

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

Read Mark 7:31-8:13

1. Jesus Is Moved By Hopelessness And Suffering

- Read Mark 7:31-37

When the crowd brought the deaf and mute man to Jesus in order for him to be healed, Jesus responded personally and compassionately.

- He Responded Personally

Jesus took him aside where he could engage with the man in a way that would allow him to understand what was going on. In most instances of healing, Jesus just spoke and people were instantly healed, but this man would not have heard his words, and so Jesus physically demonstrated what he was going to do. He touched his ears to let him know that he was going unblock them, he touched his tongue to let him know that he was going to get it to work again, and he looked up to heaven to show the man where the healing would come from.

- He Responded Compassionately

Vs. 34 says that Jesus sighed as he considered this man's condition that was brought on by the fall of man. He was grieved and despairing at the situation. He witnessed how this man struggled through life and how his condition disconnected him from the community. So he healed him, and the man was instantly transformed. Not only could he hear well but he spoke clearly, as though he had never been deaf.

When we are tempted to think that God does not care about people's struggles and pain, this story should remind us that he not only sees and understands our difficulties, but he knows the cause and the answer. We are the only people in the world who believe that God has experienced personal suffering, because he chose to subject himself to full humanity.

- ❖ Q: What makes this story a little different to some of the other healings we have heard about so far?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus took the deaf man aside privately?
- ❖ Q: Why was Jesus so despairing about this man's condition?
- ❖ Q: Why does the text specifically tell us that when the deaf man was healed that he spoke plainly (rightly) (vs. 37).
- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus told the crowd not to tell everyone about the miracle?
- ❖ Q: Have you ever accuse God of not caring about your own suffering? How does this story confront that perspective?

2. Jesus Is Moved By Faithlessness And Self-Righteousness

- Read Mark 8:1-13

In this next passage, Jesus encountered two instances of faithlessness that made him deeply troubled:

- Firstly, with his disciples who even after having participated in the miraculous feeding of the 5000, genuinely questioned where they were going to get the food from for the lesser crowd of 4000 people. The instant that there was a situation that was beyond them, they did not trust in Jesus' ability to provide. So often we respond in exactly the same way. As soon as something goes wrong in our lives, we forget God's past goodness to us and we panic and doubt.
 - ❖ Q: When was your faith similar to that of the disciples, who after seeing and experiencing God's goodness in their lives, immediately doubted God the minute their situation was out of their control? Give a specific example.
 - ❖ Q: Why do we struggle with faithlessness so much?
 - ❖ Q: As a Gospel Community, what can we do to help one another to keep believing the truth of God's goodness towards us?
- Secondly, with the Pharisees who would not believe in him unless he gave them a sign of his divinity. It is hard to imagine what more proof they needed having witnessed and heard of Jesus' countless miracles. Jesus was deeply saddened by the fact that they still thought they were in control and that they continued to play the role of judge, which came from a place of self-righteousness. At the heart of their lack of faith was a deep desire for self-sufficiency. They did not feel that they needed anyone. They had their religion and that made them feel totally secure in themselves. We often sin in this way too. We are secure in our own lives and circumstances, and when things do go badly, we then accuse God of not doing what he should do for us.
 - ❖ Q: Who do you identify with more strongly, the faithless or the self-righteous and why?



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- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus was so upset with the fact that the Pharisees were so self-sufficient?
- ❖ Q: Why is our self-sufficiency sin?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think we battle with this so much in our culture?
- ❖ Q: What is the solution to our sin of self-sufficiency? (What does repentance and faith look like in this area of our lives?)

3. Jesus Is Moved By The Price He Would Have To Pay To Save The Helpless And The Faithless

Jesus did not punish the faithless and self-righteousness because he knew that they were the reason he came. Not only did he encounter the sin and brokenness up close and personal everywhere that he went, but he knew that in a short time, he would take each and every sin onto himself, and he would feel the penalty and weight of it all, so that we would never have to. He sighed knowing that the time was coming soon when he would go to the cross to deal with it once and for all, for our good and his glory.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think Jesus sighed when he thought forward to the cross?
- ❖ Q: Why is the cross good news for the helpless, the faithless and the self-righteous??

