

Mercy For Gentiles

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[0 : 00] Mark chapter 7, I'll begin reading at verse 24. Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.

He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, yet he could not keep his presence secret. In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet.

The woman was a Greek born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

First, let the children eat all they want, he told her, for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs.

Yes, Lord, she replied, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs. Then he told her, for such a reply, you may go.

[1 : 13] The demon has left your daughter. She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

We enjoy all four seasons here in northern Indiana, but I think for many, summer is the favorite, and for one reason, that it's a time when families are often free to get together and go on vacations.

And we prepare for it, we look forward to it, and then it's such a good time to be away, away from all the work and cares of home and just enjoying each other in a different place.

Well, for the past week or so in the life of our Lord, he's been trying to find a place of rest for him and his disciples to have a vacation, to get away from the work.

Remember, his disciples have just returned from their first ministry tour where they went out two by two without their Lord, and they've come back. But wherever he's gone with the twelve, the crowds have thronged him, and he has been willing to sacrifice his rest in order to minister to them.

[2 : 29] Well, in our text this morning, our Lord finally takes the twelve some 20-plus miles north into the very northern boundary of Galilee and actually into hostile pagan Gentile territory to escape the crowds.

Verse 24 of Mark 7 says, Jesus left that place there in Galilee proper, and he went to the vicinity of Tyre. It's right up on the Mediterranean Sea, way north.

He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, yet he could not keep his presence secret. Even in these distant parts, he could not remain hidden.

Matthew Henry says you can hide a candle under a bushel, but you can't hide the sun. And that's who was here, the Son of God, and he could not be hidden.

Back in chapter 3 and verse 8, Mark told us that some had come down from Tyre and Sidon all the way to the Sea of Galilee to hear Jesus. And no doubt, they went back with the good news about this Jesus of Nazareth who can preach and can heal and cast out demons.

[3 : 51] And now Mark, saying Jesus could not keep his presence secret, goes on to say in verses 25 and 26, in fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet.

The woman was a Greek, a Gentile. Born in Syrian Phoenicia, she begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. Now the issue before us this morning is this.

This woman has a great need. Her daughter is grievously vexed by a demon that possesses her. In the Gospels, we find a man complaining about his son who was demon-possessed, and the demon caused him to fall into the fire and all kinds of things.

And this woman is so burdened with this great need. But the problem is, is that she's a Gentile. And Jesus is the Jewish Messiah of the Jews.

Now in the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, God chose one nation out of all the nations of the world to enter into a covenant relationship with him.

[5 : 10] It was the nation of Israel. And he promised that one nation, they will be my people, and I will be their God.

All the rest of the nations, God left to go their own way into sin and the worshiping of other gods. But to Israel alone was given the adoption as sons to belong to the family.

The covenant family of God. To them was given the divine glory. Remember, in a cloud by day, a fire by night, and then the fire, the glory, in the temple, in the tabernacle.

To them was given the covenants, these arrangements that God made with them, and the promises of that covenant, the scriptures, the very words of God.

He gave it to this one nation. He gave them the gospel that was pictured in the temple worship and its sacrifices about a lamb taking away sin.

[6 : 16] He gave them the promise of a coming Messiah who would come as to his flesh from that nation and about the great blessings that were to be had in him, the Messiah.

What a privileged people to be in covenant relationship with God Almighty. But this woman is a Gentile.

She is not belonging to the covenant people of God. Much later in Ephesians 2, Paul will write to Gentile Christians and remind them, remember that formerly, you who are Gentiles by birth and called uncircumcised by those who are circumcised in the flesh, you were separate from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship in Israel. You were foreigners to the covenants of the promise. You were without hope and without God in the world.

Now that was the state of this woman. All that could be said of her. She's an excluded outsider with no claim upon a Jewish Messiah and the blessings that he has brought to his people.

[7 : 38] And yet here she is, begging for mercy. Now that's the important background of our text and we'll feel that tension as we work our way through.

Mark gives us a very abbreviated account of this meeting of Jesus and this woman. And I'm going to do what I don't like to do, but I'm going to ask you to turn to Matthew 15.

And we're just going to punt and move out of Mark and go to Matthew who gives a much fuller account of this very event and sheds some important light, further light than what Mark gives us. Now I know the Holy Spirit inspired Mark and he had a purpose for what he wrote, but I think it's good for us to see the fuller account in Matthew 15. Matthew 15, verse 21, we pick up the account from Matthew.

