

Title

Jesus opens ears and mouths, both physically and spiritually

Introduction

God is not dead. (Movie title)

He is alive, Relational and he communicates: through Creation (Nonverbal communication), through His son and the Scriptures verbally

Some of you are cut off from communicating with God.

You are spiritually deaf to God and your tongues speak with great difficulty about God to other people

Hearing loss isolates a person from the world and affects speech to the world.

My daughter would often put ear pieces in her ears listening to music or a movie.

It totally isolates her.

I've often let her jump when I come into the room after having called many times and then tapping her shoulder.

She in a sense is entrapped in her world

There is no communication. - not hearing me leads to not speaking to me.

In the same way some of us may be spiritually isolated from Christ.

Our heart condition leaves us isolated from the rich truths of God's word and therefore unable to proclaim it accurately.

We live receiving communication from the world's preachers: entertainment, media, movies, gaming, yet isolated from God.

Our passage today reveals how Jesus removed the communication barriers for a man,

He opened his ears and removed a speech impediment physically of a man.

By doing so proving that **Jesus can** open spiritually deaf ears to understand spiritual truths, and to loosen our mouths to proclaim His gospel.

Reading

Mark 7:31-37

Background

Jesus leaves the predominantly Jewish area of Galilee to go to a **predominant Gentile** area.

This was **his 1st and only excursion** beyond **the ancient borders of Israel**.

Jesus was focussing His training upon His disciples and preparing them for the future mission to reach the Gentiles after His resurrection.

The disciples hearts were still hardened and were deaf to spiritual truths and viewed the gentiles as unclean.

Jesus taught that both Jews and Gentiles were sinful

Salvation was available for both groups through faith in Christ

Only through faith in Christ can hearts ultimately be changed.

His encounter in Mark 7 vs 24-30 with the Syrophoenician woman, a Canaanite revealed the priority of Christ ministry was to first restore the tribes of Jacob and after that spiritual blessings would be extended to the Gentiles.

When Israel rejected Jesus, God's mission shifted to the nations.

The killing of the Messiah paved the way for the gospel to go to the Gentile nations.

But at this time Jesus had not yet gone to the cross.

His disciples were still unbelievers.

They had hardened hearts and had ears that did not hear and eyes that did not see.

¹⁷ And Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" ¹⁸ Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? Mark 8:17-18 (ESV)

Had they been sent to tell the gospel, it may have focussed on the Messiah as wonderworker, not the Messiah the saviour of their sins.

They were spiritually deaf and mute.

They were unable to hear God properly and to speak what God wanted them to speak.

They were unable to communicate properly because of the condition of the heart.

In this passage Jesus opens the physical ears and physical tongue of a deaf Gentile with a speech impediment.

Demonstrating that just as Jesus has power to restore a person physically, one could trust Him to restore you spiritually.

To open your ears to hear spiritual truths.

To loosen your tongue to proclaim the gospel.

Proposition

3 truths reveal how Jesus restored communication so that you would proclaim Him

1. Unable to communicate with Jesus
2. Enable to communicate through Jesus
3. Prohibitions to communicate about Jesus

1. Unable to communicate with Jesus

³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 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. Mark 7:31–32 (ESV)

Explanation

Jesus was preparing to **send out the first generation** of gospel preachers.

They would be sent **after** his death and resurrection to the **nations of the world**.

The Canaanite women's display of faith, was **a picture of what** would soon be taking place.

Many Gentiles would **be coming to faith in Christ** far beyond the borders of Israel.

³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis

Jesus extended the **time he had with his disciples by traveling North** from Tyre (city of extreme paganism and idolatry) towards Sidon about 20 miles north of Tyre on the Mediterranean Sea.

The chief idol worshipped at Sidon was "**Eshmun**" the **a god of healing**.

They had built a large temple dedicate to this idol.

Jezebel was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Sidon(1 Kings 16:31-33)

Its to Sidon **that Elijah** was sent to the wisdom in Zarephath(1 King 17:9)during a great famine in Israel.

Elijah enabled by God had raised her son from the dead.

