



2024 WORSHIP RESOURCES

Sunday, Sept. 8, 2024

Lectionary 23, Year B

Mark 7:24-37 — In Mark's gospel, encounters with women usually signify turning points in Jesus' ministry. Here, a conversation with a Syrophenician woman marks the beginning of his mission to the Gentiles.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PREACHING

And Jesus said, "...for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs (Mark 7:27b)." Jesus said that. No matter how many times we hear this passage read in worship, it never gets easier. Jesus said these words to a gentile Syrophenician woman in the region of Tyre, a woman who daringly and desperately approached Jesus on behalf of her demon-possessed daughter. Biblical commentaries have attempted to diminish or excuse the problem of Jesus' callousness towards a desperate mom who breaks nearly every social convention in an attempt to find relief for her daughter.

Much ink has been spilled attempting to locate the Syrophenician woman's social status as one way to mitigate Jesus' abrasive response. Since the Syrophenician woman was from Tyre, a Hellenized and affluent port city, this possibly places the woman in an upper economic whereas Jesus and the Jews would have been in the lower class. If we entertain this possibility, then Jesus' remarks to her, "Let the children be fed first (Mark 7:27)," turn social conventions on their head: the poor, not the rich, will be fed first. However, if this is the case, and that is a big "if," there are still many problems with the interaction. Even if the Syrophenician woman is affluent, Jesus' treatment of her is harsh. More, why did she approach Jesus by herself, a culturally atypical move. Was she a widow/poor? Regardless of the Syrophenician woman's social status, Jesus' rebuke of her inquiry left a little girl hanging in the balance which raises the question, "Is it morally acceptable to punish a child because of the parent?" Most would say no.

This incident between Jesus and the woman is also a display of a gentile/Jew dichotomy. Jesus' denial of help can be framed within the trope of othering where Jesus plays into an ancient cultural stereotype which characterized gentiles as "dogs." No matter how you interpret the text, it isn't pretty. There is greater meaning, however, in accepting Jesus' callousness rather than attempting to provide theological cover for it.

The miracle in this text is that Jesus' mind was changed. One may ask, "How can God's mind be changed?" But the question about God's mind being changed focuses exclusively on Jesus' divinity (fully divine) while ignoring Jesus' humanity (fully human). Jesus displays his full humanity in his interaction with the Syrophenician woman. Jesus' rudeness does and should make us feel uncomfortable. Jesus acts just like any other human in our text. Recognizing the rudeness in others can open the door to personal change.



Like most humans, we are a people who struggle to change our minds. We all know how difficult it is to change our own mind let alone another person's mind. As a people, we have prioritized the accumulation of wealth over all other aspects of human existence. The "heroes" of our society are not those who demonstrate strong moral conviction, but rather those who are successful in business and entrepreneurship where success' sole definition is material accumulation.

According to the United Nations, it would take \$7,000,000,000 (seven billion dollars) to feed, "42 million people that are literally going to die if we don't reach them (Executive Director, David Beasley of the UN World Food Program - <https://www.wfpusa.org/articles/how-much-would-it-cost-to-end-world-hunger/>)." Where we put our money discloses our priorities and, while seven billion dollars sounds like a lot, in 2023 people in the United States spent a whopping \$12,000,000,000 (twelve billion) on Cyber Monday alone. For the entire year of 2023, consumers spent an unbelievable \$574.8 billion or over \$1 million a minute on Amazon. Gifts to ELCA World Hunger in 2019 totaled \$23 million.

Given these financial realities, hunger is a choice that we have decided to live with. We have decided to live with it because we collectively possess the power, awareness, and financial capacity to end it, but we spend our money on "things" rather than alleviating the suffering of people. Can our minds be changed? Our priorities?

