

He has done all things well

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost) is Mark 7:24-37. This text has two narratives. The first is about the Syrophenician woman's faith. The second is about Jesus healing a deaf man. Both of these acts took place in a Gentile setting.

In 7:27 Jesus says: "*Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.*" And he said to her, "*Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.*" Jesus' response to this woman is surprising on at least two counts. First, He implies she is a dog, which was a great insult. Second, He suggests that He would serve Jewish people first (the children at the table). (TLSB)

Jesus, however, alludes to a current domestic scene, particularly in a Hellenistic household. The table is set and the family has gathered. It is inappropriate to interrupt the meal and allow the household dogs (not wild or street dogs) to carry off the children's bread.

The woman seizes upon her characterization as a family pet and expresses her willingness to assume even a most modest place within the household. (TLSB) Jesus praises her response of faith and heals her daughter.

Mark 7:32 tells of the second issue Jesus faces when it says: "*And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.*" Because those unable to hear have difficulty learning to speak correctly, it is probable that this man had been handicapped from birth. (TLSB)

Jesus heals the daughter in the first story from a distance. With the deaf man he takes him apart from the crowd so that the man would rivet his whole attention on Jesus. He touches his ears and tongue and spits. The spitting is not explained anywhere.

No matter the situation, Jesus handles it well. In fact he does it perfectly. Jesus also deals with our needs in a manner that is best for us. He may not always take care of our physical needs the way we would like but what he does do is what is best for us in our physical and spiritual life.

Prayer: Lord, you have done everything well. Help us also to see the depths of your mercy and grace, so that we may understand them as gifts meant for all. Amen. (TLSB)