Nov 22, 2026 – Questions to Discuss and Consider at Home or in Small Group

“Contending with a Limp” – Mark 7:24-30

1. In Mark 7:25–26, the Syrophoenician woman approaches Jesus with zero cultural, religious, or ethnic credentials. In an achievement-oriented culture, why is it our default instinct to approach God with a curated "spiritual CV" rather than our honest limp?

2. Read Genesis 32:24–31 alongside Mark 7:24–30. Jacob "prevailed" with God not when he was physically strong, but when his hip was dislocated and all he could do was cling to God in tears (Hosea 12:4). How does this Gentile mother embody the true, limping faith of Israel?

3. In what ways do we make transactional deals with God based on our performance (e.g., "I've served faithfully, so God owes me a painless career, well-behaved children, or an easy retirement")? What happens to our hearts when God does not follow our script?

4. Why is despair or self-pity ("I am too sinful and broken for God to ever accept me") actually a form of inverted pride? How does that mindset subtly hold a low view of the sufficiency of Christ's cross?

5. Martin Luther noted that when Jesus tested her with the term "little dogs," she didn't get offended or defend her civil rights; she agreed with the verdict ("Yes, Lord") and immediately leveraged His generosity ("yet even the dogs eat the crumbs"). What does it look like in practical prayer to stop arguing our worthiness and start arguing Christ’s boundless mercy?

6. How does Jesus being cast outside the city as an unclean outcast (Hebrews 13:12–13), surrounded by "dogs" (Psalm 22:16), and crying out in cosmic abandonment without a crumb of divine comfort (Mark 15:34) permanently guarantee your seat at the Father's table?

7. In orthodox Islamic theology and secular stoicism, the response to hardship is stoic surrender with no wrestling. Why does the Christian Gospel uniquely invite us into bold, weeping, clinging contestation with God as beloved adopted sons and daughters?

8. If Christ has permanently washed your robes and welcomed you to His banquet, who are the cultural, social, or moral "outsiders" in your workplace, neighborhood, or family that you are now empowered to welcome with unmerited hospitality?

Answers to the Sermon Outline

I. Christ invites the **nakedly desperate** to **contend** with God at His table which is overflowing with grace sufficient for our needs.

II. Our fleshly heart and the world demand that we contend for our rightful place at the table according to our **status**, our self-proclaimed worth, and our **spiritual pedigree**.

III. Christ had to contend with the dogs who encompassed Him and accused Him of falsehood, taking the place of an **outcast**, as one not fit for the table, suffered at the cross without even a **crumb** of divine comfort, so that He could secure our permanent seat at the table of God, having our robes washed in His righteousness.

IV. Anchored in such costly grace, we are now free to **contend** with Christ without fear, bringing our deepest uncleanness boldly to His feet to find sufficient grace, and extend His welcome to the **marginalized**