

Homily on Mark 7:31-37: Let Jesus Do the Work in Us

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In today's Gospel, we witness a powerful moment of healing as Jesus cures a man who is deaf and mute. But there's something about this miracle that speaks to us beyond the physical healing. It reveals how Jesus desires to work in each of our lives, if only we allow Him to do so.

The healing of the mute man wasn't a quick, effortless gesture. Jesus didn't just speak a word and move on. Instead, He took the man aside, away from the crowd. He placed His fingers in the man's ears, touched his tongue with His own saliva, and then, groaning deeply, said, "Ephphatha—be opened." This series of actions shows us how personally and intimately Jesus engages with those in need of healing.

1. Jesus Takes Us Aside The first thing Jesus does is take the man away from the crowd. This is significant. Healing, whether physical or spiritual, often requires stepping away from the noise and distractions of the world. Just as Jesus took the man aside, He calls us to come apart from the busyness and pressures of our culture. If we want Jesus to work in us, we need to make room for Him in the quiet spaces of our lives.

Saint Teresa of Avila once said:

"God alone suffices." But how often do we make time for Him alone? We may feel overwhelmed by the expectations and demands placed upon us by society, but Jesus is asking us to step aside, to be alone with Him, so that He can work in us.

Are we willing to let Jesus take us away from the crowd? To come away for just 20 minutes a day, to pray and open ourselves to Him?

2. Jesus Touches Our Wounds After taking the man aside, Jesus performs a strange and intimate act: He places His fingers in the man's ears and touches his tongue with His own saliva. It is as if Jesus is entering into the man's brokenness, touching the very places of his pain.

This teaches us that Jesus doesn't just heal us from a distance. He touches the wounds we carry, the areas in our lives that need healing. Saint Augustine said, "God touches and transforms everything He heals."

What are the areas in your life that need healing? Is it a struggle with sin? Is it a wound from the past? Whatever it is, we must allow Jesus to touch those places, to enter into our pain, and to bring His healing grace.

3. Jesus Groans and Prays Before He speaks the word of healing, the Gospel tells us that Jesus groans. This groaning reveals the depth of Jesus' compassion and His identification with our suffering. Jesus is not indifferent to our struggles. He bears our burdens, and His groaning points to the struggle He faces on our behalf.

Saint Paul reminds us,

"The Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans too deep for words" (Romans 8:26).

When we feel burdened or overwhelmed, we can trust that Jesus is groaning with us, praying for us, and fighting for our liberation. But again, we must let Him do this work in us. We often try to fix things ourselves, but true healing comes when we allow Jesus to take over.

4. Jesus Speaks the Word of Liberation Finally, Jesus says to the man, "Ephphatha—be opened." With this word, the man's ears are opened, his tongue is loosed, and he is set free to hear and speak. The word "Ephphatha" is not just for the mute man; it is for each of us. Jesus speaks this word over us, too. He wants to open our ears to hear His voice, to loosen our tongues so we can praise Him, and to free us from whatever holds us back from living fully in Him.

But for this to happen, we must let Jesus do the work. We cannot open our own ears or loosen our own tongues. We must trust in His power, in His desire to heal us.

5. Letting Jesus Work in Us The challenge for us today is to allow Jesus to take us aside, to touch our wounds, and to speak His word of healing. Too often we resist, thinking we can manage things on our own, or we get caught up in the distractions of the world. But Jesus is inviting us to surrender.

Saint Francis de Sales gives us this wisdom:

"Do not lose your inner peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset."

In a world filled with noise and turmoil, we need to find that peace by letting Jesus take control. Let Him do the things for you that you cannot do for yourself. Let Him open your ears to hear His voice, to receive His love and truth. Let Him loosen your tongue to speak words of life and blessing to others.

Conclusion: Ephphatha—Be Opened As we leave today, let's take this word with us—"Ephphatha." Let it be a prayer for each of us. Jesus wants to work in our lives, but we must be open. Open to His touch, open to His healing, open to His transforming grace.

Let Him take you apart from the crowd and do the work of healing that only He can do. Ephphatha—be opened. Amen.