

LESSON EIGHT

MIRACLES OF HEALING (Continued)

A. THE DAUGHTER OF THE SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN HEALED:

1. SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES: Matthew 15:21-28 & Mark 7:24-30.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

This story takes place in Phoenicia. Apart from the time that Jesus was taken as a baby into Egypt, this is the only time in His ministry that He left Palestine.

Jesus did not go to Phoenicia for the purpose to start a public ministry. It would seem that He desired to withdraw to a quiet place with His disciples to teach them. There was no place in Galilee where He could find seclusion. Opposition had been increasing and the hostility of the Pharisees was strong. Herod had beheaded John the Baptist and it is possible that Jesus wanted to withdraw from the realm of Herod's government for the purpose of rest and to teach the disciples without interruption.

However, He was too well known to be anywhere without being interrupted. There came a Gentile woman crying out to Him that He might heal her daughter.

3. NEED:

The daughter of this Gentile woman was demon possessed. Apparently it was a very serious case.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

Jesus tried to find rest and seclusion in Phoenicia, but "*He could not be hid*" (Mark 7:24). A certain Syrophenician woman found Him and began to cry out on behalf of her daughter. Jesus entered into a house and possibly sat down at a table, but the woman followed Him right into the house and never ceased begging and crying out.

The disciples wearied of the woman's begging and requested that the Lord would send her off. Jesus made a statement defining His mission, "*I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" While in Galilee He freely ministered to Gentiles but now that He was in Gentile country, it was necessary to clearly state His ministry.

This statement would have been sufficient to discourage most people, but not this Gentile woman. She came and worshipped, and cried out, "*Lord, help me.*"

The reply of our Lord's is somewhat difficult to explain. It seems almost contrary to His nature and character to rebuke and insult a person, which had such a desperate need. We do believe that there was a reason for Jesus speaking thus: "*It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs.*" He wanted her faith to develop fully and to be able to surmount all obstacles.

To have our prayers denied sometimes strengthens and develops our faith and makes it strong. This apparent insult of being called a "dog" did not destroy her faith but rather brought her true humility and real faith into the open to be seen by all. Some might have been angry and immediately departed, but this woman saw her opportunity to claim deliverance for her daughter.

In the words of this woman as recorded in verse twenty-seven we can hear the woman saying, *"True, Lord, I am only a dog, and I am not asking for the children's bread. I am begging just for the crumbs. Just a crumb is sufficient to heal my girl and the dogs under the table have a right to the crumbs."*

How could Jesus deny such persistent faith? He could not and immediately healed the daughter. In doing so He commended this woman for her great faith.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

This woman surmounted tremendous obstacles in having her prayer answered. There were four steps that she took and we should note carefully exactly what she did.

- a. Importunity: She persisted and continued in her pleading in spite of discouragement and opposition.
- b. Worship: Many times when our prayers are not being answered, if we begin to worship, the victory comes.
- c. Humility: Pride separates a man from God but true humility causes the presence of God to draw near.
- d. Faith: Her great faith was manifested throughout her pleading and importuning.

If we put these four things into practice, we too can overcome great odds and press through to victory and deliverance.

B. THE DEAF AND DUMB HEALED:

1. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Mark 7:31-37.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

After healing the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, crowds undoubtedly gathered, and Jesus had to seek elsewhere for retirement and seclusion. He did not go directly south into Galilee but went east into Decapolis, which is the area east of the Jordan River.

Here the people brought a man, deaf and partly dumb, to Him and asked Him to lay His hands upon the deaf man.

3. NEED:

This man was completely deaf and had an impediment in his speech.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

It was only necessary for Jesus to speak the word in order to heal a man, but for some unknown reason Jesus did a few things which could be seen. He did the following:

- a. Jesus took him to one side away from the multitude;
- b. He put His fingers into the man's ears;

- c. He touched the man's tongue with His own saliva;
- d. He looked up toward Heaven;
- e. He sighed;
- f. He said to the man, "Ephatha," which is Aramaic and means, "Be thou unbarred."

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

Although Jesus took steps in leading up to the miracle, the miracle was instantaneous.

We cannot explain the purpose of what Jesus did here unless it was to inspire faith in the heart of this man. Sometimes the Holy Spirit might direct us to do something that can be seen outwardly to lift and inspire faith.

C. BLIND MAN AT BETHSAIDA HEALED:

1. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Mark 8:22-26.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

This event took place at Bethsaida. A blind man was brought to Jesus and the people asked Jesus to touch him.

3. NEED:

This man was blind but we are not told just how long he had been blind.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

Again Jesus used a gradual method here. Jesus took him by the hand and led him out of the village. He then anointed the man's eyes with spittle. He placed His hands upon him and asked him if he saw anything. Only partial vision came and Jesus put His hands upon His eyes for the second time and made him look up. When the man did this, perfect sight came to him.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

Sometimes before we may receive healing, we must give Jesus our hand and learn to walk with Him in the darkness. Sometimes only partial deliverance comes, but when we look up and see Jesus, then complete deliverance comes. It is possible to never look up to see Jesus and because of this only receive partial healing.

D. THE MAN BORN BLIND HEALED:

1. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: John 9:1-41.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES:

In this instance Jesus healed a blind beggar who had been born blind. Two great religious discussions arose out of this miracle. The question of sin was in connection with sickness and also whether it was right to heal on the Sabbath.

The disciples asked Jesus the question, "*Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?*" The problem of hereditary sin was difficult for the disciples to understand. Their mind was upon this religious problem, whereas Jesus saw the need of the man and had compassion upon him.

3. NEED:

Here was a poor beggar who was blind since birth. Certainly he had a tremendous need.

4. HOW WAS THE MIRACLE PERFORMED?

Again Jesus used some simple signs which were symbolic in nature. He anointed the man's eyes with spittle and clay. He then told him to wash in the pool of Siloam. Siloam was the same as Shiloh and meant the "Sent One." This was a type of Jesus Christ and the water itself, a type of the Holy Spirit. Certainly there was no healing virtue in the clay, only as it was the symbol of the touch of the Lord.

The healed man testified gloriously of what had transpired and because of this the Pharisees cast him out. However, Jesus came to him and he became a true disciple of our Lord.

5. RESULTS AND THE LESSON TAUGHT:

There are many truths brought out in this wonderful chapter. One of the most outstanding of these is that ministering to a man in his need is more important than solving some deep theological problem. A second truth explains why we anoint with oil when praying for the sick. This symbol has been given to point us to the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON EIGHT

SELF HELP TEST

A. Name the FIVE steps the Syrophenician woman took in having her prayer answered.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. List the SIX things Jesus did in healing the deaf and dumb man.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

C. What was the purpose of Jesus anointing the blind man's eyes with spittle and clay?