

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: February 1, 2009

Title: The Relentless Goodness of God - “He has done all things well”
The Healing of a Deaf-Mute

Text: Mark 7:31-37 (Gospel Parallels – Matthew 15:29-31 [Not in Luke or John])

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Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.

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 Theme:

Introduction:

"Centuries before Jesus' birth, the Lord had prophesied through Isaiah that one of the things the Savior would do was heal the sick. Among those healings, the Savior would make the deaf hear and the mute sing. These were signs for people to look for; and when they found the One who fulfilled all of the prophecies, they had found the Savior."

[http://www.scholia.net/files/sermons_sunday/41007031%20Mark%207%2031-37%20He%20Has%20Done%20All%20Things%20Well%20\(TJP\).pdf](http://www.scholia.net/files/sermons_sunday/41007031%20Mark%207%2031-37%20He%20Has%20Done%20All%20Things%20Well%20(TJP).pdf)

"Now here we have the story of a cure that Christ wrought, which is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it is of one that was deaf and dumb."
 (Matthew Henry)

Matthew 15:29-31 provides a more generic statement in which our event is but one of many events referred to in Matthew's account.

"The route described here seems somewhat strange in that it goes northward from the area of Tyre to Sidon and then back around to the southwest toward the Decapolis; it is evidently Jesus' intention here to remain strictly within Gentile territory for the time being."

<http://arts.wustl.edu/~cwconrad/Mark/mk6notes.html#anchor1819977>

"Another thinks that this journey took no less than eight months, and that, indeed, is far more likely. It may well be that this long journey is the peace before the storm; a long communion with the disciples before the final tempest breaks." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 180).

THE BIG PICTURE:

- Strategic Withdrawals from Galilee (6:30—9:29)
 - To the Eastern Shore of the Sea of Galilee (6:30-52)
 - To the Western Shore of the Sea (6:53—7:23)
 - To Syrian Phoenicia (7:24-30)
 - To the Region of the Decapolis (7:31—8:10)
 - To the Vicinity of Caesarea Philippi (8:11-30)
 - To the Mount of Transfiguration (8:31—9:29)
- The Pharisees Confronted: Clean vs. Unclean (7:1-23)
- The Healing of the Gentile (Syrophoenician) Woman's Daughter (7:24-30)
- The Healing of a Deaf-Mute (7:31-37)
- The Feeding of the Four Thousand (8:1-9)
- A Sign Demanded in Dalmanutha (8:10-21)

Its Eternal Value:

God can do what we deem impossible and He does it for His glory, not ours.

The Problem:

Inside of Mark, various ideas and themes collide and we struggle to pull them apart. God's love is not defined by our man-made distinctions. God loves all who are His. This group of worshippers flows outside of our preconceived ideas. What God promised, He is performing. God heals the blind eye, opens the deaf ear, and enables the weak leg. He is the promised Hero King, and He has authority over all things created, including disease and death. This passage assures us of God's will to complete all He has promised. May our faith believe this.

The Storyline:

The intent of Mark is to show how Jesus is the promise fulfilled. He comes as the embodiment of the promises made to the people of God in the Old Testament. This story reflects the idea contained in Isaiah 35:3-6 (The entire chapter celebrates God's manifested power).

³ Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. ⁴ Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." ⁵ **Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.** ⁶ Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah" (Isa. 35:3-6).

"...we are invited ... to share in the wonder and praise of those who witnessed the miracle which we have just heard recounted in the Gospel. Like many other episodes of healing, it testifies to the coming of the Kingdom of God in the person of Jesus. In Christ the messianic promises spoken by the prophet Isaiah are fulfilled: "The ears of the deaf shall be unstopped ... and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy" (*Is* 35:5-6). In him, the year of the Lord's favor has begun for all humanity (cf. *Lk* 4:17-21)."

<http://oldarchive.godspy.com/meditations/He-has-done-all-things-well-Meditation-by-Pope-John-Paul-II.cfm.html>

All of this speaks of a time when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. There is coming a time when everything on the earth and under the earth will publicly proclaim, "He does all things well." This story foreshadows the greater end that is inevitable and rushing toward its finish.

Question:

1. Notice Decapolis. Look again at Mark 5:20 and the events surrounding this region.
2. Notice the urgency of each situation. Why do we not feel the urgency of our medical needs?

3. Notice the unique process Jesus began in verse 33. What are your immediate impressions?
4. Why do you think Jesus took him by himself?
5. What might be the significance of the deep sigh?
6. When Jesus spoke it happened. What might be the significance of this statement to us?
7. Why the order not to say anything?
8. Notice the aggressive nature of the gospel's expansion in verse 36. Was their action of proclamation sin?
9. What was the response of those present?
10. Why do you think God did the miracle?
11. How might this passage change the way you think and behave?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know God as the hero of all mankind and the deliverer from sin's curse.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him above all else as the lover of our souls.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His person and work.

There are three movements inside of this one story.

