

The Healing of the Deaf Man (2)

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[0:00] And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. Indeed, you have done all things well, O Lord.

! We thank you for your word, and we pray that you will make us attentive to him even now. Help us that through the hearing of your word, we may see Christ, and for seeing Christ, we may be transformed evermore into his likeness and grow in greater dependence on his sure promises. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Good morning. Let me again welcome you, give you a warm welcome.

If you're visiting us or this is your first time worshipping with us at Holy Trinity Anglekin Church, I especially want to welcome those who are visiting on the occasion of Nico's baptism.

Baptism Sundays are a particular favorite of mine because they remind us anew of our identity in Christ. It reminds us of his promise to us and to our children.

[1:16] And so we will soon welcome baby Nico, a covenant child of Chris and Naomi, into the larger family of God.

We will be marking him as Christ's own forever. And we do this in obedience to God's command, trusting in God's promises to us in his word, of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit that is for us and it's for our children.

But before we go on to baptism, I want to invite you to look at our gospel reading this morning. It's in Mark chapter 7, verse 31 to 37. If you don't have a Bible, you can grab a Bible.

There should be a Bible in your pew. It's on page 1002. Now, I'm going to be asking you to leaf through the Bible this morning. We're going to be playing, what's that called? Sword drills.

So put a finger in Mark chapter 7. Before we go and look into the gospel reading, we will turn first to Isaiah 35, which is our first lesson read this morning.

[2:28] I'm so grateful that Kay read the whole chapter to give us a proper context and we'll see what Mark is doing and how he's arcing back to Isaiah 35 when he tells us of this miracle of Jesus in healing this deaf man.

Now, this miracle account is only to be found in Mark's gospel. It's not in Matthew, Luke, or John's accounts. And I think Mark is intentional in giving us this story and showing us the way Jesus healed this man, the peculiar way in which Jesus healed this man.

It involved a spit. It involves a touch, a sigh from our Lord, and a word in Aramaic. Now, we know that a word from Jesus would have been sufficient to heal, as he did, actually, in the previous verses.

We didn't look at it, but verse 24 to 30, it was just a word, sufficient to heal the Syrophenician woman's daughter. Just a word from God.

It's sufficient. So all this suggests, then, that what Jesus is doing here, as we have it in Mark's account, is not just a miracle, but it is a parabolic miracle, meaning that the miracle itself reveals deeper spiritual truths about the person and work of Jesus.

[4:03] And so, for the sake of our time, I'm just going to draw on three quick points that I want to make from this passage. And I will endeavor to tie those points, the event of Nico's baptism, and to encourage his parents and God's parents on this momentous day.

But the encouragement is not just for them. It's for all of us, in fact. Because, in fact, the beauty of baptism is that it is not only a rite of initiation into God's family.

It is that, but it's not only that. And in this instance, it's for Nico, but it is also for all of us who are gathered, a remembrance of our baptism.

We will have been baptized and we are reminded as we witness, bear witness to his baptism, we are reminded to, and we're called to harken back to our baptism.

[5:14] We're to remember that. And so as I give the exhortations to the parents and God's parents, I'm also giving it to each and every one of us. And the second part of why this is important and it's not just an exhortation to the parents and God's parents is that it is, as we bear witness to Nico's baptism, in fact, we are implicitly, all of us, promising as witnesses to help his parents and his godparents in their duty to bring him up in the love and knowledge of God.

So, this particular point is important to me in particular because as a parent of young children in this parish, I want to say and I say this solemnly and I fully admit it and I also say it selfishly, but my prayer is that this church will be a body, indeed a family, where those of us who are of a riper years, riper years, it's older, those of us who are of riper years are dutiful in making Christ known to the children of this parish by our faithful love and devotion to Jesus.

And as we do that, we hope and pray that they will see our example and our words and they themselves, the children of our parish, will grow as well, likewise, in greater dependence on this great Savior, Jesus Christ.

I hope you've opened there. And I'll read only verses 3 to 6. The prophet Isaiah says this, starting in verse 3. 1.

