

Text: Mark 7:31-37

Theme: Ephphatha

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My dear beloved flock, the text for our meditation this morning is the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the seventh chapter, with a focus on verses thirty-one through thirty-seven.

Boys and Girls, how are you doing this morning? Excellent! What do I have here? I have an art project that I started but it is not finished yet. It is a failed project. Try as I might, I cannot get this project done. Do you think one of you could help me? Maybe, who else could help us? Jesus can. Jesus is always able to help us. He never has a failed project. He does all things well. As we will see in our text for today, Jesus opens our ears and our hearts to the Gospel so that we can praise Him for every good thing He has done for us. How are our ears stopped up? How does Jesus open them? Ponder these questions as we hear the rest of the sermon. You may go back to your seats and those who love you.

Ephphatha= Be Opened

PRUDENTIUS, A SECOND CENTURY HYMN WRITER AND POET WHO WROTE EXTENSIVELY CONCERNING CHRISTIANITY, WROTE THUS ABOUT OUR TEXT FOR TODAY:

Deafened ears, of sound unconscious,
every passage blocked and closed,
At the word of Christ responding,
all the portals open wide,
Hear with joy friendly voices and
the softly whispered speech.

Every sickness now surrenders,
every listlessness departs,
Tongues long bound by chains of silence
are unloosed and speak aright,
While the joyful paralytic
bears his pallet through the streets.¹

JC Opened the ears/mouth of deaf man, ASL for Him speaks in His own language!

In our text for today, Jesus meets the needs of a man born deaf. Jesus is begged by a gentile crowd to do something for this man. They begged Jesus to lay His hands on him. Jesus does so in a wonderful way. He takes the man aside, away from the crowd, so that the man does not get distracted. He can focus solely upon Jesus and what He will do for him. Jesus explains what He will do using something as simple as touch. He places His fingers in the man's ears, showing that He will heal his ears and remove his deafness. Jesus spits and touches his tongue to show that Jesus will give to him a restored tongue and the ability to speak plainly. Jesus sighs, looks up to heaven, in order to tell the man where this healing is coming from. That it is coming from God Himself. Jesus then says a simple Aramaic word, Ephphatha, be opened! And instantly the man's ears were opened and he spoke plainly. He could now hear everything fully, the sound of birds, babbling brooks and streams, the voices of family, friends, and loved ones. The same divine power which brought the universe into existence when God spoke brought healing to this man.

¹ Oden, T. C., & Hall, C. A. (Eds.). (1998). [Mark \(Revised\)](#) (p. 99). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Does so still for us today

Jesus continues this healing even today. We are much like the man born deaf. Our ears are made spiritually deaf by sin. Our sinful nature does not want to hear the Word of God. We do not want to hear that we are sinners, that we have broken the Law of God in our thoughts, words, and deeds. That we have lied, murdered, coveted, put other things in the place of God, and much more. Our sinful nature does not want to hear that you are not perfect and good. The very fact that because of our sins, we cannot save ourselves. Our sinful nature desires, much like a child, to put it's fingers in our ears, stop up our ears, and not listen at all.

Yet, through His Gospel, Jesus reaches out, touches our ears and says Ephphatha, be opened! Jesus opens our eyes and ears clothed by unbelief and the mouths silenced by sin. Jesus rescues us from captivity to the power of Satan by suffering, bleeding, dying, and rising again from the dead. Jesus continues to open our ears and unloose our tongues though His word and Sacrament here and throughout the world. He releases us prisoners from our captivity, opens the eyes of the blind and the ears of the spiritually deaf so that we, and all sinners, might hear the gospel, turn and be forgiven.

As new creations, we praise Him now and forever

As renewed and restored people of God, our tongues have been unloosed and we join in telling of His great and wonderous works that He has done for us. Like the crowds, the more Jesus does for us, the more we keep talking about it. We tell others of the great forgiveness that we have been given. The comfort and

strength that is ours in the midst of strife, pain, and suffering. A comfort found not in ourselves but in the new restoration given to us by Jesus Christ. In thought, word, and deeds, in our interactions with those around us, we tell all who will listen that the Messiah has come, He has defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil. His kingdom is forever. But the best is yet to come. There will be a Day when all weeping, all ailments, all death will be banished forever and there will be no more need for sighing.

Let us always give praise and thanks to God that He has opened our ears, loosened our tongues, and continually give Him thanks and praise, now and forever.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.