

To Speak or Not to Speak

Mark 7:31-37

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Transcript:

Well, we come now to the close of Mark chapter 7. So let me invite you to take your Bible this morning and turn to Mark chapter 7 as we look together today at verses 31 through 37. As we look at this this morning, we'll quickly see that Mark is the only one out of the 4 gospels that gives us this account of Jesus healing a deaf and mute man. We do have in Matthew 15 verses 30 and 31 that seems to coincide with the concluding verses. So I wanna take an opportunity to read both of those accounts, and once again, I'll read it from John MacArthur's book, One Perfect Life.

It says, again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, he skirted the Sea of Galilee and came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on the mountain and sat down there. Then great multitudes came to him having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others. And they laid them down at Jesus's feet, and he healed them. They brought to him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to put his hand on him.

And he took him aside from the multitude and put his fingers in his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, Epathata, that is be opened. Immediately, his ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was loosed and he spoke plainly. Then he commanded them that they should tell no one. But the more he commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.

So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maim made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel. And they were astonished beyond measure saying he has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. In Mark chapter 8, Jesus asked his who do people say that I am? And they said, John the Baptist and others say Elijah, but others, one of the prophets.

Then he said, but who do you say that I am? And Peter says, you are the Christ. I read those words and immediately it tells me that they were finally getting it. They were finally seeing that he is the Messiah, that he is the son of God. But unfortunately, the people weren't getting it.

They only saw Jesus as a healer, as a miracle worker, but not as the son of God. You remember after he fed the 5,000 plus? Jesus said they sought him because they ate the loaves and were filled. They didn't seek him because what this revealed about him. He told them in John 6:27, do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the son of man will give to you, for on him the father God has set his seal.

See, they were seeking the wrong reasons. And he says, here's what you need to seek, because everything that he did was to reveal who he was. Some guided, but some didn't. What about you? Do you get it?

So we're looking at another miracle, and we just keep going from miracle to miracle to miracle to miracle. You know, how many miracles do we need to be convinced that Jesus is who he says he is? Really, only 1. 2 would just really nail it down. 3 would be a charm.

But I mean, my goodness, we have gotten miracles in almost every chapter. And, of course, this one here is recorded only by Mark, as I mentioned. As we heard in our reading, Matthew mentions the healing of the crowds, but not the healing of the deaf and mute man. So Mark begins verse 31 by giving us the setting. Since the miracle recorded in verses 24 to 30 made privacy no longer possible, what does Jesus do?

Well, he moves on. After he healed the Syrophenician woman's daughter, he leaves the region of Tyre. He followed the coastline north some twenty miles, and then he came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee. This was within the region of the Decapolis. By the way, the Decapolis, that word itself means 10 cities, and it referred to a federation of 10 Greco Roman cities that were located within the territory of Israel.

And this was gentile territory. This was totally outside the influence of the rabbis and outside of the influence of the Jewish religious Jewish religious establishment. But we're told in Matthew 15 verse 29 that when Jesus arrived, he went up on the mountain and he sat down there. And then great multitudes came to him having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others, and they laid them down at Jesus's feet and he healed them. The idea that they laid them down at his feet is an interesting phrase because the word that's used there means to throw them at his feet.

And I don't think it has the idea of implying something violent here. It's just the idea of laying something down at feet with a sense of urgency. They were urgent that he would heal their family, heal their friends, so they were bringing all kinds of people that needed healing. In fact, the verb there that she used, it highlights their desperation and their faith. They believe that Jesus was the one who could heal them.

They had seen this, they had heard about this, and now they wanted to experience it personally. And also by placing them at his feet was symbolizing an act of submission, an act of humility. It was an act of acknowledging his sovereignty, his authority. It was an act of reverence. It was an act of dependence on his power to heal.

The phrase here suggests that the people had recognized Jesus' divine authority, and they placed their trust in him completely to heal their friends. Now this is where Mark picks up the story in verse 32. Again, Mark is only writer that tells us what we're gonna go into now. And it says in verse 32, they brought to Jesus a deaf man. The word for deaf is kophos.

It could mean either deaf deaf or mute, just depending on the context. And, of course, in this context, he was deaf, as Mark says, and he spoke with difficulty or with an impediment. Now from my understanding that when deafness is congenital, in other words, you're born with it, it or when it occurs by the age of 2 or 3, it always leaves an impediment in the speech because it's hard to form words if you can't hear words. So it's normal for those who are congenitally deaf to struggle to speak when they cannot hear. There's been some shows that we've watched before.

