

Sermon

Mark 7:31-37 Well done.

Leaving the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon
And instead of heading straight back to Galilee
Jesus and the apostles go to the "**Decapolis**", v31.
Jesus and all the others took the long way round.
In fact, going through Decapolis to get to Galilee
is like going through Inverness to get to Aberdeen!
Some commentators say that the journey
That they took back from Tyre & Sidon
Would have taken 8 months walking.
That is quite a chunk of the Lord's total earthly ministry!
Eight months of the Lord's ministry
of which we have no record.
What was He doing?
I can only imagine that He was
teaching them and training them
for the difficult days ahead.
When He and His men return,
Jesus finds Himself under increasing attack
by the Jews,
which ultimately leads to Calvary to die.

It is also interesting that Jesus goes to Decapolis.
You will remember, from Mark 5,
That He and the followers have been there before.
In fact, they were subsequently asked by
the people of that region to leave their country, v17
Jesus had cast the legion of demons
out of the Demoniac.
The people of the area had rejected Jesus
and forced Him to leave.

Now He returns and their response is a little different.
Why the change? What made the difference?
I believe that part of the answer can be
found in Mark 5:19-20.
That demoniac went home and told the story
of what Jesus had done for him.
His witness was such that the people were
Eager, maybe.
Excited, possibly.
Pleased, definitely,
for Jesus to come back to town,

for when He did, they embraced Him.
Having arrived the people bring a deaf man
to Jesus for healing.
Jesus heals this man and the crowds marvelled.
They saw His power and they were amazed.
They said, "He has done everything well."

So what lessons can we learn from this encounter?

v32 The man and his condition

We are told the man was "**deaf**".

There are two types of deafness as you know.

There is the partially or wholly lacking or
deprived of the sense of hearing
meaning that a person is unable to hear.

There is also the idea of refusing to listen,
heed, or be persuaded;

possibly leading to someone being
unreasonable or unyielding.

This man falls into the first category.

He has no capacity to hear what is being said to him.

I have no idea of the cause of his deafness.

Nor do I know the medical conditions which
May have affected him.

This man cannot hear.

However, not only was he deaf,
he also had a speech impediment.

He could talk, but his speech was impaired.

I understand that it is possible for these
two conditions seem to go hand in hand.

Again to make any further comments on that
Might take me into areas I am not qualified for.

This man, even though he was handicapped,
had people around him that cared about him.

They heard that Jesus was passing by and
they brought their friend to Jesus.

They believed that the man who had
cast a legion of demons out of the demoniac
could heal their friend!

I believe that there was something
in the heart of Jesus that drew Him to
those who were not whole.

He loved people who were cast aside by others.

He spent a lot of time ministering to those

with physical infirmities because He had
a heart full of love and compassion for their needs.

Alongside that those were handicapped,
Or had some form of physical impediment,
They seem to be drawn to Jesus.

Why?

Is it because Jesus accepted them and
loved them as they are.

Looking for that kind of love and acceptance
from a society that rejects them
because they are different.

Jesus loves them like they are.

Sandra, said I should have two questions for you
In small groups.

Do we love those who are different from us?
And what makes someone different from us?

It might not be liked in some quarters
But I believe too that there will not be
a single handicapped individual in heaven!
There will not be a shriveled body,
No one suffering from dementia
or a paralyzed frame in that glorious land!
Nobody will have MS in heaven either,
And you can add a variety of other
Physical ailments which shall not be seen there.

I could ask you to discuss what you are
Looking forward to not seeing in heaven?

Bodies will be made whole and
minds will be renewed in heaven!
Praise the Lord!

v33-35 We can also learn from the
Jesus and His cure.

We see that Jesus "took him aside".
Was there an expectation in the crowd
that Jesus would just touch him right there and heal him.
Jesus does not embarrass the man
more than he already is.

This man is deaf!

And in his day and age that was bad enough

Without someone coming along and
Making him a public spectacle.

We hear the phrase in these modern times
That not all medical conditions are
capable of being seen by others.
I wonder if deafness was that original
Unseen illness?
I'm hoping that the days of the deaf withdrawing
into themselves rather than face a harsh staring public.
AS I believe it is for other afflictions and diseases.

Jesus does not want to make a spectacle of this man,
So takes him aside and performs a miracle.
Let's thank God for the very personal ministry of Jesus!
He doesn't treat people like they are mere numbers.
Yes, He healed many people,
but His methods varied from case to case.
He touched a leper.
He put spit and dirt in a blind man's eye.
He made one blind fellow go to a pool and wash his eyes.
Others He healed from a distance.
Every case was different and every case
merited special attention from Him!

While the same blood and the same Gospel
Bring us salvation,
I believe that no two of us have the same story
Of how it is that we received that salvation.
He used different methods in each of our lives.
God is good!
You can't put Him in a box!
He doesn't always work the same way!
But, there is one constant that you can depend on:
Jesus cares for you on a personal level.
He will work in your life in a manner unique to you!
You are special to Him and He honours
that special relationship in His dealings with us!