And remember, Matthew was there. He's an eyewitness of this event. He's one of the 12. And leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

[8 : 42] A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him crying out, Lord, son of David, have mercy on me. My daughter is suffering terribly from demon possession.

So this Gentile woman has heard of Jesus, no doubt heard that he has power to cast out demons and has done so. But more so, she knows that he's Lord, she calls him.

Maybe that's just a title of respect. Perhaps it's something more. But one thing that she knows for sure is that he's the son of David. You see that? She calls him the son of David.

Now that's a messianic title for the Messiah, the promised Messiah king of Israel. And so this Gentile woman has faith, faith in Jesus that brings her to him with her great need.

At the very least, she believes she has faith that he's the promised Messiah and he can deliver her demon possessed daughter. Now we'll see in verse 28, Jesus will call it great faith.

[9 : 47] And from this account, we'll see why that is. So Jesus is here testing her faith. That's what we're going to witness. Him testing her faith. Not once, not twice, but three times.

With three apparent denials. And though she's rebuffed by these denials, she refuses to quit asking and to go home to her demon possessed daughter.

Dr. Joel Beeky has a wonderful sermon on this text. I'm greatly indebted to him and much that you're hearing this morning is from that message. But the point that he keeps making throughout is that the sure mark of saving faith or true faith is that it will not let Jesus go.

Real faith holds on to Jesus with a grip that will not let him go. I wonder if that's a mark that's true of you.

That you must have Jesus. Whatever else is happening to your life, whatever else is taken away from you, whatever else you have, you cannot imagine life without Jesus.

[11:02] That's Our Lady here. This woman here this morning. In this she's like Jacob. You remember Jacob who wrestled all night with the Lord?

It was a man. He came in the form of a man back in Genesis 32. And he sent his wives and children and all of his herds and flocks ahead of him across the river.

And he's all by himself this night. And suddenly out of the darkness, a man grabs him. And he's immediately thrown into a wrestling match with this man who is himself the Lord.

And they're wrestling. And as they're wrestling, they wrestle all night long. And the Lord touches Jacob's hip and throws it out of its socket.

Now, to have your hip wrenched out of the socket is match over. Because it renders your whole leg useless.

[11:59] You can't push with it. You can't run with it. You can't do anything with that leg but hurt. And so, that's all he could do.

What he did, though, he didn't quit. Though it was match over, Jacob doesn't quit. He goes from wrestling to clinging. Just holding on to him.

Now, today, they would give stalling points against him because he wasn't trying to do anything. He's just holding on. But that's all he could do. He will not let Jesus go.

And he finally realizes, the man says, let me go. Because it's morning. By then, he realizes, it's not an ordinary man. This is God in the flesh.

And he says, I will not let you go until you bless me. He was seeking blessing from the Lord. And that's like our lady this morning, this woman, as she comes to Jesus.

[13:04] I will not let you go until you bless me with mercy. So, let's notice true faith being tested in the face of three apparent denials. The first denial is an apparent ignoring.

She comes greatly distressed, begging for mercy because of her daughter. And verse 23 says, Jesus did not answer a word. Now, this is a hard test for faith. She comes hurting and pleading for mercy.

And he doesn't have as much as one word. Kids, have you ever talked to someone who just ignores you? They don't give, they don't even recognize your presence.

They don't say one word to you. They act as if you weren't even there. It sure looked like Jesus' silence was saying to her, I'm not dealing with you, woman.

This can be a real trial of faith for the believer's unanswered prayers, can't it? We pray, we plead, we pray, we beg, and the heavens are silent. And we may be tempted to quit praying, thinking, well, it must just not be His will.

[14:16] And of course, there are those things. And so, we often pack up early and go home empty, but not this woman.

Not her faith. Her request is rebuffed with silence from our Lord, but her faith would not let her keep silent. She just keeps crying out after Him.

Now, she did so much so that it becomes a test not only of her faith, but a test of the patience of the disciples.

Verse 23, Jesus did not answer a word, so, because of that, His disciples came to Him and urged Him, send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.

This isn't the first time we've seen the disciples sending people away. I mean, they'd come here to escape the crowds, to escape ministry, and to rest.

[15:14] And now, here's this woman. She's making a scene. Perhaps she'll attract others. Her faith will not let go of Jesus. She says, Lord, Son of David, I need mercy, and You have it to give.

Son of David, have mercy on me. You know, that's a cry that the Lord cannot overlook. We're going to see it later on in Mark's Gospel, chapter 10, when Jesus is passing through Jericho.