It was a really good show. I can't think of the name of it at this moment, but the woman in the or the actor in the movie, she was deaf, and she read lips. And the police department was really interested in her because she could read lips. But she had a an interesting sound with her words because she couldn't hear, or I don't know how much she could hear, if at all. In this kind of world, during the ancient time here, there were there were no remedies like we have today.

There were no hearing aids. In fact, the first hearing aid didn't come around until about 17th century. That was the first nonelectric or nonelectronic. The first electronic hearing aid was developed in 18/98. So for some 16 centuries, they didn't have any kind of devices that would help.

No sophisticated techniques for training people, nor were there's people that had a desire like you have today. You have people actually going into those fields to help people. I know with Samuel, we've had our list of therapists that we have worked with. Some are great at it. Some missed their calling.

But being deaf in the ancient world was much different than today. Because if you were deaf in the ancient world, it meant isolation, it meant exclusion, it boots were usually categorized with the insane, because the rabbis said that they had no way of knowing what they understood, so they they wouldn't grant them normal human rights. It was actually worse in the gentile world, but the Jews would also heap on a person the fact that if they had that kind of illness or malady, they were under the curse of God. They were under the judgment of God. And even the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they would view it as being unclean.

Remember, they pretty much were in the unclean category. The only people that were clean were them. Everybody else was unclean unless you followed their rituals. And really, some of this, they were basing it not really on tradition. They were basing it on scripture.

Passages like Deuteronomy 28, 58 to 60 warned, it actually warned of diseases at being part of God's curse for not obeying the law, or Leviticus 26:14 to 16th, which would link disobedience with plagues and sickness. You remember, sickness. You remember Moses's sister when she spoke out against Moses? You remember what happened to her? She was struck with leprosy.

That's in Numbers 12 and verse 10. Sometimes they viewed it as test from God or as the direct result of a person's sin, like we see there in numbers 12 and verse 10. Do you remember the story in John 9 where the disciples asked whether the man that was born blind because of his sin or was it because of his parents' sin, and they were reflecting the common view of the day. And so Jesus was always judged by the leaders, always judged by the people for how he treated those who were sick, those who had diseases. But his healing would not only restore physical senses, like of this deaf man, but it would also reintegrate him into the community.

What was Jesus's answer to the disciples question in John 9? He said, it was neither that this man sinned nor his parents, but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. Now sometimes it is for account of sin. I mean, every time we share in the Lord's supper, we always say examine yourselves. And why do we say that?

Because it says in verse 30 that they weren't doing this, and for this reason, many among them were weak and sick and a number fell asleep. And that doesn't mean sleep, like you're gonna wake up in a few minutes, that meant death. That was the ultimate of chastening, the ultimate of God's discipline.

So, yes, there are times that god will inflict a person because of their unwillingness to repent. I mean, take our culture right now.

I mean, you can't go through the culture without reading Romans chapter 1. And if you've never read Romans chapter 1, please read it. It will help you to understand what is going on today. God has given them over to their sin so that they do not have restraint. And that's why things just continue to get worse.

I mean, my goodness, in the day in which we live, you know, when I was much younger, you know, you would hear about assassination attempts. What was the last one on Ronald Reagan, right, where he got shot? He survived. And that anymore since then until now. It's amazing.

I was really amazed the other day, and this is the only thing I'll say about this, maybe. But I was really amazed the other day to see that the second person who attempted the assassination there at the golf course, they found a letter, and the Department of Justice published the letter. And the letter had a bounty in it on Donald Trump. Now why in the world would they publish something like that unless they wanted him killed? That's what they want.

They can't beat him in the courts. They can't beat him with their policies. So what do they do? They wanna kill him. That's how they'll stop him.

And he's had so many attempts. They believe that one of the last things was happening is some, a bomb, and they it was a low missile bomb, which it would have to hit when he was taken off or when he was landing. I mean, this is just insane. I mean, even if you didn't like the man, is story of this deaf man, this man was born in this situation. And the beauty of this, Isaiah 35 verses 5 6, speaks of a dramatic transformation that will take place when the Messiah comes.

Listen to what it says. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 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 the had similar issues that He healed. We find that in Matthew 9:32.

Listen to what it says. And they were going out, a mute demon possessed man was brought to him. And after the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed and they were saying, nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel. Now there's no indication in our story here in Mark chapter 7 that this deaf man was demon possessed. Now he was born this way, or he had a disease that took place at a very, very early age.

But Mark says this, they implored him to lay his hands on him. They were begging him and doing it with much urgency. So here's what Jesus does. Look at verse 33. He meets with the deaf man privately.

