



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

September 8, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

16th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Isaiah 35:4-7a](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 146a CW

Second Lesson: [Acts 3:1-10](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Mark 7:31-37](#)

The Need for Followership Followers of Christ See the True Purpose of His Power **JESUS CAUSES THE DEAF TO HEAR**

1. Jesus does ____ things ____
2. Jesus gives _____ care
3. Jesus has _____ in His _____
4. Jesus, the _____, came to _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

One of the more famous stories in the Old Testament is the story of David when he had an affair with Bathsheba. He did such evil. He tried to get her husband drunk and send him home. Finally when he wouldn't do that, David sent him off to war and got him killed. He went on with life, pretending everything was fine, until the prophet Nathan came and told this story. He told this story about how this rich man had all these sheep and this poor man had one, and when a friend came to visit, he killed the one sheep. What does David do? He says, "How dare he?! That man should die for what he did!" Then there is the shocker, where Nathan says, "That man is you!" David didn't see his sin and his problems until it was pointed out in a different way.

In our story today, in our lesson of Jesus healing a man who was deaf, I think we are going to see the same picture that says sometimes we are pretty deaf. We need Jesus to cause us to hear. How does he cause us to hear and what does that make us do? As this deaf man who couldn't speak, he is going to speak. But are we really listening? Were the people at Jesus' time really listening and were they sharing the right thing? We are going to see that **Jesus causes the deaf to hear**. That includes us.

As we look at this, though, we see that Jesus is going to show some very important things about how he does all of this that might surprise us. Why does he do the things he does and why does he say the things he says? We listen to it and we are like “Why does he do this with his hands and mouth? Why doesn’t he tell them to go and share this?” We can be pretty confused at why he does the things he does, but let’s start at the end to understand something important.

In Verse 37, it says **People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said.** That’s the first thing I want us to remember as we look at this, that *Jesus does all things well.* As we look at this, we see all the things that he does well that at first we might say, “Why? Why does he do it this way?” But after they see who he is and what he is doing, of course he has done all things well. We’ll go through this and all the things he says and does, and we will list all the things he does well.

But before we get to that, there is one important thing to remember about this, that **Jesus** does all things well. Who doesn’t do all things well? That might be a simple and easy question to think about, but **we** don’t do all things well. I don’t do all things well. It’s so important to see that contrast, that Jesus does all things well even when we don’t understand it, even when it’s pretty strange. But we don’t do all things well and we need that perfect one. We also have to understand that there are situations in life that we struggle with where we aren’t going to do the right thing; we’re not going to handle it the right way. So it’s important for us to understand that. But even with people that we deal with—are the people around you going to do all things well? No.

Do your kids do all things well? Does your spouse do all things well? Do those you work with do all things well? But do we expect that? Who is the perfect one? Jesus is the perfect one, but are we expecting those around us to be perfect, and are we so surprised when they’re not? I think it’s so important for us to remember that Jesus is the one who does all things well. But as he does this, notice how he does this well for this man but also for you and me.

The area where this takes place is in the Decapolis. What is important about this is if you know a few chapters earlier than this in Mark, Jesus was in that same area and this is where there was a man who was demon-possessed. Jesus sent all these demons into these pigs and the pigs ran off the cliff and the people said, “Jesus, get away from here!” Then this man who Jesus saved, the one who is now the only one in his right mind because he wanted to follow Jesus, Jesus said “Go home and share with your family.”

Jesus returns to the same area and now, the same people who wanted him to go away are coming and bringing all these people to be healed. It sounds like there is this huge crowd and they bring him a man who can hardly talk and they beg Jesus to place his hands on him. Notice, the people want him to do it “this way.” “Jesus, fix it this way. Come and do this in front of all of us.” But what does Jesus do instead? It says, **After**

he took him aside, away from the crowd... Don't skip over that part. The Greek here is emphasizing those things over and over again—that he is not with the whole group. Jesus is taking him away, aside, and giving him this individual care. Jesus is going to show care and compassion to this man and not do it the way that all the people want. He is going to do it with him in the way that he needs. What is the way that he needs? What is the individual care that this man needs? Again, we might say "What is he doing?" **...Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue.** We don't know exactly if he only did it in the man's ears, or did he touch his own mouth and his own ear. He is not only spitting but he is communicating to the man, this man who is deaf, can't speak, and he is saying "Your mouth, your ear, I'm going to do something. I'm going to help you." Then as he spits, he touches the man's tongue. **He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!").** Again, this man who cannot hear what is going on, he is visibly able to see what Jesus is going to do. He is looking up to heaven to tell him where this is going to come from—that it is not just this thing that he is doing but that Jesus is from heaven, from God. And he sighs and says "Be opened!" This miracle is done very differently than any other miracles because this is exactly the care that this man needed—the love and attention, the things that he needed to know and to be healed.