There's a blind beggar lying along the side of the road, and he hears this noise, and he says, what's going on? And when he learns that it's Jesus of Nazareth, he immediately begins crying out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.

And the people tell him to shut up and be quiet, but he cries out all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. You know, that's a cry that Jesus never passes by.

It stops him in his tracks, and he says, call him. And they come to him, and they said, the master's calling you, and he gets up, and he runs to Jesus, and Jesus says, what do you want me to do for you?

[16:27] And he says, that I might see, Lord. Go, your faith has healed you. And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

Well, that was immediate. It doesn't always happen that way, does it? Brothers and sisters with unanswered prayers, it only appeared that Jesus was ignoring her.

It only appeared as if he didn't hear her. But in fact, her cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Her cry is that which stopped him in his tracks, the humble cry of faith, crying for mercy. His ear is attentive to your every cry, child of God. He hears your sighs. He knows what that means. He hears your groans.

And even your unspoken desires have a voice that Jesus hears and understands. Such is his heart that beats in sympathy with his people. Take heart and keep on crying after him.

[17:36] Well, as if that wasn't test enough, the apparent ignoring is followed by, secondly, an apparent rejection. Because as she keeps crying out, Jesus now finally speaks in answer to her cries.

Verse 24, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Now this was no more encouraging to her faith than a silence. In fact, it was probably more of a test of faith than silence.

It was a second powerful blow to her faith. You're a Gentile and I was only, only sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

The people God had entered into covenant with to be their God and to have them as his people. So, what we find throughout the old covenant, the old testament, the true faith with very few exceptions was shut up within the covenant nation of Israel.

Israel, this was still the case right now as Jesus is talking to this woman. Remember, Jesus had sent out his disciples two by two.

[18:49] Matthew tells us in Matthew 10, 5 and 6 that when he sent them out to preach, he said, do not go among the Gentiles or among any town of the Samaritans, those half-breed Gentiles, but rather go to the lost sheep of Israel, the people that God was in covenant with.

Now, the new covenant was going to change all of that in a glorious way. It was going, we were going to see the inclusion of the Gentiles into the newly constituted Israel of God in the New Testament.

With unbelieving Jews pruned out and believing Gentiles pruned in, grafted in, but this would have to wait as it would only be through the blood of Jesus, the blood of the new covenant that would secure and establish that inclusion of the Gentiles.

That they who had been formerly excluded and far off foreigners might be brought near through the blood of Christ who made the two, Jew and Gentile, into one and destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of separation and hostility, Ephesians 2.14.

It would be through the gospel that Gentiles would be heirs together with Israel, members together of one body and sharers together in the same promises in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 3 and verse 6.

[20:32] In Christ, there's no Jew or Gentile. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise, whether you're Jew, Gentile, circumcised, uncircumcised, there's just the one covenant people of God.

Now, after his death and resurrection then, King Jesus would send his disciples again to go with the gospel, wouldn't he? And he wouldn't say, don't go into the city of the Gentiles, only go to the lost sheep of Israel.

Rather, what did he say in his great commission before he ascended? He said, go into all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples of every nation, you see.

Beginning with Jerusalem and Judea to the Jew first and also to the Gentile, then on out to Samaria, Judea, the ends of the earth. So, the new covenant will bring this change, but while Jesus is talking to this woman, the dividing wall of separation is still up.

The cross has not torn it down yet. And so he says, I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. It wasn't time yet for Gentiles to share in the blessings of Israel's Messiah.

[21:52] Messiah. And so as a Gentile, she had no claim on the blessings that Israel's Messiah had brought. No claim at all.

Now, weaker faith would have concluded, well, I guess there's nothing here for me then. And turned and gone home disappointed. I mean, he's not for us Gentiles.

He just said it. What more do I need? But again, her faith in Jesus sees something in him that she must have and she refuses to let him go.

Verse 25 says, the woman came and knelt before him. Lord, help me. Help me. She's not going back to her demon-possessed daughter. She takes her place low before him. That's where she belongs and that's where she goes. Low before him. And once more, humbly cries for mercy.

[22 : 55] Lord, help me. You know, there's often more prayer in our short prayers than there is in our long prayers. And the beauty is that Jesus knows exactly what you mean when you just say, Lord, help me.

I don't even know what to say, what to ask, but help me. Help me. Well, now she receives the toughest test of her faith yet. It's an apparent insult, thirdly, because Jesus replies to her as she cries for help in this way.