Seen in this light, Jesus' change of mind is truly divine. Jesus, a product of his patriarchal, violent, classist, and ethnocentric environment (just like us), was able to listen to the Syrophenician woman, hear what she was saying, admit to being outwitted by her, and then be moved to heal her daughter. As a direct result of Jesus' turn around, a girl's life was spared. Think for a moment about world hunger: how many lives would be spared if we, like Jesus, were willing to change our minds about our financial priorities and, like Jesus, act on our humble new perspectives? How many lives would be saved? *Rev. Carmine Pernini*

WORSHIP TEXTS

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, throughout the ages you transform sickness into health and death into life. Open us to the power of your presence, and make us a people ready to proclaim your promises to the whole world, through Jesus Christ, our healer and Lord. Amen. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 47)

OR

Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcomed in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally. The following sets of intercessions may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Trusting God at work in and among us, we raise our hearts and voices in prayer for the needs of the world.

For your work in the church, we give thanks. Plant and tend relationships among faith communities, both ecumenical and interfaith, that in faithful listening, speech, and action, our hands work to bear fruit for the sake of all in need. God of grace, we pray,
hear us when we call.



For your work in creation, we give thanks. Sustain peoples and places affected by climate change, ecological devastation and natural disasters. Prosper the work of creation-care ministries locally and globally, that with our minds and hearts opened, our hands work to lovingly care for the earth. God of life, we pray,
hear us when we call.

For your work among the nations, we give thanks. Direct leaders in paths of honest service, that both their words and actions are carried out on behalf of those whom they serve. God of righteousness, we pray,
hear us when we call.

For your work in places of need, we give thanks. Sustain all who are wearied by unemployment or lack of adequate food or housing, that we advocate for relief and just policy. Bring healing to all who are sick through the skillful hands and compassionate hearts of physicians, nurses, therapists and caregivers. (*We pray especially for...*) God of restoration, we pray,
hear us when we call.

For your work in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, we give thanks. Guide our common life together so that children, youth and adults of all ages flourish. Teach us to listen attentively to our neighbors, that any new endeavors consider those who may be left out or underserved. God of wisdom, we pray,
hear us when we call.

For your work in this worshiping community, we give thanks. Bless the service project(s) of this day and throughout the year. Foster deeper connections among those who serve and a spirit of accompaniment as we work alongside those in our community. Strengthen our faith, that we trust God moving in and among us. God of love, we pray,
hear us when we call.

Here other intercessions composed for the local community or related to a local service project may be added.

For your work among those who came before us, we give thanks. We remember those who have died and are held forever in your loving hands (especially). Hold us in your presence now and always. God of heaven and earth,
hear us when we call.

Receive these and all our prayers, gracious God. We pray in the name of Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

OR

Prayers of Intercession

Gathered into God's embrace, let us lift our voices on behalf of a weary and wounded world.

God of love, send us out filled with your love and life. Be known in our daily living, that your love may be known through our proclamation. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.



God of creation, remind us to be good stewards of your diverse and beautiful world. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of peace, fill the hearts of those who rule, govern and lead. Give them and us compassion to guide the peoples of this world in the ways of truth, justice, equity and peace. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of healing, visit those who yearn for your wholeness, especially those whose names and needs we lift up now (*names and needs added as desired*). Encourage all those who bear another's burdens. Give wisdom and perseverance to all who work in health care professions. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

God of service, give us strength and humility. In our service to those near and far, whose needs are visible or invisible, may we find you in the faces of our neighbors. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

For what else do we pray?

Here other intercessions composed for the local community or related to a local service project may be added.

Everlasting God, support us in this life. As we remember those who have gone before as examples of faithful living and honor those whose faith was known only to you, inspire us to follow their example of baptismal life until we join with them in worship. God, we pray,
open our hands in love.

Into your wounded hands of love, O God, we place all our prayers, trusting in your mercy through the crucified and risen one Jesus.

Amen.

Additional Prayers

In addition to the collects below, you may wish to consider prayers related to your particular service project. For example, if the project relates to creation care, a specific prayer on care for the earth may be fitting. See Evangelical Lutheran Worship pp. 72–87 and All Creation Sings pp. 46–55.