Outline:

- I. The condition of the man (7:31-32) - His case was sad.

Our story finds a man who is both deaf and as a consequence cannot speak.

Hoskyns and Davey (1931) write: The word 'stammerer' is in this case suggestive. It occurs only once in the New Testament, and only once in the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Old Testament, and there in this remarkable prophecy [of Isa 35:3-6].

³ "Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; ⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." ⁵ **Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.** ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and **the mute tongue shout for joy.** Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35:3-6, NIV).

The "mute tongue" is translated as "stammerer" in the Septuagint Greek. Isa 35:3-6 is widely seen as the inspiration for the healing miracles in Mark. Here is a direct citation of it.

The people bring the man to Jesus and beg the Savior to heal him.

A. He is a foreigner.

Like the Canaanite woman, this man was profane by birth. He lived in the area previously noted in Mark 5. The Decapolis was "the city of ten."

B. He has friends.

This is reminiscent of Mark 2:3, "And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men." His friends thought enough of their friend to bring him to Jesus, and they thought enough of Jesus to believe He was able to heal their friend. In behalf of their friend, they implored Jesus to answer their request.

His condition was such that his speech was labored because of his inability to hear.

II. The conduct of the Messiah (7:33-37) - His cure was solemn.

It is of interest to see Him secluded from the crowd in 7:24 and now here He pulls the individual aside and asks the audience not to publicize His activity. We have noted this earlier, but it continues to be a part of Mark's story.

Because God creates, He can cure. He is the great architect of the body and, when He so wills, He can undo what has been done. It pleased Him to heal this man.

A. What he does (7:33).

Our Lord pulls the man aside, away from the crowd, and begins to minister to him in a manner that the man can understand. Several authors note this as an act of tenderness. They speak of how those who are deaf are often embarrassed by their inability to hear and thus Jesus gently leads the man into a quiet area in order to minister to him without embarrassment.

"To the impotent man He said, "Wilt thou be made whole?" to the blind men, "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" and "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Joh 5:6; Mt 20:32; 9:28). But as this patient could *hear* nothing, our Lord substitutes symbolical actions upon each of the organs affected."
<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.viii.html>

"The whole story shows us most vividly that Jesus did not consider the man merely a case; he considered him as an individual. The man had a special need and a special problem, and with the most tender considerateness Jesus dealt with him in a way that spared his feelings and in a way that he could understand."
 (William Barclay, *Mark*, 181).

His look and sigh are significant in so far as to express the weight of the curse that has settled on the earth and is beginning to settle on His shoulders.

“Notice also that Mark records this detail that Jesus "sighs" deeply as He looks up to heaven. A sigh of compassion, an expression of the weariness and sorrow that Jesus feels as he gazes upon the stark reality of this ailing man. Here is a man, suffering the effects of the curse in his physical body, unable to hear and unable to speak...and being moved with a heavenly compassion to heal the man, Jesus sighs.” http://www.newlife-lajolla.org/members_only/sermons/he_has_done_all_things_well.htm

“He sighed; not as if he found any difficulty in working this miracle, or obtaining power to do it from his father; but thus he expressed his pity for the miseries of human life, and his sympathy with the afflicted in their afflictions, as one that was himself *touched with the feeling of their infirmities.*” (Matthew Henry)

Our Lord readily identified with those He seeks to save. Jesus touches both the man's ears and tongue.

B. What he says (7:34-37).

1. To the crippled (7:34-35).

“The great command of the gospel, and grace of Christ to poor sinners, is *Ephphatha-Be opened.*” (Matthew Henry)

Jesus says, "Be opened!" And the man can hear and speak perfectly! To whom was Jesus speaking when He said, “Be opened?” His address was not to the man for he was incapable of saving himself. Perhaps it was to the demon that held this man in captive. He commands as Lord, as King over all His subjects for them to yield to His will. He speaks and it is so. **No one can stop Him from doing what He wills to be done.**

Since all things created fall under His absolute rule, the response is immediate. His ears are opened and his tongue loosed. What was once impossible is now manifested. Our Lord’s next statement is to those who witnessed the miracle.

Having never heard, he hears and having never spoken, he speaks. Not only is there a miracle in hearing and in speaking, but he spoke “plainly.” Remember, whatever vocabulary this man had was limited, yet when God healed him, He gave him the ability to speak “plainly.”

We struggle with an apparent disconnect between the Gospel story and our own condition. In your quiet communion with God and in our corporate gathering we cry out, “Lord, help me.” We need Him to once more open our ears and loosen our tongues so that we might hear His voice and speak His truth. This is what God does and is doing. Let us not forget and never fail in giving Him glory.

2. To the crowd (7:36-37).

Jesus tells the people not to tell anyone. But they do!

