

Tell No One! Why?
Mark 7:31-37

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

In our text for today, Jesus takes this deaf man with a speech impediment aside from the crowd privately, and heals him. Then He charged them to tell no one. And the more He charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

Why did Jesus charge them to tell no one? Why were they supposed to say nothing about this miracle? And this is not the first time Jesus had commanded silence after performing a miracle. Jesus had told a leper He cleansed not to tell anyone. (Mark 1:44) After raising Jairus' daughter, He told them not to tell anyone. (Mk 5:43)

Why did Jesus charge them not to tell anybody?

Maybe to help us begin to understand, we should see what they did say, which by the way, was what Jesus knew they would say, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

You know what they were thinking? "Hey, if He does more miracles like this, we'll have universal health care at no cost, all we need to do is get Him to speak a few words over someone who is sick?" That was the thinking when Jesus did a healing. They were caught up in the outward appearance of the miracles.

Further proof came when He fed the five thousand. John's Gospel tells us that He had to slip away unnoticed, for they wanted to make Jesus king because He would feed them all, all the time.

Is this what Jesus came to be about, to take care of the earthly problems of people?

It is what many people today want Jesus to be doing. In fact, there are many who would have you believe a name it and claim it type of theology. If you really want it, God wants you to have it, so all you need to do is truly believe AND THEN you will get it. Dear friends, there is no such promise like that from God.

Consider how you think? When there is talk about God blessing someone, what do most people think that means? When we speak about someone being blessed of God, or when someone says, "God bless you," what sort of things do we believe those blessings are? Usually, we think of blessings in terms of earthly possessions; happiness, health, and a multitude of things that have to do with our present day condition in this flesh and world.

Was the sole purpose for the Word of God becoming flesh to make the deaf hear and the mute speak? This is not to say that God does not sometimes bring healing, but is that the SOLE purpose for Christ? The Lord promises something that appears like healing in our Old Testament lesson, but what does He mean? "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of

their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord, and the poor among mankind shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.” The promise is not about physical healing now, but that the promises of a Savior will come to pass.

When Christ comes, those who were deaf to God Word will hear the promises of God from the book fulfilled in the person of Jesus. Those in the gloom and darkness of sin shall see the goodness of God’s grace in the person and work of Christ, they will have eternal joy in salvation, and exult in God’s Christ because of the promise fulfilled

If God’s purpose in sending His Son was solely to bring healing in this life, then why did He not heal *all* who were sick in any way, shape, or form. He could have! He could have healed all who were sick in any way, just by speaking a word. But He does not do that, does He?

And that causes a rub in our own lives, isn’t it? We are easily upset with God, and we believe for good reason. We question what to our eyes appears to be a lack of action on the part of God. Why did God let Heloise die? How come He doesn’t heal Tyler? Why can’t I find a good job? I’m a believer and Bernard isn’t, how come he has it so good and I have nothing but problems.

We need to confess our sin, that we get angry with God about all the things that we think God should do, but He doesn’t.

For what purpose was God’s Christ born of the virgin? Jesus tells us that the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)

But the work of redemption is not what was most important to the people, even not to His own disciples. After the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, He had to tell his closest three disciples not to tell anybody about what they had seen.

Why? Because they did not get what was of first importance. When He told them about the fact that He would suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, that they would kill Him, and that He would rise again. They didn’t like that story at all. Peter even rebuked Jesus for saying such things.

We prefer a naked cross too, don’t we! We would rather not see a crucified Jesus there, head limp and hanging down, His body sagging from the cross. To our thinking there is no victory, no glory, and no honor in the execution of a man by crucifixion, so we don’t want to see that.

But sin is the disease which Jesus came into the world to destroy. It was upon the cross, in Christ’s suffering and death that He purchased the cure for sin and crushed the devil’s power. With His death, He defeated death, and by His rising again from the dead, His resurrection declares sin to have totally cured, and Satan has lost all power and strength. Yes, He has done all things well – the most important things.

In healing this deaf mute from the plainly obvious effects of sin in his life, Jesus is declaring to us His power and authority over sin and death. This is not an assurance that He will grant us physical healing of our every infirmity – at least not in this life. Nor is this an assurance that He

will remove all pain from our lives, or that He will grant us our heart's every desire. None of those things, for that has not been promised to us. But Jesus did instruct us to take up our cross and follow Him.

This miracle in our text give us confidence that He will grant us healing from our sin in His Gospel. By healing this man from the obvious effects of sin, we are shown Christ's power and authority over sin itself. Christ brought healing to this man through a Word from His mouth. With but a word from Jesus, sins are forgiven and the effects of sin in the man's body are gone.

Till that is understood, tell no one.

Till you are determined to know nothing else except Christ, and Him crucified, tell no one.

Until you can boldly proclaim that you are a redeemed sinner, tell no one.

Until you can rejoice that you are in Christ Jesus, that your identity is in Him alone, tell no one.

Nothing has changed. Christ still brings healing and life through His Word. In a Word of forgiveness, He heals us from sinful doubts. With a Word He forgives our complaints, apathy, and our sinful thinking that if there are no great miracles, God is not with us. And in that Word of forgiveness, He strengthens our faith to live each day of our lives trusting in Him.

With but a Word, He speaks and sins are forgiven. Where sins are forgiven there is the greatest of healing, for therein is given eternal life and salvation.

But Jesus does not leave us with just a word in our ears. He knows our weakness, and so He comes to us with visible signs which make His work for us more personal, as it were. Just as He took the man aside from the crowd and touched Him, so He touches us.

That is why He uses water with His Word in the miracle of baptism. He singles us out, one by one, and calls us by name. His Word of promise offers, gives, and seals the forgiveness of sins in that water, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Boldly proclaim it, "I am baptized! I am in Christ a new creature!"

With but a Word, He speaks and bread and wine *are* His precious body and blood. As you eat His flesh and drink of His blood with your own mouths, His words proclaim to you what you receive, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of your sins." Christ Himself comes to you, makes His dwelling within you, and you are blessed with life.

Christ is the very Word of God who spoke all things into existence at the beginning. It is this same Word of God who spoke and the deaf man heard and his tongue was loosed. The sinfulness which had bound him was removed and he was able to hear and to speak. No less a miracle takes place in your hearing, for Christ's Word comes to you and proclaims your sins forgiven – how wonderful it is to hear.

And your mouth is opened that you might speak the glories of God. Shout it from the mountain tops.

He has done all things well - with a Word, sins are forgiven.

He has done all things well - with a Word, He gives salvation.

He has done all things well - with a Word, He bestows eternal life.

He has done all things well - with a Word, He strengthens your faith that you may believe these are all God's gracious gifts which keep you now and for eternity. Amen.