

IV. THE CHARGE TO SILENCE AND EFFECT OF THE MIRACLE (7:36,37).

- A. Tell no man: "And he charged them that they should tell no man; but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it" (36).
1. Whether this charge was for the Lord's personal safety is not revealed.
  2. He could doubtless work more effectively without great multitudes following his every step. Human nature being what it is, however, his wonderful work inspired them to do the very opposite of his request.
  3. Mark is the only gospel writer who records this incident.
- B. All things well: "And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (37).
1. Mark's account of their amazement employs a double superlative.
  2. "He hath done all things well (beautiful)" is "commendation upon the workman originally placed upon his work--Genesis 1:31."--McGarvey.
  3. "Christ ever since has been engaged, spiritually, in the same work."--Johnson.
  4. The notice of Matthew 15:31, "they glorified the God of Israel," implies that many of those present were heathen.--Trench.

CONCLUSION -

- I. The Lord's excursion into Gentile territory and the miracle wrought there reminds us we should try to be a blessing to many souls in a wide field beyond the pale of our own people (Gal. 6:10; James 1:27; 2 Cor. 9:12,13).
- II. The church has a duty far beyond our own borders (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
- III. The Great Physician has need of many human helpers as hearing and speech instruments of his divine words of grace today. "No person is so deaf as he who will not hear God's word; no person is so dumb as he who will not speak God's praises"--Cox, The Miracles of Jesus, p. 25.
- IV. Some look & sigh, but do nothing more. Let us look, sigh, then do what is needed. Persistence is needed. But we usually do our most effective work privately.
- V. The Lord has done all things well in creation, providence and in redemption. Let us do our very best to follow Jesus Christ in doing God's will for us and all mankind.

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON TWENTY

Jesus Heals A Deaf, Stammering Man

INTRODUCTION - Mark 7:31-37

- I. Just before Jesus performed this miracle, he had been in the region of the Gentile cities of Tyre and Sidon (Mark 7:24-30).
- II. Those cities were in Phoenicia, a narrow province of Syria some 30 miles long, along the Mediterranean coast just north of Galilee.
- III. That is the farthest point north visited by Jesus on any recorded trip, being considerably north of Caesarea Philippi, as can be seen on any good map. At Sidon he was about 130 miles from Jerusalem.
- IV. How long and for what purpose Jesus visited Tyre and Sidon is not stated.
  - A. He evidently did not take the trip to teach and to heal, for there were many in Decapolis just then waiting for his return. Cf. Matthew 15:30,31.
  - B. He may have gone for rest, or perhaps to signify his concern for other races.
  - C. Only one miracle which the Lord wrought on that trip is recorded: The Syrophenician woman's daughter who had a demon (Mark 7:25-30).
- V. This miracle was wrought not long before the feeding of the 4,000 (8:1-9).

DISCUSSION -

- I. JESUS IN DECAPOLIS (Mark 7:31).
  - A. "And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon" (31a).
    1. This declares that he actually passed through Sidon after leaving Tyre.
    2. His journey then was northward through Gentile country around Tyre and Sidon, then eastward across the hills and headwaters of the Jordan to the vicinity of Damascus. There he turned southward and approached the Sea of Galilee on its eastern side. See Fourfold Gospel, McGarvey-P, p. 402.
  - B. "Unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis" (31b).
    1. Decapolis was a region east and southeast of the Sea of Galilee, which contained "ten cities," "granted specific privileges by their Roman conquerors some 100 years earlier."
    2. The listing of these cities given by Pliny, Josephus and others differ. Pliny's list included Scythopolis, Hippos, Gadara, Pella, Philadelphia, Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Damascus

and Raphana.--1949 A. L. Commentary, p. 133.

3. This is the region where Jesus had cast demons out of a man which went into a herd of swine, and from which he was asked to depart (Mark 5:1-20).
4. His influence was such that Jesus was welcomed upon his return.

## II. A MAN WITH A DOUBLE AFFLICTION IS BROUGHT TO JESUS (7:32).

- A. Deaf and speech impediment: "And they bring unto him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech" (32a).
  1. The malady of deafness separates one from much in life, isolating him from immediate and normal communication with other persons.
  2. His hearing impediment is unqualifiedly stated.
  3. Since it is said only that he had an impediment in his speech, most authorities seem to agree that he was a stammerer.
  4. Some think this indicates he had not always been deaf, for only in rare cases do deaf people learn to speak.
- B. To lay his hand: "And they beseech him to lay his hand upon him" (32b).
  1. Whether his interceding friends brought him to Jesus to be healed of his affliction is not stated, but is evidently implied.
  2. "They bring" him and "they beseech him" is thought by some to mean the man himself did not have faith or hope in Jesus.
- C. Whatever brought him to Jesus, the unfortunate man stands before us as a symbol of that host of humanity with spiritual impediments of (1) hearing Christ (Heb. 3:15; Psalm 31:13), and (2) speaking for Christ.
  1. Many "veils of the gospel" impede hearing (2 Cor. 4:4; 3:15).
    - a. Prejudice and ignorance (Acts 3:17; 1 Cor. 2:8; John 1:46).
    - b. Human traditions, creeds & opinions (Matt. 13:15; 15:7-9).
    - c. Lust, pride and idolatry choke the word (Matthew 13:22).
    - d. The party spirit and loyalty to men (1 Cor. 1:11-13).
    - e. The tragedy of Christendom: Religious division and denominationalism (John 17:20-23; Gal. 5:19-21).
    - f. The blinding effects of joining & fraternizing: Higher loyalty to other "brotherhoods" than that in Christ (2 Timothy 2:4).
  2. Impediments to speaking God's wonderful words of life today: Why some are "tongue-tied," or, Causes of stammering tongues.
    - a. Most of the items listed above silence many lips which ought to speak God's word and praise Him.

- b. Failure to go "on unto perfection" silences some (Heb. 5:12; 6:1).
- c. Unchristian influences such as prayerless and sinful lives silence many tongues (James 4:1-10).
- d. Mere lip service is a real impediment (Matt. 15:8,9).

3. What will we do to cause Jesus to remove our hearing and speech impediments?

## III. HOW JESUS WROUGHT THE MIRACLE (7:33-35).

- A. Took him aside: "And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue" (33).
  1. Whether Jesus took the man aside to avoid publicity and to keep down excitement is not stated.
  2. Since the man did not seem to be a believer himself, Jesus may have taken him aside to gain his undivided attention. Possibly too the Lord wished to prevent profane imitations of his healing method and art.
  3. By signs indicating to the man his intention to heal, and perhaps as aids to faith, Jesus gave him assurances he gave to others by words.
  4. He touched his ears with his fingers, indicating the power of God's touch (finger) to give hearing; then "he spat, and touched his tongue," but where and why he spat is not revealed and is a difficult matter on which to make any reasonable guess.
- B. Be opened: "And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened" (34).
  1. This look was more likely for the aid of the man, to indicate the source of his healing. Will you accept heaven's power to aid your impediments?
  2. His sigh may have been in sympathy for the millions of deaf and dumb who will never hear, physically or spiritually.
  3. "Ephphatha" is the Aramaic term Jesus used, except for the final syllable, which, according to Clarke, could not be written by Mark in Greek.
- C. Ears open and tongue loosed: "And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed and he spoke plain"(35).
  1. Following his sympathetic look, sigh, and word, the miracle was instant and complete. Cf. Isaiah 35:5-7.
  2. Every obstruction being removed, the man spoke plain, indicating his deafness had not been since birth, otherwise he would have needed to learn to speak as an infant. Literally, he had spoke previously "with difficulty."