Readers 1=Mark; 2=Proverbs; 3=Psalm; 4=James; narrator
Readers stand behind/around table. The table is empty.

Instructions: To indicate acceptance of invitation, open hands in a receiving gesture.

Part 1

Reader 1
(Mark 7:24-27) From there [Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Reader 2
"Please cast the demon out of my daughter."

Reader 3
"Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Reader 4
(James 2:1-4) My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

Reader 2
"Please cast the demon out of my daughter."

Reader 3
"Sit at my feet."

Reader 1
"Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Reader 4
(James 2.5) Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that He has promised to those who love Him?

Reader 1
"Stand there."
Reader 4
(James 2.6) But you have dishonored the poor. You have dishonored the least among you.

Reader 1
"Sit here."

Reader 4
(James 2.14-17) What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Reader 1
"Sit here." Sit as we sit.

Reader 3
"Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Silence. Readers turn their backs. *Need to figure out how much silence—2 minutes?*

Part 2

Reader 1
"Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

Narrator
The woman was a Gentile, her home in the economically affluent region of Tyre and Sidon. A woman of means, why should she ask, and take, when she already has so much?

Reader 2
(Proverbs 22:1) A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.

Reader 1
(Mark 7.28) But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Narrator
She, a woman, counters, argues with him, a man. She will not accept exclusion, not even from Jesus.

Reader 3
(Psalm 125:1) Those who trust in the Eternal are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

Reader 1
"Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Narrator
She accepts his judgment. She is a dog. And out of *this* poverty she demands crumbs. Crumbs of inclusion.

Reader 2
(Proverbs 22:2) The rich and the poor have this in common: the Eternal is the maker of them all.

Reader 4
(James 2.8) You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Reader 1
"Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Reader 2
(Mark 7.29) Then [Jesus] said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter."

Narrator
Her self-judgment, her poverty, is her access to healing, liberation, salvation. Her self-*justice* recognizes and acknowledges her sin, recognizes and acknowledges that *she* is a child of God, created in the image of God.

Reader 4
(James 2.12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the Torah of Freedom.

Reader 1
"Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Reader 2
(Mark 7.30) So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Reader 3
"Even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Reader 4
Give us crumbs from under the children's table.

One reader gets tablecloth, another 2 bowls/baskets of crumbs.

Narrator
God of endless grace and abundance
Give us crumbs from under the children's table

Readers distribute crumbs.
Silence.

Part 3

Reader 1
(Mark 7.31-32) Then [Jesus] returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged [Jesus] to lay his hand on him.

Reader 2
Please lay your hand on him.

Reader 3
(Psalm 125.4) Do good, O Eternal, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts.

Reader 4
(James 2.8) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Narrator
The man is excluded from community because he cannot hear or speak. His community wants him to include him and takes action.

Reader 2
Please lay your hand on him. Open his ears. Release his tongue.

Reader 4
(James 2.17) So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Reader 2
Please lay your hand on him. Open his ears. Release his tongue.

Reader 1
(Mark 7.33-34) [Jesus] took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Be opened."

Narrator
Like the Syrophoenician woman, this man is a pagan, an outsider. Unclean. Excluded. The least among us. Jesus heals this outsider. Those on the inside, already clean, celebrate with him. Jesus includes the excluded, welcoming them into full participation. Those who are bound, he unbinds. Those already experiencing freedom, share his joy as they witness God's grace and abundance at work. Their own freedom, their own healing and salvation grows deeper, stronger.

Reader 3
(Psalm 125.1) Those who trust in the Eternal are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. Those who trust in the Eternal are like Mount Zion, healed, liberated, saved.

Reader 2
Please lay your hand on him. Open his ears. Release his tongue.

Reader 1
Lay your hands on us, we beg you. Open our ears. Release our tongues.

Reader 3
Open our ears. Release our tongues. Touch us. Cleanse us.

One reader gets the bouquet of greens.

Narrator
God of endless grace and abundance
Touch us and make us new

Readers hold/touch offered hands.
Silence.

Part 4

Reader 1
"Be opened."

Reader 4
(James 2.12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the Law of Freedom.

Reader 1

(Mark 7.35) And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

Reader 3
And immediately our ears were opened! Our tongues were released!

Reader 2
(Proverbs 2.9) Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor.

Reader 1
(Mark 7.36-37) Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Reader 4
They zealously proclaimed Jesus' healing.

Reader 3
Our ears have been opened! Our tongues have been released!

Narrator
The ones who are healed are the proclaimers of God's Good News. Together with those who witnessed and shared in the joy of the healing, we are messengers of God's grace and abundance.

Reader 3
(Psalm 125.2) As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Eternal surrounds Her people, from this time on and forevermore.

Reader 1
"Be opened." (Mark 7.35) And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

Narrator
Jesus declares the closed open, and the open experience new opening, expanded opening. Jesus declares the unclean clean, and the clean rejoice, remembering their cleansing, and are again made clean. We see in Jesus unexpected, startling, amazing grace and abundance. The least among us become the greatest. Together, in the embrace of inclusion, we celebrate! We rejoice in our Living God, whose abundance and grace cannot be limited.

Reader 1
"Be opened." Hear what you have not been able to hear. Speak what you have not been able to speak

Reader 3
Our ears have been opened! Our tongues have been released!

Reader 2
"Be opened." Let the Bread of Life open our ears and free our tongues. Let Living Water wash us and make us clean, heal us and save us.

Reader 3
Our ears have been opened! Our tongues have been released!

Reader 4
"Be opened." Let the Living God feed us and give us to drink.

Start music as the Table is being filled. Readers get baskets of bread, cups, and juice.

Narrator
The excluded are welcome at God's Table. At God's Table we are all the greatest, all created in God's image.
God of endless grace and abundance
Feed and nourish us with Your Living Bread
Quench our thirst with Your Eternal Cup
Rejoice and celebrate with us

Raise baskets and pitchers for blessing.

Narrator
Bless O Christ this Bread we share
Bless this Cup
May this Bread and Cup be Living Nourishment
In the name of Jesus
Our Christ
Amen

Readers serve bread and cup to all in celebratory chaos!
Singing and celebrating. No silence here!

All
Eat! Drink!