

DISCUSSION NOTES

MARCH 5, 2017

Pray and ask God to teach you, help you trust Him more deeply, & strengthen you to live what you learn.

GETTING STARTED

1. Have you ever had an encounter with a beggar? In the United States or elsewhere? Was the encounter comfortable or uncomfortable? Why?

DIGGING IN

2. Read Mark 7:24-30. Make 5-10 quick observations about what is happening. Who is present? What is the tone of the interaction? Where is the tension in the passage? What is the mood at the end?
3. In your own words, how would you explain the dialog and what is communicated in the dog metaphor?
4. In Jesus' debate with religious leaders in Mark 7:1-23, how does Jesus change their understanding of what makes a person "unclean" or "defiled"? Why do you think Mark included the story of the Gentile woman with a possessed daughter immediately following the debate about what makes a person unclean? What might this say about race and ethnic background—do they make a person unclean?
5. In Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew tells his version of this same story and includes a little more of Jesus' response to the woman. Jesus says, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." Then her daughter was healed instantly. What can we learn about faith from this woman? What words or phrases would you use to describe her faith? What kind of faith does Jesus call great?
6. Why is this teaching about our complete neediness and dependence as beggars who depend upon God's mercy and goodness essential to understanding the gospel?

LIVING IT OUT

7. Does it seem offensive to say that we are beggars, who, regardless of how good our lives seem, are unworthy of God's help? Why or why not?
8. What are some ways that we might be tempted to "approach" God on our own merits or goodness or strength, thinking he owes us or has to help us? How might this lead us to be too prideful and too demanding towards God?
9. What are some ways that we might be too afraid to "approach" God because of our failures or sinfulness or weakness, thinking he would never accept us? How might this lead us to be too dependant to accept God's offer to come to him with our requests.
10. How does the gospel lead us to be both *humble* AND *bold* at the same time in our approach to God? Why is this such a life-changing idea?
11. What keeps you from being bold and assertive in the way you approach God in prayer? This week, how should you practice the kind of humility, boldness, and persistence we see in this woman?
12. If God's grace comes to us as freely as this, how freely should we be inviting others to come to the table and experience the goodness of our God? Does this stir your heart for people who need Jesus?

TIME OF PRAYER

Would you spend some time praying for our church in light of all we've talked about? Here is a list of suggested items for your time in prayer. Save this list to pray through as a group, as a family, as friends, or individually. Thanks so much for partnering with us in praying for our church and our mission.

- Pray that we would worship Jesus, our Servant-King, in increasing measure all our lives.
- Pray that we would trust Jesus to provide for all our needs in every circumstance.
- Pray that we would serve and give so that others may live.
- Pray that we would be servant-hearted people.
- Pray that all of our ministry serve teams opportunities would be filled.
- Pray that would we see an inflow of new people to serve and new servant-leaders to direct ministries.
- Pray that we would be generous-hearted people.
- Pray that God would provide for all our needs and further his mission through our generosity.
- Pray for those who need jobs and those who face debts or financial hardships.
- Pray for an inflow of new attenders to become giving partners who support our ministry.
- Pray for our church to have a heart for our community and a passion to reach the lost.
- Pray for our city and all those that need to be reached with the gospel to come to faith in Jesus.
- Pray that we would love our neighbors, befriend them, seek their good, share Jesus with them, and invite them to be a part of our church family.
- Pray "by name" for those that you personally feel called to reach. Pray specifically for the people whose names you wrote on the "So That Others May Live" wall at our church gathering.
- Pray for the things that God brings to your heart and mind related to Christ's mission through Redemption Church and/or in our city.
- Pray for the nations, for people who have no one to tell them about Jesus, for those who have no Bible and no pastor and no gospel witness. Ask God to send people to unreached peoples.
- Pray for our church plants:
 - Claude Atcho, Redeemer Church, Boston
 - Justin Burkholder, Iglesia Reforma, Guatemala City
 - Watson Jones, Restoration Church, Philadelphia
 - Steven Lee, Redeemer City Church, Washington DC
 - Bryan Padgett, Redeemer Church, Stillwater, OK
- Pray for our pastors and ministry leaders and they serve our family and equip us for ministry.
- Ask God for help in any area where you feel weak, confused, tired, or bored and need to be renewed by God so that you can be used in his mission.