what he really is. Nasty words stemming from an evil heart defile a man. The mouth is an instrument of life or death.

**The things that come out of him, those are things that defile a man (verse 15).** The fundamental principle is simple. Eating with unclean hands or any other such

thing that we put into our bodies is not defiling. Rather, *what comes out of us* defiles us and reveals that we have unclean hearts.

The scribes from Jerusalem join the local Pharisees, who criticize the disciples for eating without washing ([Mark 7:1–2](#)). Elders before them had twisted a rule God gave only to the priests into an unnecessary ceremony to try to ensure the Jews' holiness. Over time, their tradition grew in importance, and they taught that people would become defiled without it.

"Defile" is from the Greek root word *koinoo* (*koy-no*). At its most benign, it means to become common, but it also means to be unclean or profane. The scribes and Pharisees teach that food at the marketplace can become unclean either by the hands of the buyer or the seller. Eating unclean food makes a person unclean himself. The remedy is to wash before eating.

Jesus points out that these religious leaders don't understand what "unclean" means. In the ceremonial law, God gave standards for what the Jews were to eat and what they were to avoid. But eating shrimp or bacon is nothing compared to the selfishness and pride that fill the hearts of the scribes and Pharisees. Ungodly attitudes identify that you are already defiled in your heart. Neglecting to wash your hands has nothing to do with your heart.

**“If anyone has ears to hear” (verse 16):** Everyone has ears that hang on the side of their head, but the ears Jesus was speaking of are ears to the heart. Ears are a feature shared by all humanity. Therefore, when Jesus addresses those who have ears, He refers to all who have been given His words—no matter their age, ethnicity, language, or status.

Whenever Jesus says, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear,” He is calling for people to pay careful heed. It’s another way of saying, “Listen up! Pay close attention!” Speaking in parables was one way in which Jesus sought to gain the attention of the crowds—people love stories, and the [parables](#) depicted events and characters with which they could readily relate. But unless they were willing to tune out other distractions and come to Jesus to understand the meaning of His preaching, His words would be only empty stories. They needed more than ears; however keen they were, they needed ears to hear.

#### **Stage 4 Explanation from Jesus to the disciples (verses 17-23):**

**Summary:** The explanation was given to the disciples privately. Jesus' explanation may have seemed obvious to us, but we must remember that these twelve men had been raised under the strict Jewish dietary code that categorized all foods as either "clean" or "unclean" (Leviticus 11). Acts 10:14 suggests that Peter kept a kosher household for years even after he heard this truth. It is not easy to change our religious traditions.

God gave the Jewish dietary laws to teach His chosen people to distinguish between what was clean and what was not. To disobey these laws was a matter of ceremonial defilement, and that was an external matter. Food ends up in the stomach, but sin begins in the heart. The food we eat is digested and the waste evacuated, but sin remains, and it produces defilement and death.

#### **Deep Dive of the Scriptures:**

**Are you thus without understanding also (verse 18)?** James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." Jesus has given a puzzling statement about what makes a person clean or unclean, and the disciples naturally ask for an explanation. The problem is that the disciples' misunderstanding is not based on a lack of wisdom, but they stubbornly hold onto their own perceptions of who Jesus is, and they miss what He's saying.

"Without understanding" comes from the Greek root word *asynetos* (*a-soon-a-tas*), which means "senseless or unintelligent."

He's asking, in deliberately shocking fashion, "Are you stupid?" Jesus is frustrated because, as much as the disciples love to hear Him teach, and even obey His orders, they don't understand what He is saying because it contradicts their preconceived ideas. The Law does not provide a way for us to save ourselves; it exposes the fact that we cannot save ourselves. Adding rules to the Law, as the scribes and Pharisees do, not only doesn't save, but it takes authority away from the Law.

God gave food laws to the Israelites as a sign that they were set apart from the pagan nations around them. Non-kosher food is called unclean, but those who eat it

are not called unclean. People are declared unclean because of what they touched or associated with ([Leviticus 5:3](#)) or what came out of their bodies ([Leviticus 13:3](#); [15:18](#)), not what goes into their bodies. In fact, the Old Testament doesn't even give a punishment for eating unclean food.

