

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

(Mark 7:24-37)

Intro: It happens every once in awhile.

- We read about it.
 - #In the newspapers.
 - #On the internet.
- We hear about it.
 - #On radio.
 - #On television news.

People cross boundaries.

- Sometimes the wrong boundaries.
 - #Accidentally.
 - #Deliberately.
- Boundaries that aren't meant:
 - #To be crossed.
 - #To be crossed by certain people.
 - *South Korean fishermen.
 - +Fishing in North Korean waters.
 - *Three American hikers.
 - +Apparently taking a wrong turn.
 - =While vacationing in Kurdistan.
 - +Ending up across the border in Iran.
 - *Mexicans.
 - +Seeking a better life in the U.S.
 - +Transporting illegal drugs.
 - +Crossing the border into the United States.
 - =Not at the border crossings.

Other people get all bent out of shape when the boundaries get crossed.

- Consequences.
 - #Criminal charges.
 - #Deportation.
 - #Detention.
 - #International incidents.
 - *Tensions.
 - *Conflicts.
 - *Recrimination.
 - *Retaliation.
- Not everyone is happy.
 - #When boundaries get crossed.

I. Jesus Crossed Boundaries.

A. Scribes And Pharisees Wanted To Maintain Boundaries.

1. Last week's Gospel.
 - a. Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23.
 - b. Scribes and Pharisees complained.
 - Jesus' disciples ate with unwashed hands.
2. I told you.
 - a. This was not about public:
 - Health.
 - Safety.
 - b. It was about maintaining boundaries.
 - Insiders.
 - #Outsiders.
 - Who belongs.
 - #Who doesn't belong.
 - By implication.
 - #Jesus.
 - #His disciples.
 - *Didn't belong.
 - *They didn't observe the traditions of the elders.
 - *They were outsiders.

B. Then Jesus Crossed Boundaries.

1. He went to Tyre.
 - a. Tyre.
 - In modern-day Lebanon.
 - In ancient Phoenicia.
 - #This was Gentile territory.
 - b. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there.
 - Why?
 - #So he could have peace and relaxation?
 - #So the Scribes and Pharisees wouldn't get all bent out of shape?
 - *Because Jesus had crossed the boundaries.
 - But he could not escape notice.
 - c. Woman came to him.
 - Greek.
 - #Gentile.
 - Syrophenician.
 - Whose daughter had an unclean spirit.
 - #Demon.

- d. Talk about boundaries!
 - National boundaries.
 - Racial boundaries.
 - Religious boundaries.
 - Gender boundaries.
 - #Men did not ordinarily speak with women in public.
 - *Rabbi wouldn't speak with his own wife in public.
 - #Only women a man might talk with in public:
 - *Prostitutes.
 - #Women of that day were uneducated.
 - *What's there to talk about?
- e. This unnamed woman crossed all of those boundaries.
 - For the sake of her daughter.
 - In the hope that Jesus would:
 - #Cast out the demon.
 - #Heal her.
- f. Jesus tried to protect the boundaries.
 - "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."
 - #Mark 7:27.
 - The children.
 - #Children of Israel.
 - #Jews.
 - Dogs.
 - #Gentiles.
 - #Dogs.
 - *Not cuddly household pets.
 - *They were pests.
 - +Living on the streets.
 - +Scavenging for food.
 - This was an insult.
- g. But the woman was insistent.
 - She took the insult.
 - #Not denying that she was a dog.
 - But begging for crumbs.
 - #"Yes, sir."
 - #"Yes, Lord."
 - *"Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."
 - +Mark 7:28.
 - In last week's Gospel.
 - #Jesus said:
 - *"It's not what goes into a person that makes one:"
 - +Clean.
 - +Unclean.
 - *"It's what comes out." (Mark 7:15).

#What comes out of this woman?

*It's a declaration of:

+Faith.

+Trust.

+Hope.

-Look what happened!

#Demon was cast out.

#Daughter was healed.

#Boundaries were crossed.

2. Then Jesus went to the Decapolis.

a. Decapolis.

-Region of the "ten towns."

-In modern-day Jordan.

-On the east side of the Jordan River.

#This was Gentile territory.

b. Jesus took a most circuitous route.

-He went:

#From Tyre.

#To the Decapolis.

#By way of Sidon.

*Sidon was north of Tyre.