Mark wants us to see that Jesus is that great gift he is that preeminent gift it is in him that we have eternal life the gifts and the giver are one and the same it is his resurrection life that is given to us when we come to trust in him as Lord that is the great gift that endures this is the gift you will put

before Nico as his parents and grandparents Jesus Christ the great pearl the one woman is worth us selling all that we own and have in order to have so firstly I want us to see that this miracle points to Jesus Christ as the God man of whom Isaiah prophesied in Isaiah 35 this Messiah of God has come to loosen death here and secondly this miracle emphasizes the barrier to unbelief in the human heart the problem or the barrier as we saw from our time in John 6 and as we see now in Mark is that the human heart is shockingly shockingly hard of hearing we are deaf to God's word of life we are deaf to it and we need divine intervention to come to hear the good news of the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord how many times have you heard the gospel preached before before you came to Jesus Christ and you remember oh I've heard the gospel so many times how many times have you heard it preached before God opened your ears to now hear a right to hear as if for the first time not the first time you've heard it preached but as if you're hearing it for the first time and to come to save in faith it's because

[13:30] God has intervened and opened your deaf ears loosen unstopped your ears and open your blind eyes or maybe you wonder about how the words of promise the words the goodness of Jesus Christ contained in the gospel are so life given to you as you read them and as you hear them as you sit under the preaching of God's word you wonder this is so life given this is life given words and then you look at your unbelieving friends and family members and that same life given word seems to them like dead noise why is it how is it that it is that way well it's because your deaf ears have been unstopped by God himself your deaf ears have been loosened by God himself your blind eyes have been opened to hear and see Jesus that's the only reason you hear and come to save in faith and so this miracle in chapter 7 verse 31 to 37

Mark chapter 7 verse 31 to 37 shows that God needs to first work in us before we can come to know and believe in him and the third and last point is this notice that the man could not speak as Mark tells us in this story and this is the reality of the condition of being deaf right if you've never heard if you've never heard spoken language then there's no way to know how to speak and so this man having never heard could not speak and so notice again the miracle as Mark tells us in Mark in verse 34 and 35 and looking up to heaven we're told Jesus looking up to heaven he sighed and said to him that is the deaf man that is it's a language of

Aramaic that is that means be opened be opened and what happened as Jesus said that his ears were opened his tongue was released and he spoke plainly first look at the progression that Mark tells us first his ears were opened before his tongue was loosed and then he can then speak plainly the speaking depends on the ears being opened but even the speaking itself is a miracle the ability to speak immediately after the healing of his deaf ears is itself a supernatural occurrence Chris might know this more than others because he's a speech therapist but someone who has speech hearing impediment their speech is also affected because they can hear or write that's the concept not being able to hear or write it affects being able to speak or write and maybe because of technology now they have cochlear implants and people can hear now but what happens after they can hear now they have to go to speech therapy so they can learn how to speak or write but look what happens here in this story there is no long prolonged speech therapy

Jesus opened his ears and immediately his tongue was released as well and he spoke plainly there is a deeper spiritual truth for us brothers and sisters in this if as followers of Jesus our primary task is to proclaim Jesus how can we do so if we cannot speak plainly if as followers of Jesus as parents who have covenant children godparents all the people in the family of god if it's our primary task to proclaim christ to our little ones how can we do so if we cannot speak plainly perhaps this is your fear or concern maybe this is the fear and concern that keeps you from proclaiming christ to your family and friends we need to hear this good news perhaps it's the fear that i don't know how to speak it plainly but here is god's promise to you it is a good concern but here is god's promise to you not to fear not to not to not to just be silent out of fear but to trust that god was open your ears to hear aright as also loosen your tongue to speak aright and plainly and to continue to pray for god to help you as you speak even the great apostle paul recognized this concern and so he asked the church in his letter to the ephesians he asked them to pray for him so that he may declare the gospel boldly and then he writes to the collections and he asked them to pray for him so that he may be able to speak the gospel of jesus christ plainly this is the great apostle paul he recognizes that he needs the help of god to speak boldly and plainly the good news of the gospel of jesus christ so have you yourself considered praying praying that god will do this that will give you the wisdom and the power and the power of the holy spirit to be able to speak boldly and plainly the good news