**“Does not enter his heart but his stomach” (verse 19):** Since food is merely physical, no one who eats it will defile his heart or their inner person, which is spiritual. Physical pollution, no matter how corrupt, cannot cause spiritual or moral pollution. Neither can external ceremonies and rituals cleanse a person spiritually.

**“What comes out of a man defiles a man” (verse 20):** Jesus' concern, however, is that as the religious leaders teach about ceremonial uncleanness, their hearts are black with sin: the scribes and Pharisees emphasize keeping an oath over caring for one's parents ([Mark 7:9–13](#)).

God has no use for teachers who go above and beyond in their religious service but treat people with callousness. [Matthew 15:18](#) specifically says, "But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person." The traditions we observe mean nothing if our hearts are hard.

**For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil (verse 21):** God is far more concerned with what comes *out* of us than what goes *into* us. This is *especially* true when it comes to food, traditions, and rituals.

**Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications (verses 21-22):** This is a 13-part list that exposes the kind of evil that lives in the human heart. You don't need to travel a long distance to find the source of these sins. You don't need to conduct an exhaustive search. All you need to do is look at your own heart.

“The source from which these rivers of pollution proceed is the natural heart of man. Sin is not a splash of mud upon man's exterior; it is a filth generated within himself.” (Spurgeon)

**Evil thoughts:** “Every outward act of sin is preceded by an inward act of choice; therefore, Jesus begins with the evil thought from which the evil action comes.” (Barclay)

**Blasphemy:** “When this is used of words against man, it means *slander*; when it is used of words against God, it means *blasphemy*. It means insulting man or God.”  
(Barclay)

The spirit of man wants him to live for God, and his flesh lusts after the evils of the world. Man, or mankind, is a free moral agent and can choose to be evil or choose to follow God. The will of man will follow either the spirit or the flesh. It will not and cannot do both.

**"All these evil things come from within and defile the man" (verse 23):** The sins mentioned (in verses 21 and 22), above, are the call of the flesh. A person who has turned himself over to the lust of the flesh will commit these sins. The heart of the evil man obeys the flesh. This was what Jesus was saying here.

Verses 1-23 Takeaway: Jesus teaches that inner purity is more important than external cleanliness or adherence to religious traditions. As believers, we must allow the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and minds, producing genuine faith and obedience to God.

## **B. The Faith of a Gentile Woman (verses 24-30)**

Book Of Mark, Chapter 7

**24** From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it*, but He could not be hidden. **25** For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit

Book of Matthew, Chapter 15

**21** Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. **22** And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and **cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is**

heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. **26** The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. **27** But Jesus said to her, **“Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”**

**28** And she answered and said to Him, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children’s crumbs.” **29** Then He said to her, **“For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter.”** **30** And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

severely demon-possessed.” **23** But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”

**24** But He answered and said, **“I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”** **25** Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!” **26** But He answered and said, **“It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”** **27** And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” **28** Then Jesus answered and said to her, **“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.”** And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

**Summary:** Jesus came to this area to have some privacy, but a concerned mother discovered He was there and came to Him for help. There were several obstacles in her way, yet she overcame them all by faith and got what she needed. What were these obstacles?

- Her nationality was against her; she was a Gentile, and Jesus was a Jew
- She was a woman who lived in a society dominated by men
- Satan was against her; demons had taken control of her daughter’s life
- Disciples were against her, and they wanted her to leave so they could rest

It looked as though Jesus was against her. It was not an easy situation, and yet she triumphed because of her great faith. We can learn much from her great faith today.

### **Deep Dive of the Scriptures:**

**“She came and fell at his feet” (verse 25):** The woman’s behavior indicates both reverence and desperation. She loved her daughter more than she feared being run off. Most mothers would have been terribly concerned about a daughter with an unclean spirit. This woman humbled herself by falling at the feet of Jesus.