Mighty and merciful God, lover of justice and equity, you call us to support the weak, to help those who suffer, and to honor all people. By the power of your Holy Spirit, make us advocates for your justice and instruments of your peace, so that all may be reconciled in your beloved community; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen. (*ACS*, p. 47)

By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen. (*ELW* p. 75)



Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (*ELW* p. 75)

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor,
and extend to us your continual help;
that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you,
we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW* p. 86)

Offering Prayer

Holy God, giver of all good things,
receive the gifts we bring,
fruit of the earth and the work of human hands,
that they may be used to your purposes
for life and love in the world.

Amen.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Honor, praise, glory and thanksgiving
to you, God, our loving Creator.

In the beginning you reached your hands into the earth
and formed humanity in your own image.
You breathed into us your own breath of love
and gave us hearts and hands and voices
to live your loving purpose in the world.

Seeing the lonely creature of earth,
you created a partner that we would know the joy of community.
Throughout the history of your people, you never abandoned us,
but brought us into community with one another and with you,
and guided us through your prophets.
With endless patience and love,
you called to us time and again to return to life with you.

In the fulfillment of all things, you came to us in Jesus,
born into a human family,
raised in a hometown,
who gathered around himself a community formed by your love,
and yearned to gather all people under the loving wings of a mother hen.



Sitting at dinner with friends
and knowing one among them would break the bonds of love,
our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks,
broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying:
Take and eat; this is my body given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Trusting in his promise to be among us whenever we gather in his name,
we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Gathered as your people,
meeting in Jesus' name,
and preparing ourselves to feast upon Jesus' very body and blood,
we plead with all creation:
Come, Lord Jesus.

Send your Spirit upon this meal,
the body and blood of Jesus,
that we overflow with your selfless love.
Turn us to face our neighbors,
that by us and through us your love may be known in the world.
Again, we beg:
Come, Holy Spirit.

All honor and praise and glory to you,
God of creative, dirty hands,
God of holy, wounded hands,
God who strengthens and guides our hands,
now and forever.
Amen.

Prayer After Communion

Holy Jesus, in this meal you have fed and nourished us to work in your beloved world. Send us now, filled with yourself and strengthened by your Spirit to live your love for others.
Amen.



Blessing

God who sets forth the law of love,
 Jesus who fulfills the law for you,
 and the Spirit through whom you are called to love,
 + bless you this day,
 that you may be God's hands and heart and voice
 at work in the world.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. You are God's hands at work in the world!

Thanks be to God.

AFFIRMATION OF CHRISTIAN VOCATION

Within the sending rite of the service, this affirmation may be made by individuals or groups, and may be introduced by a description of the area of service to be affirmed.

Or, the affirmation may be made by the whole assembly.

The presiding minister addresses those affirming Christian vocation.

Siblings in Christ, both our work and our rest are in God.
 Will you endeavor to pattern your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 in gratitude to God and in service to others, at morning and evening,
 at work and at play, all the days of your life?

I will, and I ask God to help me.

Almighty God, by the power of the Spirit you have knit us your servants into the one body of your Son, Jesus Christ. Look with favor upon us in our commitment to serve in Christ's name. Give us courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

OR

CELEBRATION OF VOCATION AND BLESSING OF HANDS FOR MINISTRY

Following the hymn of the day, or before the blessing at the sending, the assembly may share a brief rite of celebrating our vocations and blessing hands for ministry. Oil may or may not be used for the blessing of hands.

We are called to proclaim the good news:

God is at work!

This good news is not left in some history long ago or a place far away:

God is at work in the world still today!

In us and through us, God is glorified in our work.



When we offer a helping hand, God is praised.
When we share of our abundance, God is known in the world.

God is at work in us!

In our service today and in our daily lives,
let us live out what God has called us to in baptism.

God is at work through our hands!

Here the assembly may be seated while an appropriate hymn or song is sung. Individuals may come forward and receive a blessing on the backs and palms of their hands.