of jesus christ parents as you desire to speak as you desire to speak gospel truths to your children might you consider praying that god will give you the grace and wisdom to do so plainly and while you are at it people of god will you please keep praying for your pastor for grace and wisdom to do the same to speak god's word boldly and plainly but how will we have something worthwhile to say how can we have something worthwhile to say if we are not devoted to sitting under the hearing of the word and taking it up to read how can we how can we have something worthwhile to say if we are not doers of the word as James says in James chapter 1 how can we have something worthwhile to say if we are quick to hear if we are always not quick to hear but quick to speak rather than the opposite as James exhorts us to be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger people of god if we are to be shaped aright if we are to be shaped by god's word we must be people who are quick to hear god's word who humbly sit under god's word who readily fitfully sit under the preaching and hearing of god's word who will readily take up god's word daily to read and to meditate on because it is our food and then only then only can we speak boldly and plainly that same good news to the world around us then can we boldly go up to our family and friends but if you have not heard god speak if you have not heard god speak if you are not someone who is open to sitting under his word then nico is is ready for his baptism that's all that is he's fine we don't mind his noise that's fine and so if you are not someone who is ready to sit under god's word you have nothing to pass on to others this is why a life with god is a life that is devoted to hearing god practically that requires of all of us as disciples of jesus that requires faithfully joining the assembly of faithful christians and sitting under the teaching of his word faithfully continually attending the hearing and attending the hearing of god's word is also prayer our prayers the prayers of god's people that the holy spirit will continue to illuminate our hearts to rightly receive understand and live according to the knowledge of truth heard in the word this is one reason why we are reorienting our parish life together around the word and prayer this is the primary reason why we're committing to shaping our life together in discipleship and walking along the particular anglican heritage that god has blessed us with in the daily office of morning midday and evening prayer that's why i encourage you as we start that new midweek services this week to participate in that as best as you can in the morning prayer if it is on zoom and the coming on wednesday evening prayer or the midday prayer on Thursdays and also as we sit under god's word to avail ourselves of god's means that is provided for us so look with me at the concluding verse in chapter verse 37 after jesus has done this miracle the people verse 37 they were astonished beyond measure and they said to one another he has done all things well he even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak he has done all things well this will be the inevitable declaration of every christian on that last day when we are gathered to him in resurrected and glorified bodies we will say together he has done all things well but here in this time and moment there will be moments in this world when because of the temptations of the world and the flesh and the devil you might think what god is doing in you and perhaps what god is doing through you is not well at all you might look at your children and wonder the same but the work of god is ongoing here's the promise the work of god is ongoing he's not finished with you yet he's not finished with me and so will you persist and remain in the potter's hand as he continues to mold you through his word will you give your children to the potter's hand as he continues to mold them through the word of god and prayer and so that's what exactly we're doing this morning in baptism in baptism we are bound we bound

[25:08] ourselves to jesus in fact really it's jesus himself bound himself to us we are identified with christ in his death and resurrection we cling in baptism to his promise as we run the course of this life with the many pitfalls that is before us we rest in christ's work signified in the signs of baptism that we have died to sin having been buried with christ through the waters of baptism and we have been raised to resurrection life in him so the object of our faith brothers and sisters is jesus it's always jesus he's the object of our faith in christen naomi i implore you this morning and as i implore all of you who are parents and godparents and the whole church of christ the object of our faith is jesus the object of nico's flourishing faith is also jesus there is no other hope it is christ you are to point him to that is true for every parent and god parent every believer in this parish we are to look to jesus see him as revealed in the pages of holy scriptures in this case we are to hear and see rightly and point to him so those around us may also hear and see rightly lastly we are to pray that the miracle by which your ears if your ears have indeed been opened the miracle by which your ears have been opened and your eyes have been opened to see jesus that that same miracle will occur for our dear loved ones our family our friends our co-workers those we meet that that same miracle will happen to them because only god can do it that they may also come to hear and believe

let us pray grant grant we receive thee almighty god that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears may through your grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living to the honor and praise of your name through jesus christ our lord amen