

Maybe you have seen a video on YouTube or on a TV show of a deaf person who was able to hear for the first time. A doctor implants a cochlear implant into their ear and when it is activated they are able to hear instantly. When they are able to hear they weep with joy. The best one I've seen is of a little baby who gets a cochlear implant and then is able to hear his mother's voice for the first time. He gets a huge smile on his face. That's the kind of thing that makes you weep tears of joy, and that's the kind of thing that Jesus did in our Gospel for today. Today we see Jesus heal a deaf man who could hardly talk. The crowd is overwhelmed with amazement and says "He has done everything well."

Jesus has done everything well

- I. He enters into our world
- II. He fixes his creation

"Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis." (7:31) These places are all Gentile areas. Jesus is Jewish, but this shows that he came to be the Savior of non-Jews as well. **There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.** It says this man could "hardly talk." He wasn't completely mute. He could make some sounds, but they were not very understandable. This indicates that the man was probably born with the ability to hear but then at some point, maybe very early on in his life, he became deaf. And when you can't hear yourself talk, or hear anybody else talk, it becomes harder and harder to speak properly. So this man had almost completely lost any ability to talk.

Jesus **"took him aside, away from the crowd." (7:33)**. Jesus could have just healed him in an instant and been on his way, but Jesus takes time out of his busy schedule to take this man aside away from the crowd. Jesus takes the time to establish personal contact, a personal relationship with this man.

And Jesus does the same thing for you. In seventh grade catechism the other day we were talking about the fact that God is omnipresent. He is present everywhere. To illustrate the importance of God's omnipresence I told three of the kids to tell me about what they had to eat yesterday, but the catch was they all to talk at the exact the same time, so my attention was divided between the three kids. While I was listening to one I couldn't be listening to the other at the same time. My attention was divided between the three students. There are 8 billion people in the world. But the fact that Jesus is omnipresent means that you don't have 1/8billieth of Jesus' attention. You have Jesus' undivided attention, just like this man had Jesus' undivided attention.

Jesus **took him aside, away from the crowd**, to give him some personal attention, and then Jesus **"put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue." (7:33)** Why does Jesus do this? Well, the man cannot hear, so Jesus is doing some sign-language. He puts his fingers into the man's ears to tell him, I'm going to heal your ears. And he touches the man's tongue to say "I'm going to heal your tongue." A very interesting detail is that Jesus spit. We don't know why Jesus spit. We are told of two other times when Jesus uses saliva in a healing, the two other times he uses saliva happen when he is curing people of blindness. (Mark 8:23; John 9:6). It could be that saliva was used as a healing salve and so by spitting Jesus is again communicating to the man, "I'm going to heal your ailment."

Gain, Jesus could have just healed him. But he takes the time to do sign-language and communicate with him. One commentator said that by using this sign-language Jesus "enters into the mental world of this man."

Jesus enters into your mental world. You come face-to-face with Jesus through his word. You come face-to-face with Jesus in the water of baptism. You come face-to-face with Jesus in the Lord's Supper. These are the places where Jesus enters into your mental world and gives you the personal attention that you need. In his word and in baptism and in the Lord's Supper, he comes face-to-face with you and treats what is ailing you. Like a good physician he gives you personal care. Through his word, baptism and the Lord's Supper he forgives your sins and restores you to live a life that is pleasing to him.

Jesus enters into your mental world and he also fixes his broken creation. Jesus is the Creator. Jesus here kind of reminds me of an inventor. The inventor is on his workshop and one of his inventions is broken and so the inventor takes his invention in his hands and sees what is wrong and fixes his invention. Jesus is the Creator of this man and his creation is broken. And so here Jesus takes his creation in his hands and fixes it. **“Jesus looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh.”** Instead of sigh we could translate this word, “he groaned.” Why did Jesus “groan”? This groaning shows the deep sadness Jesus feels at what sin has done to his creation.

The reason Jesus came was to intervene and to fix what had gone wrong with his creation and so Jesus says, **“Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”). At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. (7:34-35)** Jesus did not use a cochlear implant to give this man hearing. He simply uses his almighty word. It’s a lot like when God created the world in the beginning. God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. Here Jesus says, “Be opened” and the man’s ears were opened. **His tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. (7:35)** Before the man’s tongue was severely tongue-tied, but now his tongue was loosed and he spoke very well.

The first lesson for today from Isaiah said that God was going to intervene and fix his creation. **“Your God will come ... Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.” (Isaiah 35:3-7)** “Your God will come and heal” this says. Jesus is God and he came to earth to intervene and fix his creation. When Jesus healed people it was a preview of the day when he will intervene again. When he returns on the Last Day, he will fix his creation once and for all. He will heal whatever ails us. If we are losing our hearing, he will restore our hearing. If we are starting to lose our eye sight he will restore our eyesight. If we have to walk with a walker he will restore our legs. He will transform our bodies so that they are completely healed and restored.

“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.” (Mark 6:36) Why does Jesus command them not to tell anyone? Jesus does not want to be known as simply a miracle worker. He wants to teach God’s word. And finally, Jesus was here to do something much bigger than simply heal people’s bodies. Jesus came to do something much more important and that’s take our sins away by dying on the cross. Jesus didn’t want anything to get in the way of him teaching God’s word and he didn’t want anything to get in the way of his mission which was to take our sins away by dying on the cross.

People were amazed at all the miracle of Jesus. They seem to show some special amazement at this one: **People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (7:37)** When God made creation the first time, God looked at all he had made and said, “It is very good.” When God fixes creation, people look and say, “He has done everything well.”

Jesus healed this man’s ears and tongue. People used their vocal chords to praise Jesus. Our ears are made to hear God speak. Jesus says, “The one who has ears, let him hear.” Our ears are made to hear God speak in his word. And our vocal chords are made to speak and sing God’s praise. When you get up early in the morning you hear the birds chirping. Martin Luther said, “The birds get up in the morning and the first thing they do is they praise God.” The birds’ vocal chords were made to sing God’s praise. Our vocal chords were also made to sing God’s praise. So having heard God’s word, let’s respond by singing his praise. Amen.