He pulls him away from the crowd and by himself. You know, there there were other times when he did the same thing. He did this with Jairus in Mark chapter 5, girl was and with his parents and with his with his disciples. Also, in Mark 8 that we'll look at later, in Mark 8:22, he took a blind man in Bethsaida by the hand and he led him out of the village to heal him. In this case, he he took him aside privately and and he tells him what he's about to do.

And when he tells him what he's about to do, how does he do this? Because he can't hear him. He does it with sign language. He uses 4 signs. This is fascinating.

I know for Samuel, we were trying to teach him sign language. And, you know, it's very hard to teach him had a number of therapists that claimed that they could do this tactile signing, but they never would do it. Because Samuel has a pretty cool device that he got, and is this device is a looks like a little laptop or like an iPad, but it's not. And it has a feature in there that allows you to do everything with your eyes. All you gotta do is look at it.

And when you move your eyes around, it moves things around. It selects things on the screen. Now we were pretty fascinated with that too, but that's not what we wanted ultimately. We wanted all of it, but we wanted the signing in the hands. So we'll keep looking for that.

It is estimated that between 70 to a 100000000 people worldwide use some form of sign language as their primary means of communication. You know, Tracy uses sign language. She has a colloquial device attached to her head that helps her to hear, but she's gotta be looking at you. I had a student when I was at Princewood, one of the schools. He wore a colloquial device.

The only other person I knew who had a colloquial device was Rush Limbaugh. I'd never heard of that until, at least, he got one. But helps people to hear. We have all of this amazing technology to help out here, but in this case, there was, again, no technology. And notice what Jesus first did.

Look at verse 33. It says, he put his fingers in his ears. Ears is plural, so he put them in both ears. Ears is plural, so he put them in in his ears. Ears is plural, so he put them in both ears.

And what he was doing there, he was basically identifying with the man, telling him that he understood what kind of problem he had. He wasn't insane. He wasn't a maniac. He just couldn't hear. And Jesus knew that.

And Jesus wanted him to know that he not only knew he couldn't hear, but that he was about to heal him. This was really a symbolic gesture to show the man what he was going to do. Next, here's the second sign, after spitting, he touched his tongue with saliva. And he says again to the man, I understand you're not insane, you're not crazy, you don't have a mental deficiency, you have a speech problem, and I'm gonna heal your mouth. Notice the third the third sign.

It's in verse 34. What's the third sign? He looked up. He looked up to heaven. And that's was a gesture that he was telling the man that what was about to happen is gonna come from heaven.

You know, everyone understood that. Pagans even understood that the gods were above them, that they were heavenly, that they were supernatural. And then the 4th sign was when he looked up to heaven, verse 34 says, he made a deep sigh. And that deep sigh was an expression of sympathy. It was an deep sigh was an expression of sympathy.

It was an expression of pain over the man's suffering. It was an expression of compassion and tenderness and strong emotion. And he was showing the man that God was coming down in power to the man that God was coming down in power to give him his hearing and to give him his speech

because God is compassionate. Psalm 146 verse 8 says, the lord opens the eyes of the blind. The lord raises up those who are bowed down.

The lord loves the righteous. Proverbs 20 verse 12 says, the hearing ear and the seeing eye, the lord has made both of them. Isaiah, in another messianic prophecy, he said this, Isaiah 29,18, and 19, he said, on that day, the deaf will hear words of a book. And out of their gloom and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see. The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the Lord, and the needy of the mankind of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

So he did these four signs. He's communicating with him. That's the whole point. Now, Samuel has learned to communicate. Don't get me wrong.

And we've learned to listen. And we've learned to recognize what he's trying to say to us. And you learn it over time. But he is communicating. He might not be using American sign language or anything like that.

And I think he can because there were a few times when he did do a couple of the signs, and we saw it. And we were just like, he's doing it. But look look what Jesus says now. Is Aramaic. That's the language Jesus spoke.

He spoke Aramaic. Aramaic. And Mark tells his gentile readers what epitha means. It means be opened. Be opened.

The response was absolutely in instant. Impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began to speak plainly. That's amazing. Speak plainly. That's amazing.

The word that Mark uses for impediment, it refers to bonds. It's a word for chains, that chain a prisoner. And here, it was the chain of his tongue was broken, and he began speaking plainly. In an instant, was broken, and he began speaking plainly. In an instant, he could hear perfectly, and he could speak plainly.

He could understand. Listen. To hear is one thing, but to be able to know what you're hearing is language. You've never heard language. This was another miracle.

He didn't need speech therapy. He didn't have to go to school to learn Aramaic or Greek. He was able to hear. He was able to understand. He was able to speak it plainly.