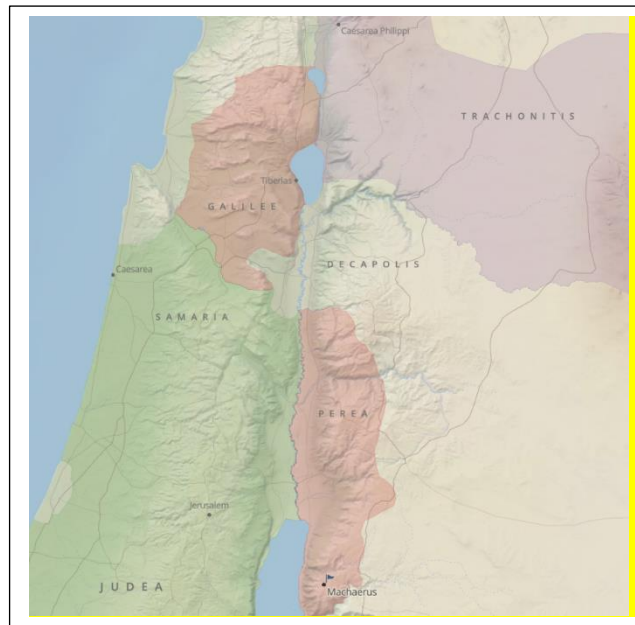
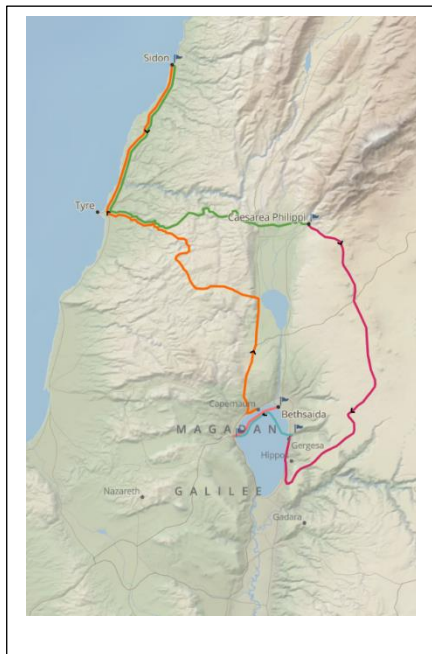
Jesus spoke of this in Luk 4:25,26

From Sidon Jesus returned on **circuit route through Decapolis** (deka= 10, polis = cities region of ten cities)

These were all pagan cities honouring idols like Zeus, Aphrodite's, Artemis and Dionysus.

Israel was Jesus priority, but here we see his heart for the nations and the need for the gospel to go from the Jews to the nations.

(Map)



Jesus returned near the area of **Gerasa next to the sea of Galilee** where he had healed the demoniac in Mark 5:1-20

Jesus had sent this man **to be a witness and he faithfully** witnessed in Decapolis.

²⁰ And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled. Mark 5:20 (ESV)

As a result of this man's testimony, **where previously the people** begged Jesus to leave, **Gentile crowds** now gathered towards Christ. Mt 15 sets the scene

*[ESVi] Matt. 15:29-31 Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there. And great crowds came to him, bringing with them **the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others**, and they put them at his feet, **and he healed them**, so that the crowd wondered, when **they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing**. And **they glorified the God of Israel**.*

Sitting on the mountain, these crowds brought the lame, the blind, the cripple, the mute and many other people to Jesus.

As he healed them, the crowds glorified God.

Mark brings attention to **one particular man that was deaf** and had a speech impediment.

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. Mark 7:31-32 (ESV)

The man is **described as deaf**. (Gk term means **to cut down, cut down from his senses**, lacking of hearing capability)

The **speech impediment** (Gk = Mogilalos- Mogi= with difficulty, laleo=to speak, to speak with difficulty, unable to articulate or mute)

The extremely rare use of the term is **only elsewhere in the Septuagint's translation** of Is 35:6

*¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; ² it shall blossom abundantly and **rejoice with joy** and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. **They shall see the glory of the LORD**, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, "**Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God** will come with **vengeance, with the recompense of God**. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the **eyes of the blind** shall be opened, and the **ears of the deaf unstopped**; ⁶ then shall the **lame man leap** like a deer, and the **tongue of the mute** **sing for joy**. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; Isaiah 35:1–6 (ESV)*

Mark inspired by the HS may be pointing readers to Is 35.

