

Reference: MARK 7:31-37
 Church: GRACE Date: 05/25/2008

The Ears of the Deaf will be Unstopped

Purpose: To urge deaf sinners to come to Christ and receive spiritual hearing

1. Introduction

A few weeks ago, we looked at the healing of Blind Bartimaeus
 We saw his terrible condition of blindness and How Jesus healed
 A picture of the spiritual blindness we are all born with - sin
 And our need to run to Jesus for healing, letting nothing hinder
 We mentioned how that miracle showed Jesus was Messiah
 How if fulfilled prophecies such as Isaiah 35 (our reading)

Good to look at other miracles of Jesus in the same way
 Learn about our sin
 Learn about Jesus' power to heal
 See how He did everything well
 He fully demonstrated that He is the Christ, the Savior

We have seen how Jesus open the eyes of the blind
 Today we will see Him opening the ears of the deaf.
 Read Mark 7:31-37

Jesus has been in the region of Tyre
 Healing the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter
 He now comes down to the region of Decapolis – ten cities
 Near to Galilee, to the east
 This was the place the demoniac had evangelized (5:20)
 Matthew tells us large crowds came to Him and He healed many
 Mark focuses on just one of them – a deaf mute
 Brought to Jesus; they implored him to lay His hand on Him

We are going to see:

- Deafness shows us one aspect of what sin is like
- Jesus has the power to heal the spiritually deaf
- We should not take this for granted

2. Deafness shows us one aspect of what sin is like

We are not told much about the man they brought to Jesus
 Was he born deaf? Did he became deaf?
 But we do know it is a terrible affliction to have
 Picture him in his deafness:
 He can't communicate normally with people
 Can't hear what they are saying to him
 He is cut off from them, isolated, living in a world of silence

We who have hearing can partly imagine what it is like:
 We all have deafness to one degree or another
 Perhaps we had a cold that plugged our ears?
 Struggled to hear others

We had a TV once that made a very high pitched whistle
 Pam and I couldn't hear it but it drove the children nuts
 Cell phones with high pitched tones for SMS
 Shops keeping youngsters away by broadcasting the noise
 Dog whistles pitched so high that no human can hear them
 But every dog has the ability
 Minor illustrations that we all have a degree of deafness

This man could not hear at all.
 He couldn't speak clearly either
 He is cut off from the world of the hearing. Can you imagine that?
 What use audio broadcasting to a completely deaf person?
 What use the audio recordings on the web site?
 What use is a radio?

Like blindness, deafness brings danger too
 This man can't hear danger coming so he can avoid it
 He can't hear the warning shouts of others and react
 Danger can come from behind and overtake him unawares
 Wild animals he might otherwise have heard – lions
 If he doesn't see them, he will have no warning
 He will be suddenly overpowered and destroyed.

This deaf man's affliction teaches us about effects of sin

There is physical deafness but there is also spiritual deafness
 God tells us in the Bible we are born spiritually deaf
 Adam was made with spiritual hearing but He defied God
 Was thrown out of His presence, placed under a curse
 All his descendants, bar One, partake in his sin
 And are afflicted with his spiritual deafness
 We cannot hear at all in the spiritual realm – double deafness
 We are deaf to the Commandments of God we need to obey
 We are deaf to the Gospel of God which alone can save us

All the things that are true of this man physically
 Are true of us spiritually because of sin
 We cannot hear spiritual communications – at all
 We are isolated and cut off from those who can hear
 Supremely, from the God who is Spirit, who speaks spiritually
 We live in a world of spiritual silence, hearing nothing

Believers keep telling you that they “hear” God
 That he speaks to them through His Word
 Through other believers or through conscience
 They know what He is saying to them.
 But you hear nothing - cut off from God - silence

You hear nothing – and so decide there is nothing to hear
 If you do not hear the high pitched whistle of a TV
 Or the noise of a dog whistle
 Does that mean those sounds do not exist?
 No – it means you don’t have the capacity to hear them
 It is a problem with your senses – it is your fault
 There are radio communications all around us in this room now
 Radio – dozens of stations, 7x24. Do you believe that?
 Can you hear them now? But you believe they are there?
 You don’t have the capacity to hear them – but they are there
 You could turn on a radio and hear them now?
 You do not have the capacity to hear them
 You need to be given the right equipment

God is speaking this morning through His Word
 He commands your obedience, but you turn a deaf ear
 He points you to Christ for salvation, but your ears are stopped
 You do not have the ability to hear it, your sin took it away
 It is your problem – your fault
 Will you say, “I don’t believe - I don’t hear anything”?
 The fact you cannot hear it doesn’t mean God isn’t speaking
 Why does Jesus say “He who has ears to hear, let him hear”? x6
 It is because not everyone has ears that can hear Him!
 Only those in whom Jesus restores the sense of spiritual hearing
 Why does He say “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them,
 and they follow me”?
 Because those who are not His sheep do not hear His voice!