Verse 26, it's not right. It's wrong. To take the children's bread and to toss it to their dogs. kids, if somebody wanted to offend you by calling you an animal, what kind of animal would they call you? You pig? That's not a flattering term, is it? You snake? You fox? Well, the offensive word in Jesus' day was you dog.

And these dogs weren't little pets like you might have at home. These were scavengers that roamed the city in packs and ate whatever they could find, even feeding on dead bodies.

[24 : 18] They were dirty, they were defiled, they were unfit. And the Jews derided the Gentiles by referring to them as Gentile dogs.

So, what's the comparison? Well, they're defiled. They don't keep the cleanliness laws, the ceremonial laws, and so they're defiled, they're unclean, they're unfit for God like a filthy dog.

And so Jesus, again, is testing her faith to see if she would realize her unworthy position in being outside the covenant promises of Israel with no claim at all to his blessings.

Oh, but this was cutting close to home. I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. You're a Gentile wanting the blessings belonging to the children of Israel from their Messiah.

And it's not right to take the children's bread, the Israelites' bread, and to throw it to the dogs, to the Gentiles. Ouch!

[25 : 26] Weaker faith would have turned on their heels and gone home, but true faith will not let Jesus go, and so she turns Jesus' own words into yet another plea, and she says, yes, Lord, I agree with you, Lord.

You're right, Lord, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. You're right, it wouldn't be right for me to give me the children's food.

I'm not asking for a place at the table. just treat me as the dog that I am and let a crumb fall from the table to me. Seems even here to be a confession of her uncleanness, her unworthiness.

She knows that she's unfit for Messiah's table. She knows that she has no claim on him, that she's a sinner outside of the covenant promises of God to Israel, but she's desperate.

And she knows that he is full of mercy. Just one crumb, Lord, for unworthy me. Verse 28 says, then, then, after the threefold testing of her faith, then Jesus answered, woman, you have great faith.

[26 : 41] This was a faith that outstripped the children of Israel. while Israel's leaders are trying to kill him and most of the nation still do not believe in him, do not understand why he's here.

Here's this outsider, this Gentile woman, honoring his power and his abundant mercy with great faith. Woman, you have great faith.

Your request is granted. And her daughter was healed from that very hour. Oh, it delighted Jesus to see this Gentile clinging to him with faith that would not let him go.

You see, our Lord's ignoring and rejection and insults were only apparent. As Beeky says, quoting one of the Puritans, Jesus was pushing her away with one hand while secretly drawing her faith toward him with the other.

these apparent denials, you see, were just testing that faith and inwardly grace is being given and pulling her to not let him go.

[27 : 57] Behind a frowning providence, he hides a smiling face. Yes, all these apparent denials, it was a frown from the Savior, wasn't it? And yet behind it was a smiling face to see her pressing in.

I must have you, Lord. I want to apply this in two ways. First to the lost, then to the saved. First, the truth to the lost among us. The truth of the matter is that we all by nature are unclean, defiled, unfit for the Holy One, excluded by our sins, separate from Christ, without hope and without God in the world.

We've all by our sinful rebellion forfeited any claim on God's blessings. sins. The only thing he owes us is hell forever. You see, it's no small thing to sin against the God who every day feeds you and cares for you and showers you, yes, with rain and food and blessings, life, breath, and everything else and to thank him by rebelling against him.

Oh, that's a great sin. It's a God-sized problem, you see, to offend the Holy One of Israel. And every hour that you stubbornly refuse to repent and seek mercy with the Lord, you're only treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

That day is coming just as sure as this day has come. So your need is great, just like this woman.

[29 : 34] You can't undo your sin. You can't hide them. You can't cancel them. You can't pay them off. You can't make yourself acceptable to this God. But here's the thing. Why try?

You don't need to try because Jesus Christ was sent to save sinners and he's done everything for those who could do nothing for themselves to save themselves.

He's done it all. You need forgiveness from sin. And he promises forgiveness for all who repent and come to him in faith. You need a sacrifice great enough to cover that guilt of yours.

And Jesus makes that sacrifice laying down his own life on Calvary's cross. You need a mediator between you and God to mediate a peace and to reconcile you to God.

And he is that mediator, the only mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. You need a righteousness to get into heaven. And he has a perfect righteousness being tempted in every way like we are yet without sin.