I think it's important to understand that *Jesus gives individual care*. But are there times when things are going on around you or it looks like Jesus is over there with someone and he's not here with you? Is that how Jesus works? He can only spend time with this person and not with you? We can feel that way at times. When sickness comes, when tragedy comes, when heartache comes, when our emotions overwhelm us and we say "Jesus, where are you? Don't you care about me?" We struggle because we don't understand what is going on and we don't understand God's plan. But that doesn't mean that Jesus doesn't love you and that he doesn't care for you individually. He has washed you clean. You are his child. So remember that he is going to love and care for you even if the things he is doing seem so weird or it seems like he's over there. He cares for you individually. It's so important to see this in your life because when we don't, when we think he's not here, we question and we wonder and we say "God, where are?" He is saying, "I'm here always, with you. Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. I'm here with you every step of the way." That's really what these miracles are all about though.

When he heals the man, it's interesting because in Verse 36 it says **Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.** Why does he do that? It's always interesting as Jesus heals and shows who he is and then says "Don't tell other people. Don't tell others who I am or what is going on." Why? The people at that time had a different idea of what the Messiah was going to come and do. They had these Roman people, the Roman authorities over them and they wanted the Messiah to come with an army and defeat the Romans. They wanted a

political messiah, a military messiah, and Jesus is saying, "That's not me." So he performs miracles, but he is trying to show the purpose for his power by saying "Don't share right now. My time has not yet come. You don't yet understand why I'm here." *Jesus has purpose in his power.* The people seem to understand a little bit and maybe were starting to see, but as it says, **People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."** This is the prophecy from Isaiah. Isaiah had foretold that this was the Messiah, but they just didn't get it.

What is the true purpose and power of his miracles? The people want earthly power. The people wanted all of their things taken care of. We already talked about how they wanted a bread king. "Jesus, you gave us food for thousands of people, but Moses gave us food every day. Can't you do that?" We can look to Jesus and his miracles and we can say "Jesus, fix this thing now." "God, why won't you do this thing? Why won't you heal this person or save this or fix this issue in our world/culture? Where are you Jesus? You can do miracles, but why don't you do this?" That's probably what the man who was born deaf or his family was wondering. "Jesus, where are you?" But the purpose of the miracle is not to say that he is going to fix everything here.

The purpose of the miracle is what is prophesied in Isaiah that we read in the First Lesson. It says, **"...he will come to save you."** *Jesus, the Messiah, came to save.* He came to go to that cross and to die for your eternal sins, not just for everything here. He does come and heal. He can fix problems, as he shows. That's what his miracles show—that God does have power over sin, death and the devil. We know we have a God that is merciful and loving and that is over all things. But what does he care about most?

He cares about your eternal good. He cares about your salvation—the forgiveness of your sins. So he told the people, "Don't talk about this yet because I need to get to the cross. The time for my popularity and for you to understand who the Messiah is has not been completed yet because I haven't finished the work. I haven't gone to the cross. I haven't paid for your sins. I haven't risen from the dead." So Jesus said "Don't speak about it" but yet they continued. It was like they were still deaf in some ways, not listening to what Jesus said.

Are there times when we can still be deaf and we share the wrong things? Do we share the times when people aren't perfect? Do we share all the struggles and all the problems and talk about all the physical things and all those immediate things? At times are we not ready to share the most important thing? It's interesting because the word here, where it talks about how they "kept talking" is actually a word that talks about "preaching." They preached the message they wanted to, but how often, when Jesus asks us to preach about him, we don't want to. We are afraid. But we don't have to be afraid.

We can look to the one who helps us hear what we need to hear, through his Word, through his Sacraments that we taste today and know of his love and forgiveness. We can get blinded by the difficulties of this world and wonder "Jesus, where are you?" Jesus says, "I'm right here." It doesn't mean it's easy. It doesn't mean that everything is going to work out the way we want. But know God has your eternal good in store.

So that's the power of these miracles. The purpose of the miracles is to show that he has defeated all of our greatest fears. He has defeated sin, death, and the devil, so when we are afraid and worried, Jesus says "I've come to save you. I've come to do the things that you cannot do." You cannot save yourself. You are not the one who does all things well, but Jesus is. So we cling to him and his personal love for you—that he was thinking about each and every one of you as he died on that cross and rose for you. So cling to him. Cling to him when our hearts and the world cause us to be deaf to the message of his love and mercy. Let his Word and what he has done break into your hearts to know that he is merciful and has loved you and he will continue to love you throughout all things. Know your Savior has done all things well. He has come to save you. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.