

Be Opened

23rd Week of Ordinary Time – Mark 7:31-37

The healing of the deaf-mute, in this week's gospel, follows Jesus' teaching that nothing from outside the person defiles. For the people of Jesus' time (and maybe ours) this would have been difficult to accept as many sicknesses and conditions would have been considered the punishment for the breaking of orthodox rules, sins of the person or perhaps their parents. The deaf-mute would have been a person that was considered "unclean", unfit to be part of the community. He would have been closed off from a relationship with others and with God.

Jesus is traveling into the area of Galilee, an area occupied by Gentiles who were considered to be unclean and impure. Jesus' reputation grew among the Gentiles through the stories and experiences of his healing and mercy. There is a universal and eternal message packed into the gospel this week. That message proclaims that no one is beyond the mercy, love and healing touch of God.

Jesus takes this man and proclaims "**Be opened**"! Jesus is saying to this man (to us) be open to my love, be open to my Word, be open to a new way of living in a right relationship with God. This man may have been healed physically through the Divine touch of Jesus. More importantly, this man was healed spiritually.

So there are a few questions for us this week. Who do we "label" in the world today as unfit and outside the love of God? How do we limit God by proclaiming in our own "closed" voice that God only has love for those who do not break the rules? We might say that we never do that, but we do. In our gossip, in our lack of acceptance of others and in our judgements, we categorize everyone. We are guilty of labeling our self as outside God's love. It is human nature to do so because it is easier to believe that God only loves those who don't break the rules when in fact, we all fail in some way to keep the commandments of God.

Jesus isn't throwing out the commandments. In fact, Jesus is inviting this man (us) into a right relationship with God and with others. The message we often miss is that mercy and forgiveness always allows for us to start over and to live within the commandments of God in the right and just way that God has planned for us.

The gospel this week is for all of us. It is an invitation to place our self in the presence of Christ and to be open to hear and to experience God's infinite love and mercy. In doing so, we are healed, allowing our voice to be open to proclaim Christ to all.

Blessings!


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