+Along the Mediterranean coast.

-It was like going:

#From Tulsa.

#To Little Rock.

#By way of Kansas City.

-Either:

#Mark didn't know his geography.

#Or he's making the point:

*Jesus was way over the border.

+Off of Jewish turf.

+Operating exclusively in Gentile territory.

c. Man was brought to Jesus.

-Deaf.

-Speech impediment.

d. There are more boundaries.

-Communication boundaries.

-Remember that passage from last week's Gospel?

#"It's not what goes into a person that makes one unclean."

#"It's what comes out."

-What comes out of a person?

#Deaf.

#Speech impediment.

*Mostly gibberish.

- e. Jesus crossed the boundaries.
 - Opening the man's ears.
 - Releasing his tongue.
 - Amazing the crowds.
 - # "He has done all things well."
 - *Echoing the words of the first creation story.
 - + "It's good."
 - + "It's good."
 - + "It's very good."
 - =Genesis 1.
 - # "He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."
 - Boundaries were crossed.

II. Where Are We When It Comes To Boundaries?

- A. Some Boundaries Are Good And Need To Be Respected.
 - 1. Otherwise we run the risk of overstepping our bounds.
 - a. Trespassing.
 - b. Child abuse.
 - c. Sexual harassment.
 - d. Meddling where we ought not to be meddling.
 - 2. Some boundaries are necessary.
- B. Are We Creating Boundaries Where Jesus Has Already Crossed Them?
 - 1. Are we erecting barriers where Jesus is pulling them down?
 - a. Race.
 - b. Nationality.
 - c. Gender.
 - d. Sexual orientation.
 - e. Economic status.
 - f. Disabilities.
 - 2. Are there people whom we see?
 - a. Not as us.
 - b. But as them.
 - "Those people."
 - "You people."
 - "Dogs."
 - 3. Let me tell you a story.
 - a. 1923.
 - b. Southern Poland
 - Predominantly Roman Catholic area.
 - Quaker nurse.
 - #Had been working among the poor.

- c. Nurse died.
 - But there was only one cemetery.
 - #Roman Catholic cemetery.
 - Since she was a Quaker.
 - #She was not allowed to be buried in the cemetery.
 - What to do?
 - #After much ado.
 - *Church officials decided to bury her.
 - +Just outside the cemetery fence.
 - #Night after her funeral.
 - *Peasants.
 - +Among whom this Quaker nurse had been working.
 - +Came to the cemetery.
 - +Moved the fence.
 - *So that the nurse was buried.
 - +Not on the outside.
 - +But on the inside.

C. Isn't That What Jesus Does?

- 1. On the cross.
 - a. He crosses the boundaries.
 - b. He moves the fence.
 - Otherwise where would we be?
 - #We Gentiles.
 - #We foreigners.
 - #We boundary makers.
 - #We barrier erectors.
 - We'd be on the outside looking in.
 - #That's where our sin places us.
 - #That's where we place ourselves.
 - But Jesus:
 - #Crosses the boundaries.
 - #Moves the fence.
- 2. On Easter morning.
 - a. He crosses the boundaries.
 - b. He moves the fence.
 - Not even death can separate us from the love of God.
 - #Which is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Romans 8: 38.
- 3. In our Gospel lesson for today.
 - a. He crosses the boundaries.
 - b. He moves the fence.
 - So that a Greek woman.
 - #Can be fed the crumbs.

- So that her daughter.
#Might be healed.
- So that a deaf and mute man.
#Might hear and speak.
- Jesus.
#Crosses the boundaries.
#Moves the fence.

4. For us.

- a. He crosses the boundaries.
- b. He moves the fence.
 - To cast out our demons.
 - To heal our infirmities.
 - To heal our hearts.
 - To feed us the crumbs.
 - #So that we can confess our faith.
 - *In the one who is Lord of all.
 - #So that we can welcome:
 - *Not just those in fine clothes.
 - *But those in dirty clothes.
 - +James 2:2.
 - #So that we can share our crumbs:
 - *Not just with those who:
 - +Look like us.
 - +Dress like us.
 - +Think like us.
 - +Vote like us.
 - *But with all those who need the gift.
 - +Of our faith in action.

Concl: Jesus:

- Crosses the boundaries.
- Moves the fence.
 - #For once.
 - *For all.
 - #For us.
 - *For all.