When she first asked Him for help, Jesus did not even answer her! Encouraged by His silence, the disciples urged Him to send her away. When Jesus did speak, it

was not to the woman but to the disciples, and His words seem to exclude her completely: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24). However, none of these barriers stopped her from pressing on with her plea.

The first time she cried for help, the mother addressed Jesus as “Son of David” (Matt. 15:22), a Jewish title, but the next time she cried out for help, she said, “Lord, help me” (Matt. 15:25). It was then that Jesus spoke about feeding the children (Israel) first and not throwing their food to “the little dogs.” Jesus was not calling the Gentiles “dirty scavenger dogs” as did many of the proud Jews; He was giving her hope, and she took hold of it.

Her reply revealed that faith had triumphed. She did not deny the special place of the “children” (Jews) in God’s plan. All she wanted were a few crumbs of blessing from the table, for, after all, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). It must have rejoiced His heart when she took His very words and used them as a basis for her plea. She accepted her place, she believed His Word, and she persisted in her plea, and Jesus not only met her need, but commended her for her faith.

#### Verses 24-30 Takeaway:

Great faith is faith that takes God at His Word and will not let go until God meets the need. Great faith can lay hold of even the slightest encouragement and turn it into a fulfilled promise. “Lord, increase our faith.”

### **C. Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute (verses 31-37)**

<sup>31</sup> Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. <sup>32</sup> Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. <sup>33</sup> And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

<sup>35</sup> Immediately, his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup> Then He commanded them that they should tell

no one, but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it*.<sup>37</sup> And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

**Summary:** The region of Decapolis (“ten cities”) was also Gentile territory. The man they brought to Jesus was handicapped both by deafness and an impediment in his speech, and Jesus healed him. This miracle is recorded only by Mark and would be especially appreciated by his Roman readers, since the “ten cities” region was like a “Rome away from Rome”.

**Deep Dive of the Scriptures:**

**They begged Him to put His hand on him (verse 32):** This was another example of intercession. The friends of this troubled man came and brought his need to Jesus.

Deaf" is from the Greek root word *kophos* (ko-fos) and means dull of hearing. The word often encompasses the state of being unable to speak well. The "speech impediment" questions whether the man is completely mute. The Greek root word *mogilalos* (mo-gee-la-los) means that either he speaks with difficulty or others find him difficult to understand. Either way, the description suggests he was not born deaf.

The people asking Jesus to lay hands on their friend indicate that the disability may have been caused by trauma. They, at least, did not believe it to be due to demon possession like the mute man in [Matthew 9:32–34](#). When Jesus heals physical ailments, He typically touches the victim ([Mark 1:31](#); 5:23; 6:5; 8:25).

When He frees people from demons, He does so with the power and authority of His words ([Mark 1:25](#); [5:7–8](#)).

**He took him aside... put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue (verse 33):** Jesus used a curious manner in healing this man. Throughout His ministry, Jesus used many ways of healing. He healed with a word, healed without a word, healed in response to one’s faith, healed in response to the faith of another, healed those who asked, and healed those He approached. Jesus didn’t want to be tied down to any “one method” to show that His power was not dependent on any method but on the sovereign power of God.

Many people cared about this man, and perhaps many had prayed for his healing. But no one ever stuck their fingers in his ears and spit on his tongue like this. Jesus did something completely new to catch this man's attention because He could not catch his attention with words. "Through touch and the use of spittle, Jesus entered into the mental world of the man and gained his confidence." (Lane)

Because the man could not hear, Jesus used His own form of sign language to tell him that He was about to heal the man's deafness. Also, a form of sign language in which Jesus offered the man hope for restored speech. This was a dramatic healing. Jesus, in each instance, touched the problem area. This healing was not for the others; this was for this one individual. Jesus heals one at a time. He deals with us on an individual basis. In this, Jesus recognized where the problems were and dealt with the problems one at a time. This prepared the man to receive in both these areas.

