

Mark 7:31-37 – Cleaning out your Ears

TSK, GreekLexicon, Henry, QT, Robertson, Geneva, JFB, Handfuls, Barnes, Clarke, Spurgeon, Trapp, Rienecker, Gill, FFG, Poole, Calvin, Eclectic, Wallace

Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Miracles were wonderful **demonstrations of God's greatness and goodness** to his people. These awesome acts of power and compassion strengthened his people's faith.

But along with God's greatness and goodness (or power and compassion), sometimes when the Lord did a miracle he taught important symbolic 象征 lessons also. Yes, miracles displayed God's greatness and goodness, but sometimes you can see symbolic lessons when you look at the **details of a miracle**. For example, in Mark 8, when Jesus was healing a blind man, it took a while for the man to see. He had cloudy vision first and saw men as trees. After another touch by Jesus, then he received perfect vision. That parable 寓言 was symbolic of how Jesus often works in men's lives: Progressively...bit by bit.

In the miracle before us today you will again see God's greatness and goodness **and** you will see beautiful symbolic lessons as well.

Our headings are:

The Man

The Miracle

The Message

Our goals are: **That you will stand in awe of Christ's greatness and goodness, that you will understand the symbolic message of the miracles, and that you will bring the weak and helpless to the Lord for the message of life.**

The Man

31 Again, **departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon**, He came through the midst of the **region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee**. 32 Then **they brought to Him** one who was **deaf** and had an **impediment 障碍 in his speech**, and they **begged Him** to put His hand on him.

1. After Jesus cured the Gentile woman's daughter of her demon in semi-Gentile lands, he took a circuitous 迂曲的 route to Galilee, his hometown.

He went to east of the Jordan River, where 10 famous cities were (Decapolis). This place was semi-Gentile as Tyre and Sidon. You will remember that east of the Jordan was where Ruben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh lived when they returned from Egypt. But they, not being as close to Jerusalem, drifted away more quickly from serving God. Pagans influenced them. This was where some people were raising pigs, something strongly forbidden according to Jewish law.

2. Some people who knew about Jesus, brought a man from the Decapolis, who was a deaf 聋 and mute 哑, to be healed by Jesus.

The man was likely born that way so he needed a lot of help. **But he could no ask for help**. He was "mogi-lalos." It possibly means "tongue-tied." **And he could not hear what to do to get the help**. It was hopeless for him to get help.

3. But those who brought him came pleading for his healing; they literally begged for help for this man.

They did not assume that the man had a right to be healed.

4. Lessons:

a. Jesus loved the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He simply started with the Jews to redeem man. The Jews were not exceptional people. You will remember he used 2 almost dead people (Abram & Sarai) from Iraq who could not take the credit for what he did. And you will remember that Israel was strategically placed for the spread of the Gospel.

b. You too have spiritually dead and mute people around you. They are helpless. There are many around you who do know what to ask for because they don't know their need. They can't hear the message of salvation. They can't ask for it either.

c. So speak for them...as Nadia and Kevin must plead for Gabrielle and Aaron...and you, for your children, that God will open their eyes, and ears to understand truth. And then praise God for his greatness and goodness. Plead for your neighbors...your parents...your co-workers.

The Miracle

33 And He **took him aside from the multitude**, and **put His fingers in his ears**, and **He spat and touched his tongue**.

1. Jesus then took the deaf and mute man aside from the multitude.

Normally Christ did his miracles publicly. Taking the man away privately may symbolize how the Lord moves us away from the world so he could minister to us personally. (Remember, there are symbolic lessons as well.)

2. Jesus then put his finger in the deaf man's ears, though he could have commanded healing directly.

Surely this is symbolic of the cleaning of the ears of a sinner so he might hear of Jesus, like a parent might have to clean a

child's ear that is clogged by wax 被蜡堵塞. Sin shuts the ear to the Gospel. Christ's power and compassion opens it up.

Gill said that this man pictures all those who are "deaf to all the instructions, directions, cautions, and exhortations, of the ministers of the word..." But God words opens up the ears so man might hear and believe.

3. Jesus then spat on his finger and touched the man's tongue-tied tongue.

This spit from the **Lord's mouth was symbolic of his Word**...his Word which has power. Jesus is called the "Word of God."

34 Then, **looking up to heaven**, He **sighed**, and said to him, "**Ephphatha**," that is, "Be opened." 35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

4. Jesus then looked up into heaven.

In doing this, Jesus was pointing the man to heaven, from where his help was coming, for surely Jesus did not need to pray to his Father for a miracle, as he had all authority within himself. It was an example for the man to follow.

