

Trinity XII

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[0 : 00] Sometimes making connections between our Old Testament reading and our Gospel reading can be a bit of a challenge, but not at all this morning.

Here in our Gospel text of Mark chapter 7, we hear the echo of our Old Testament reading from Isaiah chapter 35, especially in verses 5 and 6, which reads, Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing.

Now, the immediate context of these words from the prophet Isaiah speak to Judah's return from her captivity. Judah was living in captivity under the dominion of the Babylonians when this portion of Isaiah was written.

And the word of the Lord had departed Judah because of her idolatry, because of her disobedience. Therefore, she could no longer hear, and she had lost her voice as she was merely silent, living under the submission to foreign lords.

But that day would end, and that's what Isaiah is saying here. That day would end, and Judah would take great comfort that her exile would culminate in her salvation.

[1 : 37] She would be delivered. These words from Isaiah are the background to our Gospel reading here in Mark chapter 7. But this comfort was not only for Judah.

This comfort is for the entire world. This is the hope for the whole world. Mark is the only Gospel that has this story of Jesus healing this man who was both hearing and speech impaired.

And the story takes place in the region of the Decapolis, depicted in the mention of Tyre and Sidon. And as I've said on numerous occasions before, the Decapolis were ten city-states that represented the region of the Gentiles.

And the mention of Tyre and Sidon here represent an area that contained some of the most ruthless people that ever walked the earth.

These were the people that were the bitter enemies of Israel. It was a Gentile area that contained people that Israel absolutely hated.

[2 : 56] And it's there that Jesus performs this miracle. In the midst of Israel's bitter enemies who they considered utterly barbaric.

And this miracle was a sign to the whole world. Not just to Israel, but to the whole world that her Savior had come in the person of Jesus who is God in human flesh.

That the words of Isaiah 35 have now come to fulfillment in Christ. The two actions from our gospel text that I want to highlight this morning is our Lord's touch and his proclamation.

Our Lord's touch and his proclamation. In our Lord's touch, we see something very profound. And, to be honest, a bit weird to us. We read that our Lord put his finger in the man's ears.

And then, spitting on his own hand, he proceeded to touch the man's lips, his mouth. Now, why in the world would our Lord do such a thing?

[4 : 07] Jesus did this to identify himself not only with this man, but with all humanity. With all people. The great early church father, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the great Cappadocian fathers, said the following.

That which is not assumed is not healed. That which is not assumed is not healed. That's the whole purpose of the incarnation. You see, the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus, who is God the Son, who has come in human flesh.

Now identifies with this man in the most personal and in the most intimate way. This man now receives the life and the light of God in the person of Jesus in the most explicit manner.

This man could not hear. He could not speak clearly. And this disability was due not to some particular sin that he had committed.

The gospel text never says anything about a sin that led to this. This man was impaired because he, like us, lived in a fallen world and where sin dwells in us.

[5 : 30] And this fallen world impairs all of us as we wrestle with sin. But Jesus heals us by now assuming our humanity.

And then he imparts his divinity. Which is his life and his grace. And we receive this life and we receive this grace through the sacraments.

But Jesus not only identifies with fallen humanity here. He takes the broken. He takes the impaired. And he transforms all of us into something beautiful. Just as our Lord brought life from chaos. From the void.

From the darkness. He then transformed creation into a tapestry of living beauty. So he is doing with us.

[6 : 33] People made it in his own image. He brings life to the impaired creatures. And that is why he came.

He came to give us life. Jesus proclaims in our gospel text here. Be opened. Be opened. And this man's ears now can hear.

And his stammering tongue now gives praise to God. The word and proclamation of Jesus is one of life and freedom.

That is why he came. He came to be sin for us. He who knew no sin. So that through him we might now be sinless.

And receive his righteousness. His holiness. He came to rescue. He came to restore. And this man experienced all of this in this healing.

[7 : 41] And so it is with us. We are people who are given ears to hear the word of God. And tongues to speak and to sing praises of his goodness.

And we are to do this out in the world. We have received our Savior's touch. Our Savior's touch. By being cleansed in holy baptism.

And participating in his own body and blood in the holy Eucharist. And what was broken. And what was broken. What was broken has been repaired in Christ.

And this restoration is the life that we will enjoy forever and ever. As baptized Christians we can now say with St. Paul the words of Galatians chapter 2 verse 20.

I have been crucified with Christ. It is not only. It is no longer I who live. But Christ who lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh.

[8 : 45] I live by faith in the Son of God. Who loved me. And gave himself for me. Jesus assumed our humanity.

He took upon flesh and he came. So that now he gives us his life. Eternal life. His divine life. And our bodies have been renewed in Christ. And they are being renewed. And they will be renewed. And they will be restored for all eternity.

When we are raised to new life. To glory everlasting. Friends our lives are now to be one that speaks.

Of the glory of God found in the healing of our Savior. And like the people who witnessed this transformation. From this one time deaf man who had stammering lips.

[9 : 43] We are called to live a life of giving praise to our Savior. And to say with these witnesses of this great miracle.

He has done all things well. He makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. That's to be our lives. Lived in the joy of what Christ has brought to us.

What he has given to us. What he is making us to be. We are now to speak that and to live that. Out in the world. Jesus assumed our humanity.

So that now we participate in. And by the work of the Holy Spirit. In his divine life. We are made recipients. Of his grace.

In the holy sacraments. And in participating now in Christ. We are freed from our captivity. Of sin and death. And we are given life.

[10 : 46] That is eternal life. And even though our bodies ache. And even though our bodies break down. From time to time.

Take comfort my friends. The sting of death. The sting of death. Has been swallowed up. By the God who took upon himself. Human flesh. The God who willingly offered. His own life for your life.

The God who triumphed over death. And the grave. And the God who now imparts. His life to you.
For all eternity.

Amen. In the name of the Father. And of the Son. And of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.