



Gary Inrig – The Miracles (Master of Surprise)

Read the Chapter in Advance of the Weekly Study. Make a Mental Note or Jot Down Something That Stood Out To You – and “Why? (Something strike you - strange – new or different?)”

Week 11 – Read Chapter Eleven – Master of Surprise (Miracles in Gentile Territory)

Read – Mark 7:24-30; 31-37 and Matthew 15:21-28

***NOTE:** Before beginning it is always good to see if there are any immediate prayer needs among the group and be sure to include within opening prayer. Remind all too that ... *“What we say here stays here” so there is freedom in sharing – we are all learning from each other and from the Holy Spirit together – “Iron sharpens Iron” (Proverbs 27:17)*

Opening Prayer: Lord God – thank You for this time together and for Your protection over all those that we love while we are here and sitting at Your knee to learn from You. Help us to quiet our thoughts and hearts – to be still – knowing that You are God! Be with us tonight as we learn from You – seeking Your wisdom and truth - we pray in Jesus name Amen!

Overview: In this chapter - Gary explores how Jesus consistently defied cultural, societal and “religious” expectations throughout His ministry; particularly during His journey into Gentile territory. Gary points out that while Jesus may not have been predictable, He was always consistent and trustworthy. Through His interactions here with a Syrophoenician woman and a deaf-mute man in the Decapolis, Jesus showed that salvation and healing were not just for the Jews but extend to all who exercise faith. We are being taught to see people as God does and to embrace the mission of taking the gospel beyond our comfort zones (geo/political/social class/cultural, etc.) and go - to all nations, just as Jesus had prepared His disciples to do – we are called to do the same.

1. **Jesus rarely conforms to our expectations** - He is dependable but not always predictable.
2. **Faith matters more than ethnicity or religiosity** – Gentiles were commended for their great faith.
3. **Jesus prepares us for ministry by taking us outside our comfort zones** - Training Ground!
4. **The gospel is for all nations** - Salvation came through Israel but is available to all who believe.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

~ Romans 1:16

Read Together: Mark 7:24-30; 31-37 and Matthew 15:21-28



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Share about a time when someone you trusted did something completely unexpected – or out of character. How did you respond, and what did you learn?

2. Jesus led His disciples into Tyre and Sidon—enemy territory for Jews. What "uncomfortable territories" might Jesus be calling you to enter today? (Consider cultural, relational, or spiritual boundaries)?

3. Jesus' initial silence and what some would consider to be a very - harsh response to the desperate mother has been seen as extremely troubling to many. How do you understand Jesus' behavior in this encounter? What was He actually doing??

4. Jesus took the deaf man aside privately to heal him, treating him with respect and dignity rather than making a spectacle out of him. What does this reveal about how Jesus views hurting people? How should this shape the way - we minister to others?"

5. Gary states the following principle: "We can't become the people God calls us to be until we begin to see the world and its people as He does." How does God see people differently than we naturally do? What practical steps can we take to align our vision with His?



Things to Do this Week - Try to Put At Least One into Practice (These are only thought starters) –

1. **Cross a Boundary:** Identify one cultural, social, or relational boundary you've been reluctant to cross. Pray about one specific way you could reach out to someone different from you this week. (*From Family to Foe – and everyone in between*)
2. **Practice Persistent Faith:** Like the Gentile woman, bring a seemingly impossible request to Jesus daily this week. Journal about what you learn about persistence and trust.
3. **See People as Jesus Does:** Choose one person you encounter regularly who is easy to overlook or dismiss. Intentionally engage them with the dignity and compassion Jesus showed.

Closing Prayer: *(this prayer is only a suggestion - please pray on your own as the Holy Spirit leads)*
–Note: *If there are any needs that have arisen during the study tonight – lift these up - especially.*

Thank You Jesus that You are the originator of Pleasant Surprises—that You don't conform to our expectations of You – Help us to trust You even when Your ways confuse us. Give us faith like this woman—persistent, humble, and confident in Your power and goodness. Never doubting – always trusting! Break down any walls we've built up between "us" and "them," and help us see all people as You do ... every soul —precious and in need of Your grace. Lead us outside our comfort zones to bring Your good news with boldness to those who haven't yet heard. We trust that You always do all things - perfectly well. In Jesus' name, we pray- Amen!