Jesus cannot tell the man verbally
what He is about to do.
Does Jesus use a form of sign language
to communicate His intentions,
sticking His fingers in the man's ears
to let him know that He is going to do
something about his deafness.

He spits on His finger and touches the man's tongue
to let him know that He is about to lubricate his speech.
I do not recommend that form of activity in
Praying for healing,
Because personally I think that's gross,
but that is what Jesus did!

What was Jesus doing?
Because it has to be more than just trying to heal.
Is Jesus attempting to awaken faith in this man's heart.
It is a kind of funny way to do that.
Whatever the reason for His actions,
Jesus reaches out and touches this man!

I could ask you what's the strangest way that
God has ministered through you to someone else,
Or how He ministered to you.

If we are going to reach the lost for Jesus,
If we are going to minister to anyone in need,
we are going to have to go where they are.
We are going to have to touch them where they live.
We cannot isolate ourselves from them.
We must not be partakers of their sins,
but we must make the vital connection of touch
if we would be effective for Jesus.

Having touched the man,
Jesus looks toward Heaven.
Can I suggest this act has two purposes.
First, it told the deaf man
where the healing was coming from.
Jesus was looking to His Father and
He was telling this man,
via sign language,
that his healing was coming from above.

Second, looking toward Heaven also
demonstrated the Son's dependence upon the Father.
This is not the only time that Jesus
looked to heaven as He was about to act.
He did this at the tomb of Lazarus, John 11:41.

Then Jesus "sighed".
The Gk word "stenazo" means "to groan".
The deaf man could not hear the sigh,

but he could see Jesus when He did it
and just as it is today,
so much of our communication is not
done by our speaking of words
but our facial expressions,
our demeanor and our body language.
The sigh would have spoken volumes to him.
The sigh said
"I care about you and what you are going through!"

In case you are wondering about this,
Remember that this is the Saviour who cares!
He is "***a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief***"
Isa. 53:3 says.
He is "***touched with the feeling of our infirmities***", **Heb. 4:15**.
He cares about you and what people and
What they are facing in their lives, **1 Pet. 5:7; Matt. 11:28**.
Regardless of what you are facing today,
you will find help and hope in Him!

Jesus says one word, "***Ephphatha***",
which means "***be opened***".
So it is a word of command.
The same as "Be still!" to the winds and waves.
The same as "Let us go to the other side!"
When Jesus said this,
the man's ears were healed and
his tongue was able to make sounds that made sense.
He could hear!
He could hear his own voice!
He could speak!
One command from Jesus and the man's
life changed forever!
That is the power of the Word of God!

I've read some pieces that have said that
Nowadays we should not be looking for healing
That is physical, but only for spiritual healing
Which is the most important thing.
I have a confession to make,
I cannot accept that.
I do not read anywhere that Jesus
has stopped healing the physical.
It does not say that in the New Testament,
And while there is still sickness and disease in
The world I believe that we should pray for

People to be healed.

v36-37 The multitude and their confession

As soon as He has accomplished this miracle,
Jesus tells the multitudes not to tell anyone else.
He does not want to be identified as a Gentile Messiah.
Jesus came to the Jew first and then the Gentile, **Rom. 1:16**.
So, He tells them to keep quiet.
The language here says that Jesus
Ordered them to not say anything.
In fact the very opposite seems to happen
With the comment that He kept on commanding
them to keep the matter quiet.
He told them to tell no-one and they told everyone!

I could ask you to consider who was the last person
That you spoke to about Jesus because He
Just keeps doing exciting things?

The passage finishes by telling us that
the people were “overwhelmed with amazement.”
What they saw Jesus do was more than
their minds could comprehend.
It left them with their mouths hanging open in amazement.
I don’t know about you,
But I am often left amazed at the things people
Tell me God has done on their behalf.
Not because I do not believe them,
But because I do believe them.
God is good.
They summed up what they felt about Jesus by saying,
“He has done everything well!”

That statement was a statement of faith.
They looked at all they knew about Jesus
and they voiced their approval of Him
and His ministry.
They considered His miracles and
His ministry and they said,
“He has done everything well!”

So what lessons can we learn from this encounter?

Do we love those who are different from us?

And what makes someone different from us?

Discuss what you are
Looking forward to not seeing in heaven?

What's the strangest way that
God has ministered through you to someone else,
Or how He ministered to you.

Consider who was the last person
That you spoke to about Jesus because He
Just keeps doing exciting things?

What things would you consider that
God has done well with you?

Prayers for others and Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who is in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven. Give us today, our daily bread. Forgive us our debts As we forgive
our debtors. And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil. For Yours is the
Kingdom, the power and the glory Now and forever Amen!

Praise:

Benediction