[30 : 37] A perfect record of righteousness to give to us who have none whose best deeds, whose best righteousness is filthy rags in his sight. You need a new heart that wants to turn from sin in your way and wants to go God's way.

Jesus can give the spirit, the spirit to regenerate and bring a new birth in you to change your heart. You see, every need you have as a sinner is to be found in Jesus Christ.

It's a perfect match. The sinner's need and the Savior's provision. He's done all that needs to be done. There's nothing for you to do but to receive him.

And in receiving him, you get all the blessings of salvation. And so, call on him. Go on calling on him.

Just like this Gentile woman. Don't quit. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Keep asking until he gives you himself and assures you that you are his and he is yours forever and forever.

[31 : 48] Ask. Seek him. He's promised that those who seek him will find him if they seek him with all their heart. If you're sincere. Knock.

Keep knocking until he opens the door and brings you into his kingdom. How desperate are you to be saved from the coming wrath? How desperate are you to have Jesus wash your sins away?

All of them. To know him personally as your Lord and Savior. To be joined to him forever. Never to be separated. How desperate.

Learn from this woman to never, never, never stop begging for mercy. Lord, have mercy on me, the sinner. And save me for Jesus Christ's sake.

There's a beautiful scene in Pilgrim's Progress, the second part. Many people only read the first part. In many ways, there's wonderful things found in the second part when Christian's wife, Christiana, and her four children head out for the celestial city.

[32 : 54] And a neighbor, Miss Mercy, comes along too and they come to the wicket gate and Christiana knocks and knocks and knocks again. And at last, the keeper of the gate opened and let Christiana and her children inside and then shut the gate.

Leaving Mercy outside, alone, trembling and crying for fear that she was rejected. So Mercy waited a bit for Christiana to plead with the keeper on her behalf.

But then she could wait no longer. And so she knocked at the gate herself. And then she knocked so loud that it startled Christiana on the inside.

And so the keeper of the gate opened the door but Mercy had fallen and fainted, fearing that she would not be allowed in. He revived her.

He pleaded. She pleaded for grace and forgiveness of her sin. He took her by the hand and led her gently inside. Yes, the Lord of the way received them graciously and spoke many cheering words to them.

[33 : 57] And then he left the two ladies alone for a while in the parlor and they began to speak with each other. And Christiana said to Mercy, you know, I was afraid because though I had knocked, no one answered.

And I feared that we were not going to be let in. Mercy says, but my worst fear was after you were allowed in, I was left behind. And I was afraid to knock anymore till I saw what was written above the gate.

Knock and the door will be opened to you. I thought I must either knock again or die. So I knocked though I'm not sure how because I was so weak.

Christiana says, your knocking was so loud that it made me jump. I never heard such knocking in all my life. I thought you would take the kingdom by force.

And Mercy said, well, who in my situation wouldn't have knocked with all their might? Tell me, what did the Lord say about my rudeness in knocking? Was he not angry with me?

[35 : 02] Christiana says, when he heard your noisy pounding, his eyes brightened and he smiled ever so pleasantly. I really believe that what you did pleased him.

That's our Savior. That's the sinner's friend. He does not stay angry forever, but delights to show mercy. Not, okay, I guess so.

Gentile, okay, I guess so. He delights to show mercy. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they turn and live and the repentance of one sinner causes heaven to rejoice and none rejoices more than the friend of sinners himself, Jesus.

He loves to have unworthy sinners knocking earnestly for him to save them. No one who was begging for mercy was ever turned away. So keep knocking until the door is open and you are his and he is yours.

He says, come to me. All you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Well, that's the application for the lost among us. But then surely we can be encouraged who are believers from this woman to pray for others.

[36 : 21] She was burdened for her daughter and she brought the matter to the Lord Jesus. Any of you burdened for sons and daughters? Granddaughters, grandsons, family members, loved ones?

You, you are one of God's children through faith in Christ. You have a seat at the table of grace.

You are one of his own adopted children now in the new covenant.

And therefore, the meal, the food is for you. So come and ask. Come and seek him. His blood has opened this new and living way to draw near to him.

So come and plead mercy for your loved ones. And don't stop praying. There's encouragement here to pray and not give up. You know, it's easy to quit praying. You pray and pray and pray and there's no change.

No change in the situation in their lives. And you're tempted to think, well, what's the use of praying? You know, that's exactly what the devil wants you to be thinking because he knows that you're just that far from stopping praying when you say that.

