

看得见的怜悯——马可福音 7:31-37

Visible Compassion – Mark7:31-37

Introduction, outline

- Scripture reading: Mark 7:31-37; Matthew 15:29-31; Isaiah 35:1-10.
- Teaching text: Mark 7:31-37
31 Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. 32 They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him. 33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva; 34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, “Ephphatha!” that is, “Be opened!” 35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. 36 And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it. 37 They were utterly astonished, saying, “He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.
- The miracles of Jesus not only attest that Jesus is God, thus proving His teaching as God’s message; but they also reveal God's compassion to humanity. This miracle is especially designed to show us God's abundant compassion in a tangible way.
- Outline:
Title: Visible Compassion
 1. Background of Compassion (v. 31)
 2. Recipient of Compassion (v. 32)
 3. Expression of Compassion (vv. 33-34a)
 4. Power of Compassion (vv. 34b-35)
 5. Focus of Compassion (v. 36)
 6. Hope of Compassion (v. 37)

Background of Compassion (v. 31)

- “went out from the region of Tiro....., and came through, within the region of.....”: Hundreds of miles, taking at least a few weeks. The key is that this is all Gentile area. This is Jesus' second visit to Decapolis; the first was when he drove out demons in the Gerasenes (see 5:20). The main purpose of this journey is disciple-training rather than public teaching and miracle-working (see 7:24). While the content of disciple-training is not recorded, it can be inferred that compassion for the Gentiles is a key focus. For the disciples to proclaim the Gospel to the Gentiles, they need to understand God's mercy towards them.
【Background】 In Jewish thinking, God has no compassion for Gentiles at all; their religion was filled with spiritual pride and arrogance that they’re the chosen race. Such a culture—full of pride, arrogance, no compassion for Gentiles—had a profound impact on the disciples. This trip was meant to correct such narrow-mindedness. Therefore, all three events recorded from this trip (7:24-8:10) are filled with God's compassion for the Gentiles.

【Additional】 Matthew 15:30-31 mentions that Jesus performed extensive healing in this region, while Mark's Gospel selects one example from the numerous healings, focusing on one individual to highlight Jesus' particularly abundant compassion.

Recipient of Compassion (v. 32)

- "who was deaf and spoke with difficulty": A deaf-mute individual. Most likely, this person was born deaf, leading to an inability to speak because they never heard human language. The term "spoke with difficulty" implies the ability to produce sounds is there but he can't use it normally. This kind of
【Think】 When the ability to communicate is deprived, the person's humanness is essentially stripped away. Humans were created in the image of God, and God's image includes the loving communion within the Trinity. Therefore, the ability to communicate is fundamental to human nature. If a person cannot have loving communication with others, their humanness is largely absent. On a spiritual level, this is exactly what sin does to us.
- "they implored Him to lay His hand on him": They likely had a superstitious belief thinking that Jesus' hands have supernatural powers. They only saw the external, not knowing that Jesus' healing power emanated from his divine nature which they could not see.

Expression of Compassion (vv. 33-34a)

- "Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself": Jesus not only had a general compassion for the multitude (extensive healing miracles, Matt 5:30), but also a personalized, one-on-one compassion. Jesus wanted to demonstrate this personal compassion specifically on this person. For all who receive the grace of salvation, Jesus' compassion is not just broadly directed toward everyone, but it touches me personally out of the millions.
- "Put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva": The Gospels rarely have such detailed description of Jesus' physical touch. Mark uses slow motion to bring us up close to see Jesus' actions so we can feel His compassion in a tangible way. Specifically, these actions were tailored for this individual, indicating: I know the reason for your suffering is your ears and tongue. My power is going specifically to these areas; I am taking practical steps to alleviate your pain.
【Principle】 When serving, Christians must learn to express Jesus' compassionate heart through practical actions, even to those most rejected by society. God often uses the compassion of Christians to pick up those who have fallen into the dark pits in life.
【Application】 When you see brothers/sisters going through hardships, don't rush to open the Bible; show them compassion. When you see them struggle spiritually, don't be quick to judge; show them compassion. When you see them do things that may seem inconsistent with biblical principles, don't rush to educate them; take time to listen first, see why they do what they do, sympathize with them, try to feel their pain, and then seek with them the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Bible.
- "looking up to heaven with a deep sigh": Human sighs usually express helplessness and despair. What emotion does the Lord's sigh convey here? "Looking up to heaven" indicates this is a silent prayer; so for a brief moment Jesus shifts his focus from the deaf-mute person to heaven. I believe this moment

triggered the Lord's compassion for all humanity and the entire sinful world. All diseases and sufferings are consequences of sin. In the process of healing one patient after another, Jesus, through his Spirit, suddenly felt the bitter fruit of sin in a profound way!

