

The Gospel According to Mark

All Will Be Well

Mark 7:31-37

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Introduction

In a time of uncertainty and political and cultural volatility it can be easy to become overwhelmed. It can be easy to lose hope and to give in to despair. Thankfully, as Christians we can return to the Scriptures for perspective. We can look to the Word of God and be reminded that for those who know Christ there is a day coming when all will be well.

There is a common way that the story of the Bible and of human history is often summarized: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation. These four words are often used to remind us of the plan of God for the world. He created all things, and He created them perfectly (Gen 1:31). Through sin came the fall and the curse, but through Jesus came redemption. Now, we await the consummation of all things when Jesus calls His people to Himself and restores all that sin has distorted and destroyed. The promise of the Bible is that for those who know Christ a day is coming when all will be well (Rev 21:1-5).

In Mark 7:31-37 we have the account of a deaf and mute man who is healed by Jesus. It's a great reminder of the power and compassion of Jesus. But there's more to be gleaned from this passage than seeing Jesus as a kind miracle worker. The response of the crowd and Mark's subtle allusion to Isaiah 35 serve as reminders that Jesus came as the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament and to set in motion the fulfillment of the promise that all will be well.

Context – This miracle's place in the Gospel of Mark

In chapter 7 Mark has been showing how Jesus is bringing a new age in God's plan of salvation. While the Jews believed that salvation was reserved for Israel and dependent on adherence to the Law, Jesus reveals that salvation is a matter of the heart and it is available to people of all nations (7:1-23). One way He illustrates this truth is by going away with His disciples into a Gentile region where He shows compassion on a Gentile woman (7:24-30).

A Trip through Gentile Lands (7:31)

- **An unusual route** – In verse 31 Mark records that Jesus traveled from Tyre (northwest of Galilee) to the Decapolis (east of Galilee), but His route is anything but direct. In recording this extended route Mark reveals that Jesus is spending a prolonged period of time in the Gentile region.
- **A return to the Decapolis** – In chapter 5 Mark writes of Jesus and His disciples traveling to the region of the Decapolis, but they were only there for a short while. After freeing a man possessed by demons Jesus was forced to leave. But before He left He commissioned the former demoniac to go and tell everyone what Jesus had done. It's interesting to recognize that upon his return to the region Jesus is well known and large crowds are coming to Him seeking miracles (Matthew 15:29-31). Perhaps the witness of this one man led to the fame of Jesus in the area.

A Compassionate and Miraculous Healing (7:32-35)

- **A man brought to Jesus (v. 32)** – After hearing that Jesus was in the region some people bring a deaf and mute man to Him. Both their coming to Jesus and their desperate pleading show their faith that Jesus can heal.
- **A rare word choice** – In verse 32 we are told that the man is deaf and has a speech impediment. The Greek word Mark uses to describe the speech issue is only used one other time in the Scriptures, in Isaiah 35:6. This word choice as well as the response of the crowd in verse 37 show a clear connection between these two passages.
 - **Isaiah 35** – After many chapters of announcing coming judgment the tone of Isaiah shifts in chapter 35. Here he announces that a time will come when God will save and bless His people. The arrival of this time of blessing will be marked in part by the deaf and mute being healed.
- **A compassionate touch** – Often Jesus healed with just a word. In this case the healing is much more involved as Jesus takes the man aside, touches his ears and even puts his own saliva on the man's tongue. Lastly Jesus looks to heaven and sighs. While Mark doesn't explain the reason for Jesus's actions, His patient and purposeful interaction with this man seems to reveal the compassion of Jesus and His sympathy for human suffering.
- **The miraculous healing** – At the word of Jesus the man's ears were opened and his tongue was released (unchained). This demonstration of Jesus power and compassion should evoke our awe and worship.

A Commandment-Defying Proclamation (7:36-37)

- **A command to silence** – Again we see Jesus commanding that people not speak of His miracles. The time for Jesus to be fully revealed had not yet come – this would happen after His death and resurrection.
- **A zealous proclamation** – Despite Jesus's strict charge the crowd does not remain silent. They cannot help but speak of what Jesus has done.
- **The content of their message** – The message of the crowd reveals more than they may have understood. They affirm that all that Jesus does, He does well; that is seen in part by His ability to open deaf ears and mute mouths (an allusion to Isaiah 35:5-6).

A Sign that Hope has Come (7:36-37; Isaiah 35)

- While this is certainly an account of a great miracle by our Lord, the connections to Isaiah 35 serve to remind us of the bigger picture. Jesus has come as the fulfillment of the promises of God that things will not stay as they are, but that God is bringing blessing, joy and salvation for His people. The work of Jesus reveals that the kingdom of God is coming and the day is drawing near when all the promises of God for His people will be fulfilled. Take heart, the day is coming when all will be well. (Isaiah 35:3-4, 10).