

But our sufficiency is of God

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When God called Moses to go and speak to Pharaoh, the greatest ruler of the known world, Moses said to God, *oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent...but I am slow of speech and of tongue* (Ex. 4:10). Yet God worked through Moses and showed Pharaoh and the world His glory. When God called Isaiah to be a prophet, Isaiah said to God, *Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips!* (Isa. 6:5) Yet God spoke through Isaiah and gave the promise of the coming of Jesus. When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet to a people who would not turn from their wickedness, Jeremiah said, *My Lord, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth* (Jer. 1:6-7). Yet Jeremiah became the mouth piece of God and was a faithful witness to the Hebrew nation. And so we hear again this morning that God opens the mouths of those who cannot speak, in spite of their shortcomings, for His glory and for His Kingdom. We read that even age does not keep God from calling us, because Moses was 80 years old when the Israelites were led out of Egypt, Jeremiah was a teenager when he was called

to be a prophet, and even Jesus Christ began His earthly ministry at the age of 30, dying for us on the cross at the age of 33. God takes no notice of ability, talent or age, He calls us into His service at every stage of our life.

This morning we read that Jesus heals a deaf and mute man. We read all through the Gospels how Jesus heals the lame, the palsied, the blind, the deaf, the mute, even the possessed, and the people cannot contain their praise for God. Even when He tells them to tell no one what has happened, and still they go to the ends of the earth singing the praises of God. By opening the deaf ears and loosening the mute tongue, Jesus takes a poor beggar and makes him a prophet to all that God has come down in the flesh, and that He has the power to restore us and heal us. It reveals a primary characteristic of Jesus, that He does not seek His own glory, and that He changes and restores lives that all may know that He is indeed God, with the power to do the impossible. Jesus is God in the flesh and yet He does not seek His own glory, unlike the Pharisee in last week's Gospel who prays so that God and everyone around him remembers how righteous he is, Jesus the only one who is truly righteous shows humility.

And there is a certain humility about the man in this morning's Gospel, he did nothing to deserve such a miracle, he does not even approach Jesus by himself. The gospel says, *they brought unto Him one who was the deaf and mute.* This man was lucky enough to be surrounded by family and friends who brought him to Jesus. Like the paralytic who was lowered through the roof of a house, these friends were determined to get him to Jesus by any means necessary. These friends prayed with their feet, by physically bringing the man to Jesus so that maybe Jesus will take notice and heal him.

And how often do we pray for a miracle from heaven, only to not have our prayers answered as we would like? We often pray for what we think is best for ourselves or for another, not realizing that our plans are not always God's plans. We fail to remember that for the true follower of Jesus, the works of God and the glory of God is manifested every day. We fail to remember that God takes no regard for ability or age, calling us at every point of our lives to follow Him and to work in His Kingdom.

And how many celebrated modern saints of the Church have been less than qualified? St. Bernadette who witnessed the apparitions of the Blessed

Virgin Mary at Lourdes, and yet she was so uneducated she barely knew how to pray her rosary. St. Therese, whose doctrine of “The Little Way” who has inspired so many souls on their way to heaven, was so young and so sickly that many said she would never survive the convent. Blessed Solanus Casey is another great saint of the Church, yet he too was weak and sickly, he likely had a learning disability, and yet he was reluctantly ordained a priest but not allowed to preach or hear confessions. He worked over 300 miracles as the door keeper of his parish church in Michigan, and even after his death in the 1970’s numerous miracles are still being attributed to his intercession.

But what of us? We are not yet to the level of those great saints, we are not on a level with Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah. To us St. Paul writes in 1st Corinthians, *But consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to the flesh, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth, but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no flesh might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life*

in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. We hear this in the Epistle this morning, *Such trust have we through Christ...not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.* There is nothing in us that qualifies us for service in God's Kingdom but our willingness and openness to God. Blessed John Keble writes, *the deaf heart, the dumb by choice, these baffle even the spells of heaven.* God calls each of us where we are in life to come and follow Him, to serve Him and His Kingdom. God desires to make us all into His saints, regardless of our sinfulness, age, abilities, or talents. What matters most to God is our willingness to serve Him in humility, our obedience to Him and our desire to manifest His glory in our own lives. How can we serve God if we take all the credit for ourselves and for our own glory? We must have our ears and our hearts open to the voice of God.