

Mark 7:31-37

Jesus Does All Things Well

I think most people are at least roughly aware of what their strengths and weaknesses are. And most people like me usually stick to the things we're good at. But every once in a while (or perhaps more frequently for some) life just has a way of reminding you of your shortcomings.

So over at the parsonage, our upstairs shower drain over the past two weeks has been draining slower and slower. And it wasn't anything critical because it WAS draining, but you could tell a clog was getting worse. And I've been told a thousand times by you, the congregation, call someone. Let us take care of it for you. But I'm stubborn and prideful and I was thinking, I can do this. So yesterday after I got all my work for today done, I had some time and I was going to fix this clog. 3 hours later, the drain had won. I spent about the first hour trying to fix it the way I thought it should be fixed because I'm a guy so I never bothered to look up how you're actually supposed to do it. That resulted in my drain snake getting all bent and pretty much ruined. Then I finally looked up how it's supposed to be done. But I ran into a rusted and stripped out screw which I just couldn't for the life of me remove. I broke two screw heads trying. So I finally called someone and we got the screw drilled out. Now I'm at least at the point where I can try to finish the job this afternoon.

3 hours and two sweated through shirts later, I was reminded of why I didn't chose an occupation working with my hands. Sometime life just has a way of reminding of your shortcomings.

You probably have someone in your life you think of as being good at everything. But I'd be willing to bet if you stopped and thought about it, even that person has weaknesses and shortcomings.

This morning in the aftermath of a miracle Jesus performed in Mark 7, we hear a crowd proclaim, [Jesus] does everything well. We are reminded that this wasn't just hyperbole of the moment but a statement backed by divine truth. Jesus truly is the one person with no shortcomings, the one who does all things well. And as we look at the context of that declaration, we're faced with some interesting questions. Do we value Jesus so highly? Do we truly confess him as one who does all things well? Our prayer will be that the Spirit through his Word will enliven your faith to proclaim, yes! and join the crowds in their sincere confession.

You know when you read the gospel of Mark, it's a fast-paced, one-story-after-another kind of read. Mark records miracle after miracle after miracle. And one thing that can happen really easily is you lose sight of the individuals Jesus interacts with. They just become another faceless person in the crowd of people who crossed paths with Jesus.

So stop for a second and take a look at the man in these verses.

Jesus had been way up north in the Gentile regions of Tyre and Sidon. He had gone there in the aftermath the feeding of the 5000 when, as the gospel of John tells us, so many turned away from him. He traveled from there to another Gentile area. The Decapolis, the ten cities, located mostly on the eastern side of the Jordan River. From there he traveled north, around the sea of Galilee back to a place he had been prior. This was where he had healed a demon possessed man and sent those demons into a herd of pigs. So when he arrived, his reputation preceded him. The people knew exactly who Jesus was and what he could do.

Which is why they brought the man to him. Pay attention to how he's described. Deaf and with a speech impediment (which given how they described him later as mute, was more serious than a studder). Imagine this man's life. Imagine the isolation. Every time he tried to speak he could see the children giggle. He was probably accustomed to being silenced because the adults didn't want to deal with the embarrassment or have the patience to try and understand. He couldn't hear anything, just alone in the silence of his own thoughts. You can imagine a person like that retreating deep into their own isolation. He lived his life alone.

Until he encountered Jesus. Now look at the personal care and love. Jesus took him aside, refusing to make this a spectacle, away from further embarrassment. And then he communicated with the man in a way he could understand to tell him what he was going to do. He put his fingers in his ear. I'm going to fix those. He spit and then he touched the man's tongue. I'm gonna fix that. Then he showed the man how this was going to happen. He directed his attention up to heaven. And finally he sighed. It's one of those details you wonder why the Spirit had Mark record. Do you think maybe it was to show us that Jesus wasn't happy with the results of sin in this world? He knew this man was not the way God intended him to be. This disability, though not the result of a direct sin, was a result of living in a world ruined by sin. Jesus sighed to show that he too saw the devastating consequences of sin. And then he spoke. Ephphatha! Aramaic for "be opened".

Immediately the man could hear. Immediately the man could speak. His isolation and suffering were over. Perhaps most miraculous and certainly most important of all was this man now knew Jesus. It's not hard to imagine that he was at the front of that group of people telling anyone and everyone about Jesus using his newly acquired ability to speak.

The conclusion the people took away from this miracle? **He does all things well.**

Do you find yourself agreeing with that conclusion? Probably out loud you would. Probably as a matter of knowing what you're supposed to say or think you would. But do you actually agree?