Psalms 121:1 I will lift up my eyes to the hills — From whence comes my help? 2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

5. Jesus then sighed or groaned, for he understood the misery of man and how much man needed help.

This is quite common, as you might sigh when you see the sinful state of your children.

6. Jesus then said: "Be loosed," showing that he had all authority to free those who are bound by diseases.

This was a symbolic phrase, as deafness does not tie us up. And isn't it by the power of his word that the captive are set free?

Isaiah 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the

ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. **For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.**

This was referring to spiritual healing. This is why Isaiah wrote about waters bursting forth 爆发了 - a great blessing. Zephaniah spoke of a spiritual blessing on man's tongue.

Zephaniah 3:9 "For **then I will restore to the peoples a pure language**, That they all may **call on the name of the LORD**, To serve Him with one accord.

7. Then the man's tongue was loosed by the saliva that came from Jesus's mouth; the dryness was gone.

This was symbolic of the life that comes from the words of Jesus' mouth! Yes, the non-believer did not care to talk to God or to ask for salvation except when God looses his tongue.

8. The man was then healed so that he could hear and speak.

He could **hear everything**.

He could **speak - plainly!** **This was the greater miracle here.** How could he speak plainly if he were deaf and never heard the language? Could you speak Korean if you never heard it before?

9. Lessons:

a. Bring your children to Jesus. Bring your friend to Jesus. Bring your mother and father to Jesus. There is no other way for their ears to be cleaned so they can hear and believe the Gospel and sing the praise of God. There is no other way for their tongues to be loosed for them to call for God for help and to praise him for his power and compassion.

b. Let your loosed lips praise the Lord for all his goodness. You had nothing going for you. Your house was on fire but you had no hearing...and no sight...and no smell...and no feeling. Christ did all the work.

The Message

36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.

1. Jesus then commanded the man and those who brought him not to tell people about the great miracle the deaf mute experienced.

a. Jesus did not want them to tell the world about the miracle because he knew people would become more concerned about miracles and hinder him from preaching. Earlier when Jesus had healed the demoniac 着魔 in this same area he told him to go and tell others, but that was because he wouldn't have been able to hinder the preaching of

the Gospel as Jesus was about to return to the west side of the river.

b. Jesus did not want the people to tell the world about the miracle because he knew the Pharisees would come after him with more zeal to try to kill him before he was done with his teaching work.

2. But the people were so enthralled by the miracle that they did not stop telling others about the wonderful thing Jesus had done.

They went everywhere telling about it...and doing so loudly.

But if these people had shouted the Gospel of Jesus, that Jesus had come to die for the sins of the world, they would have accomplished much more for the kingdom.

Zeal is often misplaced.

37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the **deaf to hear and the mute to speak.**"

3. The people who heard it were astonished at the work of God.

And rightly do men praise God (not Beelzebub) for all his goodness, but sadly, though they heard and witnessed these great miracles, not many of them believed.

4. Lessons:

a. You can have lots of excitement about many things in church, but the Gospel of Jesus must be paramount最重要的. Watch out for activities that remove the priority of the Gospel. Diaconal ministries might be exciting, but they can be used to replace the Gospel. Digging wells, and building hospitals and schools may be valuable work, but if the Gospel is sacrificed, these things vex God. This is the danger of the big musical bands in church...and the big worship teams. Excitement? Yes. Progress? **No. Zeal without knowledge is like a surgeon with a machete弯刀.**

b. So watch out for churches that substitute action for the Gospel and avoid them like the plague.

Conclusion:

This was a wonderful picture of a powerful God showing compassion to his people who suffer. **But this miracle has symbolic messages as well.** Jesus opens your ears so you can receive the Word of God. Jesus loosens your tongue so you can call for help and praise him. With the impediments removed, you can tell the world about Jesus.

Beloved in the Lord:

1. Rejoice when God graciously heals your body and saves your soul. You did nothing to warrant it. He simply loved you enough to do it. **And he had the power to do it.**

2. Respond by telling the world and each other what wonderful things the Lord has done. This will encourage your Christian brothers and sisters. This will make the non-believer ask more questions of the Savior. This will lead your children to the Savior. (The man had to be quiet, but you don't have to be!)

3. Remember the basis of the healing! Isaiah 53:5 “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement 惩罚 for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray 走错; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.” Yes, the basis of your healing was the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, if you are not a Christian, I pray that the Lord will open your ears so that you will hear these words of truth, believe, be saved, and then tell others of his praises.