“It was their zeal, that, though he charged them to say nothing of it, yet they published it, before Christ would have had it published. **But they meant honestly, and therefore it is to be reckoned rather an act of indiscretion than an act of disobedience**, v. 36.” (*Matthew Henry*)

The response of the crowd was not out of rebellion, but unspeakable shock. They were simply stunned by what they both heard and saw, thus they spoke. Their witness was wild and uncontrollable. They spoke and shared as those who just witnessed the unbelievable.

III. The conclusion to the event

A. They were perplexed

Our Lord solicited a response that is appropriate to His being. They were utterly astonished. “**hyperperissos**—*more than above measure*; they were exceedingly affected with it.”

B. They were praise filled

“How marvelous, and how appropriate their confession, "He has done all things well, He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." But it is even more marvelous than they realize. You see, in their confession they are echoing the words of the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah prophesied of the coming Servant of the Lord who would perform mighty deeds. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped...then the tongue of the dumb will sing." (Is. 35:5-6). Truly, Jesus is fulfilling this prophesy right in front of their eyes, He is showing Himself to be the Servant of the LORD by his actions. Intentionally performing the mighty deeds that are to accompany the Messianic Servant. Jesus is bringing in the Messianic Kingdom.”

http://www.newlife-lajolla.org/members_only/sermons/he_has_done_all_things_well.htm

His impact on the audience was breathtaking. There was only one conclusion they could make, “He has done all things well.” Matthew’s account states, “They glorified the God of Israel.”

This has been, and ever will be, true of every part of our Lord's conduct. In creation, providence, and redemption he hath done all things well. The wisest philosophers are agreed that, considering creation as a whole, it would be impossible to improve it. Every thing has been made in number, weight, and measure; there really is nothing deficient, nothing redundant; and the good of the creature seems evidently more consulted than the glory of the Creator. The

creature's good is every where apparent; but to find out how the Creator is glorified by these works requires the eye of the philosopher. And as he has done all things well in creation, so has he in providence: here also every thing is in number, weight, measure, and time. As creation shows his majesty, so providence shows his bounty. He preserves every thing he has made; all depend upon him; and by him are all things supported. But how glorious does he appear in the work of redemption! How magnificent, ample, and adequate the provision made for the salvation of a lost world! Here, as in providence, is enough for all, a sufficiency for each, and an abundance for eternity. He loves every man, and hates nothing that he has made; nor can the God of all grace be less beneficent than the Creator and Preserver of the universe. (*Adam Clarke's Commentary on Mark 7:31*).

I believe we would be amiss if we did not hear, in echo, the stirrings of Genesis 1:31 where God sees all that He has done and says, "It was very good." It is important to remember that biblical revelation is telling one story. What God did and does is good.

"When Jesus came, bringing healing to men's bodies and salvation to their souls, he had begun the work of creation all over again. In the beginning everything had been good; man's sin had spoiled it all; and now Jesus was bringing back the beauty of God to the world which man's sin had rendered ugly." (William Barclay, *Mark*, 182).

"Show that the Kingdom of God has begun: v. 37c is a quotation from a section of Isaiah on Israel's glorious future." In our present story, Jesus is re-creating by momentarily suspending the curse that will one day be entirely removed (Rev. 22:3).

"Healing then, and perhaps healing now (though we don't always realize it), can never be simply a matter of correcting a few faults in the machine called the human body. It always was and is, and perhaps supremely so in Jesus' actions, a sign of God's love breaking in to the painful and death-laden present world. It was and is a pointer to the great Healing that will occur when the secret is out, when Jesus is finally revealed to the whole world, and our present stammering praise is turned into full-hearted song." (N.T. Wright, *Mark for Everyone*, 99).

Friend, we have a God who speaks and acts. He is in our midst doing what appears to be impossible in order that we might give Him glory. No matter how impossible your current situation appears to be, God is able. He is able to do the unbelievable and accomplish the impossible. Our God is great and He does do all things well. He is good.

Shepherding the Sheep (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. What miracle are you asking God for? Know this, He loves you and is tender toward you. He does care about your feels.
2. Do you believe He is able?

3. Do you recognize the miracle you are currently living in?
4. You are a miracle!
5. God is working in you and through you. God is working in the absence of you. Can you rejoice when He appears silent in your life but speaks loudly in the life of others?
6. Let us not forget that this individual was a Gentile and God was doing mighty acts in their midst.
7. Let us pray that God would save worshippers from Iraq, Afghanistan, and among the Hezbollah. Let us pray for a mighty work in the life of our government. **Let us not forget that God puts in place those whom He wills in order to accomplish what He wants.** Our God reigns, and we are invited to pray for the power of God to be made known in order that all people might glorify the God of the Christian.
8. Can God heal the deaf and cause the mute to speak? Can God cast out demons? Can God, cause the lame to walk and the blind to see? Yes, God can, and God can work His will in those who hate Him the most. He did it in Paul, He did it in you and me, and He can do it today. Let us believe God, let us trust God, and let us give Him the glory.
9. In the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit, I call you to have open ears and loosened tongues so that you might hear His voice and speak His truth.