And the idea of speaking plainly is the Greek word orthos where we get orthopedics. It means that things were straightening out. It means to put something back into a correct alignment, and that's exactly what Jesus did. He brought him to that place it should be, it should be it should be that kind of interpretation. He did this not plainly, did it correctly.

He did it right. It was nobody that could teach him how to form the letters, how to form the words. Nobody had to teach him what the words were. He received an instant facility in the language to hear it and to speak it and plant it in his brain. I mean, again, here's a man who hadn't spoken all his life, and now he can speak Aramaic.

They have to learn it? I mean, babies have to learn. Got a little 3 year old granddaughter. She's learning. For the longest time, she didn't say much of anything, and now she won't stop saying anything.

And sometimes you have to you're listening real hard, and sometimes you ask have to ask the other kids what she say. Because, you know, kids real hard, and sometimes you ask have to ask the other kids what she say, because, you know, kids can interpret kids. Adults can't. The man unable to speak is now unable to speak. But now, he's unable to speak.

You say, what? Wait a minute. Jesus just healed him, gave him his hearing, loosed his tongue. Now he can speak. What do you mean now he's unable to speak?

Well, listen to what Jesus tells him in the crowds in verse 36. What's he ordering him to do? Not speak. He was not to tell anyone. The crowd wasn't to tell anyone either.

But the more he ordered them, the more widely they continue to proclaim it. Now that he can speak, he can't hold it back. This is not the first time Jesus told someone not to speak. In chapter 1 verse 44, he says, don't tell anyone. In chapter 3 verse 12, anyone.

Why did he do that? Why did he say that? Well, there's a couple reasons. First, let's say that he didn't tell the men in from Gadara not to say anything. You remember the men in from Gadara not to say anything.

You remember the 2 demon possessed men that they had the legion of demons? After they were delivered, they wanted to follow Jesus, and Jesus said, go back home tell all your friends what happened, what good things God has done for you. Why did he tell him to do it and he told the others not to do it? I mean, that's the opposite. The reason is because what God had done needed to be proclaimed in the Decapolis.

And these were the 1st missionaries to do it. See, no one was able to talk about Jesus before this miracle and telling the man to spread the word was establishing who he was and what he could do in his power. And the second reason is why he would tell people not to say anything is because the crowds were growing. And it was making it difficult for him to go into places, because his popularity had gained so much attention. And so anything recorded about people knowing about it.

But when he arrived, they knew who he was because they had already heard about him. And that's when that woman who also heard about him came with begging him to heal her daughter. When you get into chapter 8, you have the feeding of 4,000 plus men and children. And really, the essence was they needed to understand the full picture of who Jesus was. He did perform miracles.

He did cast out demons. He did heal the sick. He did raise the dead, but that was not the whole purpose of him coming. That's not the big picture. They wouldn't understand the big picture until after his death and resurrection.

And once they saw the whole picture, then they would have the entire gospel. But they couldn't stop short of his death and resurrection, and they didn't even understand that even though the crowds are getting now to where they're gonna turn against 37. Notice the people's response. 1st, we hear what they thought. 37.

Notice the people's response. 1st, we hear what they thought. I love words. I love defining words because they have so much impact. Notice what it says, they were utterly astonished.

They were They were amazed. They had a profound amazement. They were speechless, if I could use that word. Here's a man who was speechless all of his life. Now he can speak.

Now he can hear. Now he can communicate. There are no impediments, and they are speechless. This appears to be a pattern when people saw his miracles and healings. For example, Mark 127, it says, they were all amazed so that they debated among themselves saying, what is this?

A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him. Over in Mark 2:12, it says, he got up and immediately picked up the pallet. You remember this was the guy that they had cut open the roof and they let their friend down right in front of Jesus. And Jesus heals him and also tells him, your sins are forgiven, and then tells him to pick up his pallet and go home, and he did that in the sight of everyone.

And Mark 212 says that they were all amazed and they glorified God saying, we have never seen anything like this. Or how about when Jesus calms the storm for the disciples? Mark 41 Mark 441 says, they became much afraid. And they said to one another, who is this that even the wind and the seas obey him? You see the pattern?

I believe that if you had seen this too, you would had the same response. Matthew I'm sorry, Mark 542, after he had healed Jairus' daughter, it says that she got up. And when she got up, she's walking around the room. And it says, immediately, they were completely astounded. They've never seen anything like this.

Or how about when Jesus walks to them on the water, and then he gets in the boat, all of a sudden the storm stops and they're on the shore? I don't know if astounded or astonished is really the right the right word. They were blown away, totally amazed. But notice now their speechlessness had turned to praise. They said 2 things.