[37 : 30] What's the use in praying? Well, it won't be long before you quit. But see in this woman the worth of persevering prayer. When you, brothers and sisters, are growing weary of praying for another, remember this woman.

Yes, remember her continuing to throw herself and not let Jesus go. Throw herself at his feet. But remember her going home and finding her daughter.

Wow. with the demon gone. Remember that. Call it to mind and be encouraged to pray on. Jesus may be testing your faith.

Is he not able? Is he not full of mercy? How badly do we want his promised blessing? Well, take heart from the delight of Jesus to answer the cry of the persevering, desperate cry for mercy.

We may be met with apparent ignoring from heaven, with apparent rejection and apparent insult.

But as the Lord stood in for us at Calvary, yes, us Gentile dogs, unworthy, unfit that we were, when he stood in for us at Calvary, he took real ignoring, didn't he?

[38 : 44] Remember Psalm 22? Why are you so far from the words of my groaning? He cries. Oh my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer by night and am not silent.

We see him in Gethsemane. He's overwhelmed with sorrow to the place of death and he falls to the ground. He's on his face before his Father in heaven.

My Father, if it's possible, let this cup be taken from him. What was in that cup? It was the concentrated wrath of God for all of his people of all time.

It was boiled down into that cup. What a cup of wrath that was. And Jesus says, Father, if there's any other way to save our people, take this cup away from me.

Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done. And he prays again. But the heavens were silent. There was no answer. Not a word. He prays a second time.

[39 : 42] My Father, if it is not possible that's what he's now thinking. Well, he didn't answer. If it's not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.

And again, there's no word. I cry, but you do not answer. And now he's sweating great drops of blood and he's so weak that an angel is sent to strengthen him.

And you know what he does with that strength? He falls down and prays once more. My Father, if it's not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.

There was silence because there was no other way for you and me to be saved and be made fit for heaven than the merits of Jesus' blood and righteousness.

righteousness. That was the way that he would save sinners, those who trusted in what he has done for unworthy sinners.

[40 : 45] And that rejection that he suffered was not apparent but real, not only despised and rejected by men, but by his heavenly Father that caused him to cry, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I understand my disciples. I understand the Jewish leaders. But why you? It was real forsakenness. It was the forsakenness we would have known in hell forever had he not been forsaken for us.

And because he was forsaken, there's no separation for us who are in Christ Jesus ever from God's love in Christ Jesus. And then the insults that he bore were not apparent.

They were real too. The two thieves, the soldiers, the religious leaders, the people watching as he hung naked, exposed to their scorn. He says, I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people.

All who see me mock me. They hurl their insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him. Psalm 22, 6-8.

[41 : 56] If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross and we'll believe you. He saved others. Well, he can't even save himself.

Do you see the insult? It was real. And they stung his holy heart as did the rejection and the silent treatment from heavens.

But here's the thing. None of it turned him away, did it? We see the persistence of this woman with the demon-possessed daughter. We see it in her Savior, Jesus, on Calvary's cross.

None of this, real ignoring, real rejection, real insult, made him quit and come down from the cross to save himself. He suffered on and on and on until he could finally say, it is finished.

He got to the bottom of that cup of wrath. For all of his people. And it was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross and scorned its shame and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven.

[43 : 03] He did it for love. That's how we even know what love is. Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. He did it for the joy of bringing many sons, many sinners, home to glory.

Here am I, Father, and the children you have given me. Not one of them is missing. What joy he looked forward to in being able to present us spotless in his presence.

He did it to glorify his Father and to hear from him, well done, good and faithful servant, my son. You've done all things well.

He did it that right now you and I who are in Christ might have a great high priest on the throne of God who's able to sympathize with us in our sufferings and in our weakness and has turned a throne of judgment for us into a throne of grace upon which sits he, our king of grace.

and he has mercy and grace to give us in our time of need. So we should come with confidence, you see. Confidence. Just keep coming. Keep coming.

[44 : 14] The door's wide open. His blood has earned this for all of his children. What a privilege to be in the covenant with Christ, in the new covenant, to belong to him as one of his people, to be those of whom God says, they will be my people and I will be their God.

Has he said that of you? You are one of my people. I am your God personally. You. Are you in that covenant of grace? Come and trust in the Savior. Knock and the door will be opened and he will make you one of his own children.

And as we leave that throne of grace, he either gives us what we ask for or he gives us what's better, what we should have asked for. What a Savior.

Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, power and authority before all times, now and forevermore.

Amen.