I don't know, maybe you can relate to of the struggles that man endured. Maybe you've found yourself feeling isolated and alone lately. Maybe its not a physical disability but a mental or emotional one. Maybe it's just the circumstances of our world the last year plus. And in the isolation of your own mind you can't help but wonder if God is there or if he is why he's continuing to allow you to be in this situation when you're crying out to him for relief!

Or maybe it's not loneliness or isolation but some other hardship which has left you with questions. Why another senseless shooting? Why doesn't God just put an end to it? Why does God force people to go through life with a physical, mental, or emotional handicaps? Why doesn't God just cure the diseases? Why the hurt, the pain, the sorrow, the sadness? Why is my marriage the one that's falling apart? Why is my kid the one with the disease or the disability? Why am I confined to this chair or hospital bed or nursing home?

We find ourselves asking these questions in frustration. Because we hear what Jesus did on that day and we know that with one snap of his powerful fingers...with one wave of his almighty arm...with one word from his creating lips...God could change all of it. He could put an end to disasters. He could put an end to disease. He could put an end to violence. But he doesn't. So we get frustrated with God...we get upset with God...we get angry with God...we begin to resent God...we begin to doubt God. And maybe not out loud, but in the depths of our hearts the crowd's praise of Jesus doesn't sit so well with us in those moments. He does ALL things well? Doesn't seem like it to me!

So maybe it would be helpful for us to state the unstated. Jesus performed a miracle of healing on that day with great compassion for that man, freeing him from his struggles. But that man was just one of many deaf men in Israel and the surrounding regions. That man was just one of many mutes too. Yet Jesus didn't open the ears of every deaf human. He didn't rid the world of mutes.

That's not the point. Jesus didn't come to rid the world of the effects of sin. He came to rid your soul and your future of them.

So why did he heal this man? So he could reveal himself to that man first and foremost. All his suffering led him to this encounter with Jesus. But also so he could reveal himself to that crowd and to you and me. In fulfilling the words of Isaiah who said the Messiah would make the lame walk and the blind see and the deaf hear and the mute speak, Jesus revealed himself the Savior. Not from every pain, but from sin itself.

In fact, Jesus was so concerned about the consequences of sin that he wasn't content with just giving you 70 or 80 years of pain free living. He wanted more for you. He wanted you to have eternity with him. And so rather than just ridding your life of the symptoms of sin, he actually took your sins upon himself.

If you want to truthfully be able to confess with the crowds that Jesus has done all things well, then THAT'S where you have to start.

That was what his Father had sent him to do...and he did it very well. There were no half measures. Jesus didn't walk in off the horizon at 9am on Good Friday, put in his 3 hours of pain and torture and shame, to be back in heaven by lunchtime. He wanted to redeem you fully. So he became you. He took on the weakness of this flesh and lived among his lowly creatures for an entire lifetime. So that he could do ALL things well. Not just sprinkling his divine power here and there to heal our afflictions, but putting his divine righteousness to work every minute of every day. Laboring as a true man to keep the law with all of its demands SO well that when he gave you his perfection as a gift by faith, God the heavenly Father looks at you and without lowering his standards AT ALL, declares you holy in his sight. And having lived life SO well on your behalf, Jesus faithfully sighed that final sigh of life unto death on the cross, to pay for sin and mark that accomplishment with a declaration of completeness: It is finished.

That's what Jesus wanted for you. That's what Jesus wants for you. And that is what he accomplished well enough that even his perfect heavenly Father agreed.

And now with that goal accomplished, Jesus now rules this world and continues to do all things well. How can we say that in the face of all those difficulties. Because we see them as Jesus does. He uses them to serve the greater goal. He uses them to bring you to himself. He uses them to bring others too. Those hardships become opportunities to praise Jesus in the presence of others. They become opportunities to call on him. They become opportunities to rely on him. In all of it, pulling our hope away from ourselves and this life and squarely onto Jesus.

That's what he did for that man. All those years of hardship led to that moment. And in healing him, the man knew Jesus in a way he didn't before.

Jesus can and does the same for each of us. If it serves his will to lead you or someone around you closer to him, he has the power and the desire to heal us of any affliction. And as he demonstrated he, he will. But if it serves his will to lead you or someone around you closer to him by continuing to allow an affliction, he'll do that too. Because THAT is what it means to do all things well. A Savior whose every decision and action is filled with love for your eternal well being in him.

And with eternity in mind, we can look at every difficulty of life and proclaim with that crowd, Jesus does all things well. In deliverance AND in hardship. Jesus does all things well.

As for me, don't even bother offering to help me with the drain, I'm gonna fix that one! But I have no disillusion about my shortcomings. No so with Jesus. He truly does all things well. May we confess it and believe it for the eternal well being of our souls. Amen.