1, they said, he has done all things well. The word done there is in the perfect tense. It's speaking of continuous action, and it means this, everything that he has ever done, he's done it well. He's done it perfectly, rightly, correctly, appropriately. And here, they're commenting on the perfection of his miracles.

The blind could see, the lame could walk, The deaf could hear. The mute could talk. It's it's all perfect. They walk perfectly. They see perfectly.

They hear perfectly, and they speak perfectly. The second thing they said, he makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. You remember what Moses said to the Lord in Exodus 4 and God's response? God has just told Moses that he's gonna be his spokesman. He's gonna go to Pharaoh and he's gonna tell Pharaoh to let my people go.

And Moses said to the Lord, please, Lord, I have never been eloquent neither recently nor in time past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I'm slow to speech. I'm slow of tongue. He's given all these excuses. And the Lord said, who has made man's mouth?

Or who makes him mute or deaf or seeing Jesus. Is deaf and blind to Jesus. They need him to open their eyes and their ears, and that's what Jesus does. He makes the spiritually deaf hear and the spiritually mute speak the praises of God. Let me show you that.

Go with me to Ephesians chapter 2. In Ephesians chapter 2, the first five verses, Paul tells the Ephesians about their spiritual resurrection. He tells them what Jesus did, and he also reminds them of what they were before it was done. Look at verse 1. And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you formally walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.

Among them, we too all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved. You know, Colossians 2:13 essentially says the same thing. Paul said, when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive together with him having forgiven us all our transgressions. That's what he did for them.

That's what he does for you and me. That's what he did. And if you're here today and you're having trouble hearing the things of God, it's because you're spiritually deaf. Deaf. You can't see the wonderful works of God because you're spiritually blind.

And like the apostle Paul, you need the scales to fall off your eyes. You need Jesus to put his fingers in your ears so you can hear. You need him to touch your tongue so you can speak his praises, so that you can confess him as Romans 10:9 says, confessing him as Lord. That's what you should be praying this morning. Because because apart from Christ, you're deaf and mute and blind.

You need a miracle of grace. And the only way you're gonna get a miracle of grace, you need to come to the grace giver as Jesus. You know, week after week, the Lord has been merciful to let you hear these words over and over and over. But today, you need to act on those words. God's mercy is gonna run out.

And where is it gonna leave you? If you die without Christ, immediately go to eternal punishment, hell. It's immediate. The scripture says, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. That's the issue.

Your sins need to be forgiven. And if you won't come to Christ who is the only one who can forgive them, then you're left to bear the penalty of your sin for all eternity. And it's eternal because you'll never satisfy a holy God. Your punishment will never ever satisfy him. So it will go on forever and ever and ever and ever.

There'll never be an end. We don't understand that. I don't think we understand that because there's so many things that go on in our world that do eventually end, or they kinda flesh out in a way that you

can cope with it. You won't be able to cope with this. Matthew 10 says, God will give you a body for hell just like first Corinthians 15 says that God will give you a body for heaven.

Those who are in heaven will eventually be given glorified bodies, and that will occur at the rapture of the church when the dead in Christ rise first, then we who are alive are caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the lord in the air. That moment will be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at that last will be given those glorified bodies. Same will be true for those who are resurrected. In their unbelief, they will be given bodies fit for hell. Right now, this body can't endure any kind of punishment like that.

Burn victims, those that don't survive, many times are burned beyond recognition. They can't determine just by looking at them who they were. They have to go by other means and family and things like that to identify them. But that won't be true with a body that's fit for hell that can I started to say, withstand that, but can you really withstand it? I mean, in essence, the body at that time will be able to, but you will not be able to.

But he won't let you die. He won't let you go out of existence because you're being punished for your sin. Now wouldn't it be better to come to Jesus and let the fact that God poured out all his wrath on his son be applied to you, and you'd be forgiven of all your sin? But you gotta come to him. You you you gotta repent.

You gotta place faith in him. You gotta come to him with all you got. So if I just described you this morning, that's what you're to do. And my prayer is that God will awaken you from spiritual death and grant you the new birth so you can come. Father, we ask for that this morning.

We ask for that help. We can't save anybody. All we can do is give them the message and plead with them to come to you. And I pray this morning that those that are in here today that don't have that kind of saving relationship with you would repent today and come to you and be saved. We thank you for what we've learned today, father.

We thank you for the compassion of Jesus. We thank you for what we've learned, and we give you thanks. We give you praise. And just open up the hearts of your people in here today that they would see the truth that is being pictured here and revealing the identity of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray all of this in Jesus' name.

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