

## Let The Savior Be The Savior

### Mark 7:31-37

{ adapted from sermon by Rev. Paul Kaiser - 9/6/1992 }

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

Today's Gospel presents this miracle performed by our Lord, and many people immediately want to begin talking about how our Lord heals us in a spiritual sense. After all, we know that Christ is True God as well as True Man. He raised Lazarus from the dead, He could surely heal someone deaf and dumb. Many then wonder, "Why does He allow us to suffer with the afflictions and pains of this life?"

So, to avoid that question we hustle past the physical healing to what appears certain to us, that Jesus does indeed heal us from the effects of sin. Christ gives to us a new spiritual heart, one that trusts Him alone for forgiveness, for salvation, and for eternal life. A new heart that desires to serve and to please Him.

Now, all this very true. In fact, it is very important, we can even say with all confidence that this is the most important thing. But, if we go straight into looking at the spiritual healing, we miss much of what God's Word is telling us in today's lesson.

If you look closely at the account of this miracle, it is interesting to note how it both plays up and dumbs down this wondrous event. At the same time as it affirms and emphasizes the healing of this man, it also shows us that this physical healing is not the most important thing our Savior came to do.

This miracle proclaims to us that this man Jesus is the promised Savior, and what that promised Savior is like. In dumbing down this miracle, the Scriptures proclaim that Jesus may not always live up to **OUR** expectations of Him as our Savior. This text admonishes and encourages us to let the Savior be the Savior.

This miracle is recorded for us for many reasons, one of which is to show us that Jesus fits the description of the promised Savior foretold of prophets long before. Jesus did all the Messiah was supposed to do according to the prophets. He fulfilled the Old Testament lesson from Isaiah in our text.

There is another prophecy from Isaiah (35) which describes the works of the Savior as follows: "Say to those with anxious hearts `take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but will save you.' Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongues of the dumb will shout for joy."

These things foretold by the prophets, are the works which the Messiah would perform when He came. These are the very things Jesus is doing in our text recorded for your ears and eyes. Matthew's account of this time of Jesus life in the area of the Decapolis describes that the multitudes brought "those who were lame, crippled, blind, dumb, and many others, and they laid

them down at Jesus' feet; and He healed them..." This crowd was mostly Gentiles, in other words, of non-Jewish descent. They marveled at the works Jesus performed, and as Matthew tells us, "They were led to glorify the God of Israel."

Not only does the healing of this man reveal that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Savior, it tells us a few things about what He is like. It shows that He is merciful. During this time in His life, Jesus wasn't seeking popularity, He was seeking a private place to teach His disciples. Despite the business to which He wanted to attend, Jesus took the time to heal many people of their afflictions. In the midst of a crowd clamoring for His attention, Jesus took this one poor man aside and gave him His undivided attention. This is so astounding because, He could have healed the whole crowd with just a word.

Picture the scene. Jesus goes off alone with this man who was deaf and could hardly talk, He places His fingers in his ears, then spits and touches the man's tongue. He then looks up to heaven and lets out a sigh. His sigh speaks volumes about the mercy and compassion of our Lord and Savior.

In Romans we learn that we sigh with groanings, longing to be delivered from the "sufferings of this present age." We want to be released from the afflictions of this body and life. The Spirit groans in our behalf, when our prayers are too deep for words. Here in our text, Jesus sighs. He lets out a sympathetic sigh at the affliction of this one man.

Our Savior is merciful and compassionate. He cares about all of us, even the lowliest among us. "Surely He has born our griefs and carried our sorrows."

Not only is He merciful, but our Savior answers prayers. Our text shows this to us. The deaf man wasn't even the one seeking help for himself, it was the crowd who brought him to Jesus and pleaded with Him to help. And, with a word, Ephphatha, "be opened," Jesus answers their pleading and heals the man. In this one word, the man is released from the prison of his affliction.

Our Savior is both merciful and quick to answer our prayers. Why do you so often doubt this? Too often we take it upon ourselves to write a job description of the type of Savior we think we need, and then we question why Christ does not seem to live up to what we expect?

Don't we pray at times, and then question and complain that God has not answered or heard our prayer, especially when what we prayed for does not take place? We ask, "Why does God not take away my afflictions as He did for the man healed in our text? Why does He allow so much suffering in the world?"

You and I question God, and perhaps this is why the text reminds us that, as wonderful as this miracle is, that is not the type of salvation for which our Savior came into the world. God's Son did not come merely to save us from all the suffering in this life.

Many were the people in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry who were looking for just that, a Messiah who would deliver them from their political oppression and physical suffering. Jesus seemed to so many, to be the one who could do just that. At the time of the events in our text, it seems that Jesus was trying to avoid being swept up by a crowd and made into a miracle worker or

bread king.

It is for this reason that He was trying to avoid Galilee, Jesus was trying to avoid becoming a kind of popular earthly hero. It is why He commanded the Decapolis crowd not to tell anyone of the miracles He was doing. These merciful acts were not the Gospel which He wanted His followers to proclaim.

Yes, the miracles of Jesus Christ were signs that He is the promised Messiah, the Savior. And yes, they tell us what kind of Savior He is. However, they are not the salvation which He came to provide. He came into this world to bring a much greater salvation, to provide a much greater mercy.

Listen again to the prophet Isaiah as he foretold the reason for Christ's coming; "He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned each one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Christ came to save you from the eternal suffering for our sinfulness. He came to release you from your bondage to sin, death and Satan. He came to poor souls, souls like you and me who are deaf to His Word, and dumb to speak His praises and confess His name. He came to us through His Word, and in your baptism He spoke His "Ephphatha, be opened." He opened your hearts to receive His free gift of salvation. He opened your ears to hear and believe. He loosed your tongues that you might proclaim His wondrous deeds to the world.

Yes, our Savior has provided an eternal salvation for you. And though He did not end all the trials and tribulation of this world, He does **ALWAYS** hear your prayers and answer them. He has compassion for you in all your trials. He often gives you exactly that for which you pray. But more importantly, He always protects and provides you with that which you need most.

Our sermon hymn boldly proclaims: My soul, now bless thy Maker! Let all within me bless His name. Who maketh thee partaker of mercies more than thou dar'st claim. Forget Him not whose meekness still bears with all thy sin, who healeth all thy weakness, renews thy life within. Whose grace and care are endless and saved thee through the past; who leaves no sufferer friendless, but rights the wronged at last. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.