

Gospel lesson

We continue in the Gospel of Mark from where we left off last week, after Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for complaining about His disciples.



picture from <https://www.pexels.com/photo/puppy-smelling-food-25905568/>;
credit: Михаил Крамор

Mark 7:24-37

(NRSV)

²⁴ From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice,

²⁵ but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet.

²⁶ Now the woman was a gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

²⁷ He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

²⁸ But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

²⁹ Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter."

³⁰ And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

³² They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

³³ He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue.

³⁴ Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

³⁶ Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

³⁷ They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

The word of God for the people of God

<Children's time>

<Hymn "Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands">

UMH #273>

<Interactive Time>



picture from personal creation

What is FOMO (F-O-M-O)? <Let them respond>

What do people tend to do if they think they are missing out on something? <Let them respond>

What about if you think someone else is going to get what is rightfully yours already? <Let them respond>

What if you have more than enough and the person has an obvious need? <Let them respond>

The non-Jewish woman came to Jesus asking for His help, which the Jewish people felt was theirs. How do you think they would have reacted if Jesus had simply helped the woman without question? <Let them respond>

What did the woman's answer do? <Let them respond>

In talking about scraps under the table, the woman made it clear that she would be receiving excess that the Israelites did not need. In talking about dogs, she pandered to the ego of the Chosen people, enabling them to continue to feel superior to her before God's agent in their midst.

What types of sin did Jesus have to deal with before helping the girl? <Let them respond>

Where have you, having enough for yourself, thought others should have less? <Let them respond>

What can we do in those situations to make sure we are not hurting them with sin? <Let them respond>

God knows what is best for every situation. May the Lord guide all that you do, for everyone's benefit.

Message: Choosing How We Shall Live



picture from

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/uncommon-wisdom/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

God of infinite wisdom and grace, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to hear Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

That we may learn to choose Your better way to live and to share Your love more fully through our choices. Amen.

We continue in the "Uncommon Wisdom" series today, "Choosing How We Shall Live":

"This week, the lectionary text features three different couplets from Proverbs 22, all of which point us toward how to engage wisdom-driven decision-making in our daily lives."¹

Before I had kids, I - like most young adults - was a pretty clueless idiot. I said and did well-meaning things without understanding the harm they could do.

¹ Theme summary taken from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/uncommon-wisdom>.

After having children and struggling through the adjustment of putting someone else's needs ahead of my wants 24x7, I began to realize what a fool I may be in pushing things from my limited perspective onto other people, especially when I do not consider what is different in their situation from mine.

Such wisdom is priceless. It affects so much in your life: your relationships, your satisfaction with the way things are, your priorities in general.



picture from personal creation

We spoke already about FOMO. Do you know what YOLO stands for? You only live once. It is often used as an excuse by youth to do risky things or selfish things while ignoring the impact on others. It may be popular, but it is not the wisdom of the Lord.

In Proverbs, we hear that reputation is more important than wealth, that doing injustice will yield less than being generous, and that we should not take advantage of the poor. James goes on about how, all other things equal, we should not treat the rich and poor differently, but show the love of God to both. All of these point to the importance of relationships over personal gain.

Jesus always tended relationships when He helped

others. Rich or poor, not just healing illnesses or disabilities, Jesus restored their place in society as a human for others to respect and value.

- † Gentile woman in face of Jewish community
- † Deaf man to hear & speak well
- † Nicodemus, lepers, many others

From the time of ancient Israeli proverbs, through Jesus's teaching, the words of the apostles, up to today, the Lord shows us that our relationships with God and other people them matter most.

So if we only live once, what should be our priority? Should we let fear of missing out - on stuff, on the spotlight, or on being in control - drive how we go about things? Do we put our personal comforts ahead of addressing the needs of others?

As a side note, we must ensure we are considering real needs, not what we assume are needs. Jesus spoke about the blindness and deafness of the Pharisees; He combatted this by interacting with the people.

So talk with those you want to help! Learn about them and confirm with them what actually nurtures them to be healthier and more independent. In this way we foster stronger relationships.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you identify opportunities to share Jesus's love. Ask for wisdom to know when and how to help - and what that looks

like, given your capabilities and resources.



picture from

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Strive to bring glory to God in all of your relationships, direct and indirect, through the way you choose to live your life.

After all, we only live once. I hope we all choose to make the best possible impact we can in this world.

Now let us respond with

The World Methodist Social Affirmation UMH #886

We believe in God, creator of the world and all people;
and in Jesus Christ, incarnate among us,
who died and rose again;
and in the Holy Spirit,
present with us to guide, strengthen, and comfort

We believe; God, help our unbelief.

We rejoice in every sign of God's kingdom:
in the upholding of human dignity and community;
in every expression of love, justice, and reconciliation;
in each act of self-giving on behalf of others;
in the abundance of God's gifts
entrusted to us that all may have enough;
in all responsible use of the earth's resources.

Glory be to God on high; and on earth, peace.

We confess our sin, individual and collective,
by silence or action:

through the violation of human dignity
based on race, class, age, sex, nation, or faith;
through the exploitation of people
because of greed and indifference;
through the misuse of power
in personal, communal, national, and international life;
through the search for security
by those military and economic forces
that threaten human existence;
through the abuse of technology
which endangers the earth and all life upon it.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

We commit ourselves individually and as a community
to the way of Christ:

to take up the cross;
to seek abundant life for all humanity;
to struggle for peace with justice and freedom;
to risk ourselves in faith, hope and love,
praying that God's kingdom may come.

Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

<Doxology>

<Offertory / Pastoral Prayer>

Loving Creator, we dedicate these offerings with
hearts guided by your wisdom and grace.
As we gather on this September Sunday, may our gifts
embody the teachings of Proverbs, spreading honor,

kindness, and justice to all.
Use these offerings to uplift those in need,
fostering hope and peace in our community.
May we live out your wisdom in our actions and
generosity.

(above prayer from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org>)

- Lord, please help {these members of the body of Christ whom we lift up} with Your healing touch and comfort:
 - **Wilson & Ed Carson** - (Paul's nephews) housing issues
 - **Family of Anna** - (Carl Johnson's sister) died
 - **Doris Genter** - lung/breathing issues
 - **Dayna MacKenzie** - fibroids during pregnancy
 - **Katie Geiger** - illness
 - **Family of {toddler}** - Sep 4 MVA 2558 Ste Hwy 26
 - -
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- Thanks for
 - -
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- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Family far off
 - Travelers

- Lord, please help all people who struggle, especially those to whom we remain oblivious.
- Send Your Spirit to address world/social problems
 - end bigotry, dismantle racism, reform systems persist
 - bring world peace
- Guide our Leaders – local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray:
<Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Trust and Obey">

UMH #467>

*<Benediction>*²



background picture from
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/uncommon-wisdom/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-graphics>

Beloved siblings in Christ,
 “trust and obey” our Lord, “for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey.”
 May God bless you today and all days
 with wisdom that guides you to notice
 the needs all around you
 and to share in the work of nurturing abundant life
 for all of God’s creation. Amen.

² Benediction adapted from what Dr. Lisa Hancock wrote in June 2024 and posted on
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/uncommon-wisdom/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/sixteenth-sunday-after-pentecost-year-b-liturgical-resources>