



Cuyahoga  
Valley Church

# SERMON STUDY GUIDE

Week of 3.22.26  
Mark 7:24-37 // Joe Valenti

Please take the opportunity to revisit the CVC Equip  
Portrait of a Healthy LifeGroup on a regular basis

## CONNECT (10 MIN)

- 1 Pastor Joe opened his sermon this week by sharing a story about going on a mission trip. Have you been on a mission trip before? If so, what did you learn in going? If not, would you like to go on a mission trip one day - either in your city, across the country, or around the world?

## EXPLORE (30 MIN)

### Create Context (5 min):

HERE is the Sermon Recap video playlist on Vimeo.

### **Study & Discussion (25 min)**

#### **Read Mark 7:24-37.**

- 1 As we considered our passage together on Sunday, Joe invited us several times to consider some of the ways that we sometimes “categorize” people according to our own expectations, fears, or experiences. He also asked us to consider the ways that this type of “categorization” can keep us from really seeing people who are different from us with the compassion and love of Jesus. He also said that it is Jesus who shows us how to respond to the people who fit into categories we are uncomfortable with.
  - Have you ever felt like someone else has looked at you and put you into a “category” in their mind in a way that separated you from them, and made you feel less than or cast aside? If you’re willing and able, share a bit with your group about what that experience was like.
  - Have you ever, consciously or unconsciously, looked at someone and put them into a “category” in your mind in a way that separated them from you, in order to feel safe or comfortable (Joe made the point in his sermon that most, if not all, people do this at some point)? Why do you think it can be so easy to do this, even subconsciously?
  - Joe spoke to this a bit in his sermon, but in your own words - how do you think that this type of “categorization” limits Christians in our ability to share the gospel with truth and grace, with honesty and with compassion?



- ② In his book “The Weight of Glory,” apologist and author C. S. Lewis wrote, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations - these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously - no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption.”
- In this quote, Lewis invites his readers to really contemplate and take seriously the reality that God has created people to live eternally - and they will do this either with God, or apart from Him. What do you think it looks like to remember this as you interact with the people God has placed around you in your life today - both those who seem a lot like you, and those who seem to you to be very different from you?
  - Belief in God’s sovereignty means that we believe no person who enters our lives, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, or our homes is an accidental encounter. What would it look like for you to grow in treating everyone around you as someone God has divinely ordained that you encounter, someone with whom you have a unique opportunity to share Jesus with?
- ③ Joe said in his sermon on Sunday, “Even Christian people are going to blow it, but Jesus never does. So let’s look to Him and see how He responds to people that might be categorized negatively by others.” Why is this important for all of us to remember, as we seek to love one another (love other Christians) and also love the world by compassionately and boldly sharing the gospel in word and deed with the lost?
- ④ The Syrophoenician woman’s heart responds to Jesus’ parable by saying “I don’t need to be first - I just need you.” In what way does your own heart echo with or wrestle against this level of humility and faith that she demonstrates, and why?
- ⑤ Reread verses 29-30. When Jesus told the woman that the demon had left her daughter, she trusted and had faith in who He was and what He said - and she went home. Just like the Syrophoenician woman, we all have moments in life where Jesus asks us to trust Him even when we don’t yet see what He has done or is doing. What is something you can think of right now, a situation or a struggle or a scenario, that Jesus is asking you to trust Him with, even though you can’t yet see His plans or His purposes in it? What might it look like to trust Him more deeply here today?



## PRAY AND APPLY

- Pray for Hearts to Be Softened and Transformed

Ask God to expose and remove any fear, bias, or division in the hearts of the congregation. Pray that people would begin to see others not through cultural categories, but through the compassion and grace of Jesus.

- Pray for Those Who Feel Like Outsiders

Intercede for those who feel like they don't belong—those carrying shame, confusion, or past wounds. Ask that they would clearly see there are no prerequisites to come to Jesus and that they would be drawn to Him in faith.

- Pray for Unmistakable, Humble Faith

Ask God to form a faith in people that is not demanding or entitled, but humble and confident in His provision. Pray that hearts would say, "I don't need to be first—I just need Jesus."

- Pray for Trust and Obedience to Jesus' Word

Lift up those who are waiting for clarity or proof before they act. Ask that they would trust Jesus at His word, stepping forward in obedience even when they cannot yet see the outcome.

- Pray for Courage to Move Toward Others with the Gospel

Ask God to give the church boldness to move toward people they might naturally avoid. Pray that the congregation would see others as people in need of grace and faithfully share the love and message of Jesus, even when it is uncomfortable or costly.



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# WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week of 3.22.26

Please take a moment to share  
these announcements with your group.

## INVITE

### **Easter Services 2026**

Friday, April 3

Family Tenebrae: 5:30 pm (Lower Level)

Traditional Tenebrae: 7:00pm

Easter Saturday: April 4

3:00pm, 5:00pm

Easter Sunday: April 5

8:00, 9:30, 11:15am

## YOUNG ADULTS

### **CVC Young Adult Volleyball: April 12**

Come join us for an evening of volleyball at the Blossom Fieldhouse in Brecksville, Sunday evening April 12th from 6:30-8:30PM. Free event - bring a friend and come and play!

## SEND

### **Disaster Relief Trip - North Carolina: April 21 - 24**

To find out more about how you can pray, give, or go [CLICK HERE!](#)