Pursue

- Jesus journeys into Gentile lands and is met again by a large and desperate crowd. It is clear the news of Jesus' ministry has reached even the Gentiles. Attempting to rest, Jesus meets a Syrophoenician woman who repeatedly begs for Him to remove an unclean spirit from her daughter. Jesus speaks to her in a parable describing his ministry as intended for the Jewish people first before the Gentiles. For some people, the language Jesus uses in this parable can seem harsh and uncharacteristic of Jesus.
  - As a group, discuss what you think this parable means and why you think Jesus, in keeping with His character, uses this language.

- The Syrophoenician woman is the first person in the book of Mark whom both understands and agrees with Jesus' parable. This is remarkable! A non-Jewish woman with a daughter who has an unclean spirit is the first to understand Jesus' teaching and place herself humbly inside the story, pleading her case to Jesus. Jesus sees her humility and faith and heals her daughter.
  - What can we learn from how the Syrophoenician woman interacts with Jesus? What marks her interactions with Him that we, as fellow followers of Jesus, want to emulate? How does your relationship with Jesus have similar markers and in what ways does it not?
  - What can we learn from Jesus' interaction with the Syrophoenician woman? What does it reveal about His character and how does that encourage and challenge your faith?

- Jesus then goes on to meet a man who is deaf and struggling with a speech impediment. Jesus heals this man in a particular and somewhat peculiar way. Jesus, ministering to the man privately, places His fingers in his ears and touches his tongue, sighs, and says, "Ephphatha," meaning, "Be open," and the man is healed.
  - As a group, discuss why you think Jesus chooses to interact so intimately, physically, and verbally with this man when he has healed others, like the Syrophoenician's daughter, without even seeing her. What does this reveal about the character and nature of God?

- Lastly, Jesus charged the crowds not to share about Him but the more He implores them, the greater their fervor increased. Verse 37 states, "And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear, and the mute speak." Earlier in our study of Mark we stated that Mark is looking to display the fulfillment of the Old Testament in Jesus. That this story of Jesus in Mark is a picture of a kind of new Exodus and new Creation story.
  - Does this remark of the people remind you of any Old Testament text? If so, which ones? How do these help us understand who this Jesus truly is and what he is doing in Mark?

Practice

- **Gratitude Practice -** What the crowds declare in Mark 7:37 is true, Jesus has done all things well. As a group, spend time thinking and sharing the ways in which Jesus has done all things well in your life. Try thinking of things both on a general or grand scale but also things more specific to your story. Consider writing them down as a group. Spend time in prayer thanking God for his faithfulness. Some examples might be:
  - His works of justification, adoption, sanctification
  - Your salvation
  - His work in sanctification - be specific & share stories
    - Healing (Physical/Mental/Emotional/Spiritual)
    - Redeemed relationships
    - Forgiveness
    - Etc.
  - Financial provision
  - And more...

Proclaim

- **Individual Opportunities:** The weather should be nice this week. Encourage group members to get outside in their neighborhoods to build relationships with others!
  - Grab the kiddos and go for a walk praying for the families on your street.
  - As you mow your lawn, pray for your neighbors, and attempt to meet any out in their yards.
  - As you take a lunch break, don't eat in your car or office. Ask someone to join you in the lunch room, outside, etc.
- **Group Opportunities:** As summer approaches, discuss group opportunities like cookouts, game nights, dinners, etc. that you could plan and invite unbelieving or de-churched friends to.