Is 35 follows a **series of judgments of Edom, Egypt, Tyre, Israel and Jerusalem**.

In Is 35 the focus **is towards future events signalling** the arrival of the **day of the Lord**.

When **the Lord returns, he comes** with **vengeance and recompense**, repayment. Is 35vs 4

He will **come as a saviour**.

After that we see **healing of infirmities** taking place: **the blind eyes would be opened**,

The **deaf ears** will be unstopped vs 5

The **lame will leap**

The **tongue of the mute** will sing for joy vs 6

Lebanon in vs 2 is the every area **of Tyre and Sidon mentioned** in Isaiah in vs 2

Decapolis then becomes the first fruits of the fulfilment of Is 35:10

*¹⁰ And **the ransomed of the LORD** shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 35:10 (ESV)*

Note that the redeemed, return to Zion "Jerusalem" singing and will obtain everlasting joy

Sorrow and sighing flee away. Vs 10

A magnificent promise of joy awaits those redeemed by the Lord not only in the Millennial kingdom, but for all eternity.

Salvation had come to the Gentile world.

Jesus is the saviour not only of the Jews but also the Gentiles.

This narrative gives you a glimpse of what will take place in the future.

They were the first fruits (the first results of the harvest) a picture of the future harvest that would come for all the nations.

Mark inspired by the HS used one word only found here and in Is 35 to direct the reader to this prophesy, that still awaits complete fulfilment with the return of Christ.

Every word in Scripture is inspired by God.

Back to our text Mark 7:32

They bring this man who is unable to hear and he spoke with great difficulty to Jesus.

The ability to communicate, requires the ability to hear(or receive information) and to speak(to transfer information).

Deaf, mute or people with speech impediments in Israel were regarded as mentally handicapped in society

Jews believed God had judged them for sin. (John 9:1-2)

¹ As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

John 9:1-2 (ESV)

Gentile society may have seen him as a problem in society.

However, some cared enough to bring him to Jesus.

They begged/implored/urged Jesus, strongly to lay hands upon him to heal him.

This term root is used:

Mark 5:12 in which the demons urged or begged Jesus to send them into the pigs

Mark 5:17 the gentiles in that area had begged Jesus to leave the area

Surprisingly here we see them begging Jesus to lay hands upon the man for healing.

The preaching of the former demoniac's ministry had changed the crowd's view of Christ.

Jesus, despite having been begged in the past to leave, despite the fact that culturally Jews viewed Gentiles as unclean steps over the cultural taboos.

Here was a man physically cut off from communicating to the world around him.

Yet this man was not cut off from Christ.

One cannot help wondering if this pictured:

His disciple's predicament: unable to hear Jesus spiritually,

And unable to proclaim the gospel, since they did not yet understand it, and their hearts were still hardened.

But help is found by Jesus.

Jesus is able.

Jesus the healer but more importantly Jesus the Savior.

Application

- Are you this morning spiritually deaf to the things of God?
- Are you this morning only able to speak the gospel with great difficulty?
- The unbeliever is spiritually unable to come to Jesus, since they are spiritually dead. (Eph 2:1)
- Eph 2:8 tells us you are saved, grammatically it means something that is done to you, not something you do. (Its by His Grace, through the means of faith trusting in Him)
- Its Jesus that can open those spiritually deaf ears and loosen the chained tongues to hear the gospel and proclaim it.
- So, Come to Jesus
- Let Him heal your heart.
- Just as he healed this man physically, he can heal you spiritually.

2. Enable to communicate through Jesus

³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴ 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. Mark 7:33–35 (ESV)

³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately

Amidst the crowd of people Jesus takes the man aside and gives him undivided attention.

He is not a problem to Jesus but a unique person .

Jesus relates to people individually, does He know you?

he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴ And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

Jesus used nonverbal communication with the man.