2 Corinthians 5:4: "For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life."

Romans 8:22-23: " For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. "

【Conclusion】 Jesus saw the people He created suffer the consequences of sin, afflicted with various diseases. He knew this was not God's original design. This is not the glory of God. Instead, it's the lack thereof. So, He sighed deeply for them.

【Insight】 Sighing is an expression of emotion. Knowing God not only enlightens our mind but also shapes our emotion. Who among us will sincerely sympathize with the suffering of others, like the Lord Jesus, with deep sighs for the hardships of others?

Power of Compassion (vv. 34b-35)

- "Ephphatha!" Whenever the Bible has a transliterated word from the original language, it wants us to picture ourselves in the scene, which always is a moment when Jesus is most emotionally engaged (see 5:41; 15:34). Here, we see Jesus' emotion which reveals to us the heart of God.
【Insight】 Jesus did many things, but what ultimately brought about the healing was not any of these actions, but a single word. The power to heal is not in those actions but in the word he spoke. Only the words of God can heal human sufferings.

Psalms 119:25, 107: "...revive me according to your word."

【Application】 Pastors can help you with teaching; the church can help you with loving care; but only the Word of God can truly heal you and give you spiritual life.

- "he began speaking plainly": Being able to hear is one thing, understanding is another, but being able to both understand and speak clearly is entirely beyond imagination. This person had never heard any human language in his entire life, yet instantly, he could understand and control his speech muscles to articulate clear and fluent language. With just one word, "Ephphatha," Jesus implanted the entire language system into this person's mind, creating neural connections that never existed before in an instant. This is a creative miracle.

Focus of Compassion (v. 36)

- "not to tell anyone": Because they do not yet know the key message. What they need to do now is humbly obey Jesus' teaching, confess and repent according to His teaching, and wait for the key message to be revealed. When they heard this command, they should've understood that the key

message was yet to come. Without that future message, they wouldn't be able to correctly understand the current message here.

【Principle】 Any message without the cross is incomplete. A Jesus who only performs miracles without the cross is an idol, not the true Jesus. The fundamental issue of humankind is not sickness but sin, and the key of Jesus being the Savior is to give His life as a ransom for sin.

- "More widely they continued to proclaim it": Repeatedly disregarding the command, the more they were told not to spread it, the more they spread it. This simply reveals their true spiritual condition. **Luke 6:46:** "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

John 8:31: "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine"

【Insight】 What really needs to be opened is the ears of our soul. Physical healing is wonderful, but we need a more miraculous work (the regeneration of the Holy Spirit) to change us from within, giving us a willing heart to obey, so we can live out the real kind of life.

Hope of Compassion (v. 37)

- "He has done all things well": A weighty statement, echoing Psalm 119:68, "You are good and do good." These Gentiles unintentionally acknowledged Jesus as God. Perhaps it is God that put these words in their mouths.

"In first bringing us out of darkness into marvelous light,—in humbling us and teaching us our weakness, guilt, and folly,—in stripping us of our idols, and choosing all our portions,—in placing us where we are, and giving us what we have,—how well everything has been done! How great the mercy that we have not had our own way! ... We shall never see the full beauty of these words till the resurrection morning. We shall then look back over our lives, and know the meaning of everything that happened from first to last. We shall remember all the way by which we were led, and confess that [He has indeed done all things well!]" — A pastor

"And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped..., the tongue of the mute will shout for joy": This is Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament (Isaiah 35:4-6). When Jesus comes again, all the redeemed will experience complete healing. This is the hope we have by the compassion of our Lord Jesus.