Signing a cross on the backs of the hands:

God bless your hands and your work,

Signing a cross on the palms of the hands:

that through you God's love may be known.

Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FOR MISSION

This order is intended for use when material resources or people are being sent forth from the assembly as a tangible expression of the baptismal call to share in Christ's mission to all the world.

This order may precede the blessing and the dismissal in a congregation's primary service, or it may be adapted to be used independently.

The leader addresses the assembly, adapting these words to the occasion.

Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and seek God's blessing as we send these
_____ to description of destination and purpose.

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

You made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you.

We lift our voices to join the songs of heaven and earth
in thanksgiving for the many blessings you have given us.

Renew in us the commitment to use our gifts in the service of others, especially of those in need.

Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless,

clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast,

welcome the stranger, care for creation,

and be loving neighbors to all people.

The leader continues with one or more of the following petitions, adapting as appropriate.

Sending of people

Bless those who go out from here to labor in/at _____.

Prosper the work of their hands.



Bless those who receive [them and] the fruits of their labor,
and may those who are sent receive blessing in return.
May the gifts they use and share be signs of your love to all people.

Food, sustenance

Bless these _____.
May those who receive them be nourished and strengthened,
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

Medical and personal-care supplies

Bless these _____.
May those who receive them be cared for and healed,
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

Clothing, quilts

Bless these _____.
May those who receive them find dignity in their use and comfort in their warmth,
and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people.

The prayer concludes:

To you, O God, be glory and honor through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in your church and in the world, now and forever.

Amen.

HYMNS AND SONGS

The following suggestions may be especially suitable for this day. For additional suggestions, explore the topical indexes in Evangelical Lutheran Worship, All Creation Sings or This Far by Faith. Singing on this day may take place in settings outside the worship space such as a service project worksite. While any song can be sung unaccompanied, hymns marked with an () lend themselves more readily to singing without the aid of instruments or printed materials.*

- ELW 513 * Listen, God Is Calling
- ELW 538 Enviado soy de Dios / The Lord Now Sends Us Forth
- ELW 546 To Be Your Presence
- ELW 548 Rise, O Church, like Christ Arisen
- ELW 549 * Thuma mina, Nkosi yam / Send Me, Jesus
- ELW 583 / 685 Take My Life, That I May Be
- ELW 722 O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate
- ELW 741 * Your Will Be Done
- ELW 748 O God in Heaven
- ELW 798 Will You Come and Follow Me
- ELW 808 Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song



ACS 939	Touch That Soothes and Heals
ACS 984	May the God of Hope Go with Us
ACS 985	Let Us Enter In
ACS 987	* Guide My Feet
ACS 991	Go to the World
ACS 1000	God's Work, Our Hands ^
ACS 1003	* For Such a Time as This
ACS 1022	God, Bless the Hands
ACS 1036	Commonwealth Is God's Commandment
ACS 1043	Spirit, Open My Heart
ACS 1045	Come, Share the Spirit
ACS 1047	What Is the World Like
ACS 1048	Founded on Faith
ACS 1056	God Bless to Us Our Bread
ACS 1056	Come Now, You Blessed
ACS 1061	Caminemos con Jesús
TFF 130	* Listen, God is Calling
TFF 134	O Lord, Open My Eyes
TFF 243	* Your Will Be Done
TFF 244 / 245	* Send Me, Jesus / Thuma mina

^ Two versions of the "God's Work. Our Hands." hymn are available at [ELCA.org/dayofservice](https://www.elca.org/dayofservice) set to a familiar tune (as presented at ACS 1000) and a new tune, with permissions to reproduce for local, non-sale use in synods, congregations and other ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

A setting of the newly composed tune for SATB choir and optional assembly [is available for purchase from Augsburg Fortress.](#)

Copyright © 2024 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This document may be reproduced for use in your congregation as long as the copyright notice appears on each copy. Permission is granted to reproduce this material for local, non-sale use only.