And spiritual deafness puts you in great danger:
 Judgment for sin is coming
 If you do not have Christ as Savior, you will be consumed
 You did not obey the Commandments of God
 You rejected the only Savior from sin - Jesus
 The fires of Hell are reserved for those who do not repent
 But you cannot hear the warnings spiritually
 This is what they sound like to you.....
 (Your soul is heading to Hell – Jesus can save you – run!)

So spiritual deafness is far worse than physical
 You cannot hear the warnings about coming judgment
 You cannot hear the words of eternal life
 You cannot hear the call of Christ when He says
 “Come to Me and I will give you rest”
 You hear nothing spiritually. You are cut off, oblivious
 And it is all your fault.

3. Jesus can heal the spiritually deaf

How will Jesus respond to those who bring him this man?
 “It’s his own fault he can’t hear – I won’t help him”
 “I’m too busy with this crowd – I won’t help him”
 No – He sees the need and He takes time for this poor man

Leads him away from the busy crowds, by himself
 Not a showman – concern is for the person
 Jesus wants his whole attention
 Jesus then uses sign language to show the man:
 “Your ears have a problem – I am going to do something”
 Same for His tongue
 He looks to heaven – the source of all blessing and healing
 And he sighs, or groans
 Same word used in Romans 8:23 of our groaning in prayer
 In Corinthians, we groan, longing for heaven, burdened with sin
 So Jesus groans, so He sighs.
 The Great High Priest, sympathizes with our weaknesses
 Some commentators point to him bearing our afflictions
 See Him here, entering into this man’s deafness, misery
 Others see Him groaning over the devastation of sin
 The ruin of a once good creation – And He does
 Others speak of the agony of His pure soul in this wicked place

Now He utters a word of authoritative command
 “Ephphatha!” – be opened!
 Instantly, the deaf man’s ears are unstopped and he can hear
 His tongue is loosed – he is whole

You have friends who have told you often about Jesus
 They have told you how He healed them
 How He kept the Law of God for them, which they broke
 How He died on the cross and took their guilt, punishment
 Paid the debt for their sin
 You haven’t heard Him, but you want to hear Him for yourself
 How will Jesus respond if you come to Him for healing?
 He will take time for you – deal with you as an individual
 If you give Him your full attention, serious about your soul
 If you turn from your sin that made you deaf to Him
 If you trust Him alone to save you from your guilt and shame
 He will utter the word of command over you, “Be Opened!”
 And you will hear Him speaking in Word, Conscience, through
 other believers – in many ways

You will be given the ability you lack right now
 And you will know that He has loved you and healed you
 Don’t you want that?

4. We should not take this for granted

Note that Jesus didn’t exactly follow the crowd’s directions
 They asked only that He lay His hand on him
 Jesus treated him as an individual – in the best way
 Be careful in directing the Lord how to answer your prayers

See the crowd – “astonished more than beyond measure”
 They couldn’t help speaking about it
 Even though amazement led them to disobey Christ’s instructions
 Not rebellion based on hatred of Jesus but excessive enthusiasm.
 “He has done all things well”, they said
 Some refer to the creation account, God saw all was good.
 They see the New Creation unfolding here by Christ’s power

We have an outstanding Savior – who has done all things well
 Every saved person is a testimony to His healing power
 It is a miracle of the profoundest wonder, if we understand sin
 He makes the blind to see, the deaf to hear (Isa 35)
 He makes the dead to live
 Maybe we could allow ourselves a bit more enthusiasm!
 Could we be more unstoppable in telling others of this Jesus?

5. Conclusions

Have you heard Him this morning?
 Do you at least want to hear Him?
 Come to Him now, believe on Him now
 Accept that if you cannot hear Him, it is entirely your fault
 But He is able and willing to forgive, to heal
 Get on your own with Him, look to Him, trust in Him
 Lose yourself to Him
 He will open the ears of your soul with a word – “Ephphatha!”

He who has ears to hear, let him hear!