One commentator states the following

1. He puts his fingers into his ears indicating he recognizes the man’s physical problem. He knew it was not a mental or demonic problem as some may have thought. This demonstrated that he correctly diagnosed the problem.
2. He then spit and touched his tongue. He uses this as a gesture to indicate identifying his speech impediment. Though Jesus used spit, it had no magical properties. Ancient people believed saliva had magical properties. But Jesus uses saliva to communicate his intension to heal the man.
3. He looks to heaven demonstrating that He was using the creative power of God.
4. He sighs communicating a deep sympathy for the agonies of the man’s disability. The other possibility is that he sighed knowing that even after he would heal this man, this man would immediately disobey Christ and make it even more difficult for Him to do His ministry. Yet despite knowing this Jesus still healed the man showing His love and mercy despite his sinfulness.

One should know that non verbal communication can lead to miss interpretation, but I do think there is some weight to Christ using nonverbal communication with this man.

The point is some kind of communication was taking place between Jesus and this man.

The message: The compassionate Son of man would heal him with the power of God .

These truths would be crystalized in his heart as Jesus “said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

Using the Aramaic Mark provides an exact quote of Jesus words (the everyday language that Jesus spoke.)

With those words Jesus, God incarnate gave new hearing to the man and his tongue was miraculously loosened to speak.

Instantly the Creator of the universe commanded and this man to heard clearly and speak fluently.

In creation God spoke things into reality.

It reminds you and I that the one who said let there be light and there was light in creation is also the one that shines into your and my hearts to see the gloriousness of Christ.

*⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)*

And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly

The term **released** is a GK term that means to loosen, its used to untie ropes or bonds.

Gk: would read the organ that hears **was opened** and the **chains of the tongue were loosened**

He was **imprisoned by deafness**, cut off from the world and his **tongue was in chains** making it difficult to speak.

Jesus took him out of the **realm of isolation** into the realm of relationship

This miracle goes beyond just **repairing the physical faculties**.

He was **given the ability of miraculous language** communication.

He **is able to hear**, to **understand and articulate words** without **months of speech therapy**.

and he spoke plainly

The term plainly means **straight, right or correctly**."Orthos"

Its the term used in **orthopedics or orthodontics** (correct the teeth or the bones)

Application

God the son spoke creation into existence,

It takes the same creative power to save you.

To change a hardened heart to a heart of flesh, a heart that believes.

Through repentance and total dependence upon Jesus death and resurrection, you too can be released from your spiritual dungeon

Are your cut off from God?

Cut off from hearing Him and understanding the spiritual truths of His word.

Cut of from proclaiming Jesus to the rest of the world.

This passage reminds you that Jesus not only has the ability to heal physically, but **spiritually**, and someday will provide glorified bodies , unaffected by the fall.

You can find hope in this truth.

Tremendous eternal joy awaits every believer.

3. Prohibitions to communicate about Jesus

³⁶ And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." Mark 7:37 (ESV)

Mark 7:36 (ESV)

No doubt the **man rejoiced** when Jesus healed him.

No doubt inwardly he had the strong desire to tell everyone

To use this tongue of His.

That is **often the reality when you experience** God's blessing upon your life.

Its also a **reality for many desiring to be missionaries.**

But what is most important is the **content of your message** you tell others.

This man wanted to tell of **this amazing healer and healing he experienced.**

Yet we see Jesus commanded him and the **people with him to tell no one.**

Jesus had commanded the **former demoniac to spread the** news, but to this man he says tell no one.

And Jesus charged them to tell no one.

The big question is why?

1. **There is an important difference to the demoniac.**

The former demoniac was the **first missionary to that area.**

Through his witness news had spread of Jesus' the miracle worker.

There already was **wide spread euphoria.**

Jesus did not want to **add fuel to something that** had already hindered his ministry among the Jewish areas.

2. A second reason would be that Jesus **earthly mission had not yet been completed.**

He still needed to go **to the cross.**

He would **soon instruct his disciples** to tell no one until **the story was complete.**

The content of the **gospel message was still not fully** understood.

Mark 8:30-31 And he strictly charged them **to tell no one about him.** ¶ And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and

after three days rise again.

These Gentiles would proclaim a message that would only highlight His miraculous healings, but did not include the full message of the gospel.

