

MIRACLES OF JESUS

BE OPENED - Mark 7:31-37

A. Context - Mark 7

1. Jesus refuted the teaching of religious leaders.
 - a. He accused them of hypocrisy, Mark 7:6-8, *And he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.*
 - b. He gave the people true teaching on what makes a person unclean, Mark 7:1-15, *There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.*
2. Jesus healed the Canaanite woman's daughter in Mark 7:24-30
 - a. He declared that her faith was great.
 - b. She came looking for a healer and left with a Savior.
3. The miracle of the deaf man in Mark 7:31-37 is only recorded by Mark.

B. Jesus went to the region of Decapolis near the Sea of Galilee (31), *Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.*

1. Jesus left Tyre and Sidon but did not go directly to Galilee.
 - a. He traveled along the Phoenician coast.
 - b. A. T. Robertson, *He thus kept out of the territory of Herod Antipas.*
2. Jesus returned to the region of Decapolis where he had performed miracles at the beginning of His ministry.
 - a. He cast demons out of two men and sent them into a herd of swine (Mark 5:20).
 - b. Many from Decapolis followed the Lord (Matthew 4:25).
 - c. The region was primarily Gentile.

C. Jesus was asked to heal a man of his infirmities (32), *And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.*

1. Friends brought a deaf man to Jesus.
 - a. Deafness brought isolation, Charles Ryrie, *Unlike the blind person who, although also isolated, could be communicated with, it was nearly impossible to communicate with a deaf person. So a deaf person remained isolated from much in life in those times of no mass media and no science of lip reading or sign language.*
 - b. Deafness brought ignorance.
 - 1) Charles Ryrie, *Since he lived in a day before mass media communication, including books, this deaf man must have known very little about most areas of life. He would have known only what he could learn through sight. No television, no newspaper, no magazines, no encyclopedias, which today feed our minds, were available to him to read and thus to compensate for what he could not hear.*
 - 2) John Kitto, *To me the whole world is dumb, since I am deaf to it...All around, below, and above me is solitary silence; silence unbroken.*
2. The deaf man had a speech defect, as well.
 - a. *speech defect*, the word is found only here in the New Testament and in Isaiah 35:5-6, *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*
 - b. Mark saw the fulfillment of Isaiah's words in the healing ministry of Jesus as did the crowd in verse 37.
3. They begged Jesus to heal the man.
 - a. They wanted Jesus to lay his hand on him.
 - b. Jesus would respond but not as they asked.

D. Jesus responded to their request (33-35)

1. He took the man away from the crowd and ministered to him (33), *And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue.*
 - a. Jesus took the man aside from the crowd.
 - 1) He wanted the man's attention as best the man could give it.
 - 2) His ministry at this moment was to the man not to the crowd looking for excitement.
 - b. Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears and touched the man's tongue with His spit.
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Both acts would have told the man that Jesus intended to do something about his tongue and mouth.*
 - 2) John Calvin, *...by touching the tongue with spittle, he intended to point out that the faculty of speech was communicated by himself alone; and by putting his fingers into the ears, he showed that it belonged to his office to pierce the ears of the deaf.*
 - 3) Jesus took the best course of action for the man: he could feel Jesus' touch and He could see Jesus' actions.
 - c. Jesus could have commanded healing by His word but He wanted the man to receive more than physical healing.
2. He looked to heaven, made a command and the man was healed (34-35), *And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.*
 - a. Jesus directed the man's attention to heaven as the source of his healing.
 - 1) Jesus did the same thing as He prayed for the bread before the 5,000.
 - 2) This man was being made aware that Jesus was not just a miracle worker but one Who has the authority of heaven.
 - b. Jesus sighed and said *be opened.*
 - 1) John Grassmick, *His deep sigh may have reflected compassion for the man but it was likely Jesus' strong emotion as He battled the satanic powers that enslaved the suffering man.*
 - 2) Martin Luther, *This sigh was not drawn from Christ on account of the single tongue and ear of this poor man, but is a common sigh over all tongues and ears, yea over all hearts, bodies, and souls, and over all men from Adam to his last descendant.*
 - 3) Sin brings not only a sigh of compassion from Jesus but action, all the way to the cross.
 - c. Jesus said to the man, *ephphatha*
 - 1) The man's ears were opened, his tongue released and he spoke plainly.
 - 2) Healing was immediate and complete.
 - 3) The man heard clearly and spoke plainly.

E. Jesus gave orders to those who had brought the man (36a), *And Jesus charged them to tell no one.*

1. Jesus did not want miracles to be what attracted people to Him.
2. He came to proclaim the kingdom of God.
3. His time had not yet come for crucifixion and He did not want people trying to keep Him from the purpose for which He came.

F. The men were amazed but still disobeyed Jesus (36b-37), *But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."*

1. The crowd disobeyed the commands of Jesus.
 - a. Thomas Constable, *The conduct of the multitude is a good example of the way in which men treat Jesus, yielding him all homage, except obedience.*
 - b. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth but in this age, man has a choice.
 - c. The most important choice a person can make is to choose Jesus as Savior.
 - d. The important daily choice is to choose to obey Jesus as Lord.

2. The crowd was overwhelmed with emotion by what Jesus did for the deaf man.
 - a. They were looking at what Jesus had done as fulfillment of Isaiah 35:6.
 - b. They were looking for a leader not a Savior.
 - c. Many of these same people were like the ones in Jerusalem who went from joy in Jesus to disdain toward Him, crying, *Crucify Him!*

<i>CONCLUSION</i>

- A. Jesus cares about our physical needs - His compassion is sincere.
- B. Jesus deals with us individually - He knows what each of us needs.
- C. Jesus gives more than expected - He gives the best not just the good.
- D. Jesus' purpose is not hindered by our inappropriate desires - He completed His task even as He will enable us to complete the tasks God gives to us.