

He Does All Things Well

Mark 7:31-37

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

How many of you know someone in Texas who has been affected by hurricane Harvey? I know a few pastors in the area, and we have family that is nearby. Some of those pastors have homes and churches significantly underwater, the extent of the damage is at present, undetermined. Not quite sure about the cousins and how they are faring.

What has again been discussed as the flood waters rise and the tragic pictures continue to scroll across the news and social media, is – where is God in all of this? Why doesn't God do something? Doesn't someone have an answer?

When things go bad, we want to have an answer, we want to either receive or bring comfort. We want to have an answer. And, we think that we need to say something like, "God's still in control!" Or, "when a door closes, God opens a window." Or maybe, "God has a plan for you." And even quoting the Bible, "all things work together for good to those who love God."

Then comes our text and it appears to fall right in line, we find God in Christ Jesus healing a deaf man with a speech impediment. Reading this text after this last week, where at the writing of this sermon it was still raining and the flood waters were still rising, we wonder why does God wait to do something like He did in our text?

It makes us wonder about whether we have our faith placed in truth or fiction. Why does God allow such calamity to happen?

Dear friends in Christ, not everything that is true about God, are things people want to hear about God. There are hidden things of God, and there are revealed things of God. Too often, people want to know the hidden things of God, but they have not all been revealed to us.

Unfortunately, all the questions asked so far in this sermon are all the wrong questions. I know that you may want the answers to those questions, but they are none of your concern.

Trust me, I know the questions – I know them intimately! They were questions I begged God to answer, sometimes as I soaked my pillow with tears, "Why God? Why do I need to take care of my mother? Why do I need to bath her? Why do I have to change her diapers? Why do I have to place food in her mouth? Why can't you just heal her? Why do you let her suffer with pain when she loves you so much? Are you listening – God? Do you care – God? Are you even there – God?"

Dear friends those were all the wrong question. And the answers that some people tried to give me, were of not help! They offered fine feelings, but they only gave unstable hope.

God wants us only to know this about Him – are you ready? Listening? – here it is... God wants us only to know this about Him, Jesus!

In our text, Jesus demands the people to say nothing. After healing the man, He charged them to tell no one. But the more He charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. What do they say? "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Wow! God does all things well? He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak? Great!

But mom still lies in bed.

My brother still has to work from a wheelchair.

Heloise is still dying of cancer.
The rain still falls in Texas.
People kill one another without any regard for life.

The only thing we know about God is Jesus, and the only thing we know about Jesus is what is revealed to us. And all that we know about Jesus is that He is the crucified One. It is why Paul says, "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified," (1 Cor 2:2).

Those folks in the region of the Decapolis did not understand that. They wanted something other than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. All they saw was that the mute deaf now talked and heard. Wow! Amazing! Incredible! That's the God we want, the God Who will make this life easy.

Dear friends, God has an incredible plan for your life, but it is not what you think. His plan is to crucify you with Christ – bury you with Christ – raise you to new life in Christ. It is your daily life of baptism. In baptism, you are united to the only God we know, the crucified, dead, buried, and resurrected Christ. In Christ, God reveals who He is.

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. It is the promise of a Savior, it is the promise of eternal blessings that will come to pass, at the end of life in this mortal coil.

Jesus heals to show His power over illness, and that which causes illness, sinfulness. His healing shows the power of Lord of Life over death. Spit, that is water, cleanses the man of His illness – baptism cleanses him of his sin.

Jesus Christ and Him crucified is not glamorous. The things of eternal import are not glorious. We are like the crowds that day, we want the physical things, the earthly miraculous. We are enamored with this life.

Jesus is the God who allowed Himself to be arrested by liars. He gave His cheeks to be slapped. He turned His back to be whipped. He bowed His head to accept a crown of thorns. He gave His wrists and feet to be nailed to the cross. He gave His ears to those who mocked Him, and gave His voice to proclaim their forgiveness. He willingly gave His flesh to those who crucified Him. In doing so, He purchased their forgiveness for the vile acts they committed. He purchased forgiveness for the despicable sins that you and I have in both our heads and hearts – and have acted out with our lips, hands, and bodies.

Jesus may not give us all the answers we want, but He gives to you the forgiveness and life eternal which He purchased with His innocent suffering and death. In Christ, your ears are opened to hear a word of forgiveness, and your mouth is loosed to proclaim His praise.

In healing this deaf mute from the plainly obvious effects of sin in his life, Jesus is declaring to you 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, nor 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 gives 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.

Until that is understood, tell no one.

Until 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 since the events in our text. Christ still brings healing and life through His Word. In a Word of forgiveness, He heals us from our sinful doubts. With a Word He forgives our complaints, our apathy, and our sinful thinking that if there are no great miracles, then God must not with us. And in that Word of forgiveness, He strengthens your faith to live each day of your 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.