3. Many people were coming to Jesus only as the miracle worker and not as the savior for sins.

They were looking for the signs, but not seeing their own sins and the need for a savior.

¹¹ The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, seeking from him a sign from heaven to test him. ¹² And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, “Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation.” Mark 8:11–12 (ESV)

We read

But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it

Unable to contain their joy they disobeyed the Lord.

Jesus had healed his ears, but these people refused to heed His instructions.

³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” Mark 7:37 (ESV)

The people were astonished (Term means to strike, to be knocked out of one’s senses, to be struck with amazement, blown away, awestruck)

Despite Jesus’s instructions they spread the word everywhere.

The message they spread was the following:

“He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.

There was a commendation of the deeds of Christ, He did everything well, correctly, excellently.

The crowds were commenting on the perfection of His miracles.

They focused on the physical healing, neglecting the spiritual healing needed.

Jesus the wonder worker not the savior

The bad news of sin and the good news of the gospel was missing.

In a sense they were **hugging the signs, or the sign post** and not looking at what it pointed towards.

- The signs were intended to **authenticate Christ as having** come from God- the son of God
- The healings Jesus performed was a **preview of the glories of His future Messianic Kingdom** when death and disease would be diminished .

⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; Isaiah 35:4–6 (ESV)

[ESVi] Is. 29:18 In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see.

[ESVi] Is. 65:20 No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.

Just as in the OT **the many shadows (sacrifices, feasts, prophecies) pointed to Christ 1st** coming, so **Jesus healing ministry pointed** towards his second coming with **complete benefits of salvation that comes for the believers.**

What must be **proclaimed is the gospel**, not the **experience**

And until **one knows the true gospel**, you should **refrain from proclaiming it.**

Application

Many today fixate on Jesus as **the miracle worker and the great teacher.**

But miss **him as Savior**

People flock to **the experience** instead of the truth.

Experience is **not the test of biblical truth.**

The truth of **Christ word stands in judgment of experience,**

Some will even propose **that unless there are the miracles**, your evangelism is ineffective.

What gospel do you preach?

Is it come to Jesus because he can do signs and wonders and so will you?

Is it come to Jesus because of the experiences you will have?

Is it come to Jesus because He will take away your problems?

Is it come to Jesus because he will restore your health and your wealth?

Or

Is it come to Jesus because you know?

- how sinful you are
- how wicked your heart is
- how dead you are in your and sin
- how your only hope for salvation is to trust in His death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin.

Maybe in your heart you think:

- I need this experience to be more spiritual
- So your desires influence you to make the decisions to pursue the experience rather than God's word.
- Teachings and doctrines should not flow from experience but from the truth of God and His word.
- Experience cannot validate truth, its the other way around.
- Are we proclaiming the experience or the truth That is the question?

Jesus

1. If the gospel is a message only of Jesus 's abilities to heal you of your sickness, or your poverty, or your problems, then you may actually be missing the gospel.
2. You and I must make sure that the gospel we proclaim is a gospel pointing to the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the death and resurrection of Christ and the call to repentance and faith.

Summary

IN this passage we learned that this man was unable to communicate physically.

He was deaf and spoke with difficulty.

He was brought to Jesus.

In the background we know that his disciples were unable hear and understand Jesus cause their hearts were hardened Mr 817-18

Every unbeliever is in the same condition.

Jesus was able to communicate with this man non verbally.

Jesus was able to heal this man physically

In the same way Jesus is able to reach in to a darkened heart, and change that heart.

Jesus is able to give you spiritual understanding, spiritual hearing and a tongue that can share the gospel

This is through repentance and faith in the gospel(JC death and resurrection)

You and I should take care that:

- we don't determine truth by experience
- we don't proclaim the experience rather than the truth
- Let's preach the gospel
- Let's evaluate the experience by the truth of God's word.

3 truths reveal how Jesus restored communication so that you would proclaim Him

1. Unable to communicate with Jesus
2. Enable to communicate through Jesus
3. Prohibitions to communicate about Jesus

Ephesians 1:16–23 (ESV)

¹⁶ I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸ having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰ that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.