**He sighed (verse 34):** The 'sigh' was an inward groan, our Lord's compassionate response to the pain and sorrow sin has brought into the world. It was also a prayer to the Father on behalf of the handicapped man. (The same word is used in connection with prayer in [Romans 8:23](#), and the noun in [Romans 8:26](#))." (Wiersbe)

It reflects Jesus' inner emotional and spiritual fervor as He beseeches God to undo this evil. This "looking up to heaven" lets this man know where his help came from. Perhaps, the "sigh" was to let the man (and all who read of this in the years to come) know that Jesus truly had compassion for those who were suffering for any reason. He suffers with us.

We know that Jesus is Lord of lords and King of kings and that everything on earth must bow down to Him. He commanded these ears to be opened and the tongue not to stammer.

*Ephphatha* is an Aramaic word that means "be opened, be released." The man did not hear Jesus speak, but the creation heard the command of the Creator, and the man was healed. Both the tongue and the ears functioned normally again.

**"Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly" (verse 35):** Isaiah 35:5-6 NKJV

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. <sup>6</sup>Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

Mark wants us to know that the Messiah was here, bringing the glorious benefits of His rule. We see here that whatever kept this person deaf and dumb had to obey the voice of Jesus, and this person was made whole.

This is hope for those of us who suffer now. We may never see complete healing in this world, but those who trust in Christ for their salvation can rest in the knowledge that we will spend eternity completely whole. We will not shed tears, suffer pain, or feel sorrow ([Revelation 21:4](#)). We will never be separated by death again ([Revelation 20:6](#)). And, greatest of all, we will spend eternity with the God who healed us ([1 John 3:2](#); [Revelation 21:1-4](#)).

**“Tell no one (verse 36)”**: There was no possible way this man could keep it a secret that he was made totally whole. Suddenly, he could hear the birds chirp, the rustling of the leaves, and the sounds of the wind. He could hear a baby cry or hear a mother sing a lullaby.

His tongue was loose as well, and you know he talked without stopping. His praises of the God who did all these wonderful things for him had to keep him talking forever, constantly. Those who knew him before constantly asked how this all happened, and of course, he was so proud that he spread the word.

**He has done all things well (verse 37)**: Jesus does **things well**. There is no shoddy, slip-shod work with Him. It is true of *creation*, but it is even truer of His work of *redemption*. Despite our Lord’s strict command for the people to keep quiet about the miracles, they told the news everywhere (see Mark 1:34, 44; 3:12; 5:43), and this resulted in a large crowd gathering and bringing people who were ill or handicapped. Even though Jesus was trying to enjoy some rest, He took time to heal them all. The result? These Gentiles “glorified the God of Israel” (Matthew 15:31).

**Verses 31-37 Takeaway:**

These accounts demonstrate Jesus’ willingness to minister to all people, regardless of their background, and the transformative power of faith in His name.

## **Conclusion**

Mark chapter 7 – We are reminded of the importance of genuine faith and obedience to God. It’s easy to get caught up in traditions and outward appearances, but Jesus challenges us to examine our hearts and motives. True purity and righteousness come from within, and it’s essential to allow the Holy Spirit to transform our minds and actions.

Also, Jesus’ compassion for the Gentile woman and the deaf and mute man demonstrates His love for all people, regardless of their background or social status. It’s a powerful reminder that God’s grace and mercy extend to everyone who seeks Him with a humble and contrite heart.

May we strive to live out our faith authentically, focusing on the heart of God’s commands rather than merely adhering to external rituals. Let us embrace the transformative power of the gospel and extend Christ’s love to all those around us.

## **Resources:**

NKJV Bible, Leadership by John Maxell  
Jewish Virtual Library  
Warren Wiersbe Commentary, Mark Chapter 7  
What does Mark 7 mean? | BibleRef.com  
Enduring Word Bible Commentary Mark Chapter 7  
<https://www.bible-studys.org/Mark 7>  
Mark 7 NLT - Jesus Teaches about Inner Purity - One - Bible Gateway  
What did Jesus mean when He said, “He who has ears to hear”? | GotQuestions.org  
G801 - asynetos - Strong's Greek Lexicon (KJV)  
Law vs. grace-why is there so much conflict among Christians on the issue? | GotQuestions.org