

**He Has Done All Things Well; Mark 7:31-37**  
0460-0463

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In your notes, you have Psalm 139. This is a familiar Psalm to all of us. Let's begin looking at Mark 7 by looking at Psalm 139. For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. I think the psalmist is reflecting there upon a truth that all humans have always known.

We've always known that we are creatures that are without equal among the creation of what God has made, that we are creatures that are made in such intricate and complex and wonderful ways, that the psalmist is just lifting up this Psalm to heaven to say, you have made us in such incredible ways.

You've, you've knitted together these bodies in which we reside. that are unspeakably complex and advanced. You know, the human body that is the sometimes thought of as the apex or the crowning jewel of God's creation. We're not the crowning jewel of God's creation, by the way, the crowning jewel of God's creation, creative work.

Is not man that's made in his image. The crowning jewel of God's creative work is redeemed man is the church. The church is the crowning jewel of God's creation, but nevertheless, that doesn't detract anything from the incredible body that God has made for us. The body that we knew it hasn't been that many weeks ago that we talked about the incredible engineering that went into the human hand and all the intricacies of the human hand.

We don't need to revisit that because that's not even really, I think, the best place to go when we think about the body that God has made for us, we think, I think most of all of our five senses, we are given these five senses with which we interact with all of God's creation. Everything that you interact with, with the created world around you and with others, all of it is done through these five senses that you have.

These five stunning, complex ways that God has given us. of interacting with the world around us and people around us with perceiving things around us with understanding the universe around us and the created world around us these senses that not only give us this information, but they also are capable of providing so much pleasure for us.

God gave us these five senses that not only allow us to interact with the world, but they also are. Our avenues are sources of pleasure for us. Think of your sense of smell and think of how, you know, we live in a modern world in which we have refrigerated food and grocery stores. But for most of humanity's existence, our sense of smell was crucial that we would not eat something that might be poisonous or spoiled for us or make us sick.

But at the same time, while our sense of smell is crucial for us as, as creatures, it also can bring such pleasure to us. Think of the smell of flowers in the spring, freshly blossomed, freshly bloomed, flowers. Or think of a, of a spring morning. Think of the beach as the salt water. The salt is, is in the air, and you, and you sense that with your sense of smell.

What an incredible thing that God made that he has endowed us with the ability. To sense particles, chemicals in the air that are measured in parts per million. And yet we can detect that and we can detect that with such accuracy as to recognize things or even have our emotions flooded with certain emotions.

Who has ever had the experience of a smell bringing back? A childhood memory, such a wonderful thing God gave us with our sense of smell or our sense of taste that God gave you these little buds on your tongue there that are capable of detecting so many different flavors and also at the same time, not just assisting us in nourishing ourselves in that way, but also are capable of providing such pleasurable experiences for us, like a, like a well cooked steak or or, or.

Um, perfectly baked cake, such pleasures that God has given to us throughout through those senses or our sense of touch. Just think of what God has given us with our sense of touch. Our sense of touch is a wonderful thing that we often I think underestimate, but our sense of touch, you know, that the human hand is capable of detecting incredibly minute differences in texture.

You can run your fingers over textures that are just so slightly different from one another and you can detect the difference between those textures. And our sense of touch is something that really informs our minds around, about the world around us in ways that we don't even... Um, Um, You have to touch it, really, I think, recognize because what's one of the things that you always have to do when you see something new?

What do you always have to do? You always have to touch it. Why? But you have to touch it when you see something, maybe something. Sometimes somebody's made or something that someone has crafted. You just want to touch the thing, don't you? Because your sense of touching it informs you about the thing. Or what about a good, firm handshake between two men?

Just that sense of touch there. What a thing that God has given us in our own. And our sense of touch. Who could, of course, forget our sense of sight? I think if we think about our five senses, that's probably the one that we would gravitate to the most as being our favorite, our sense of sight. God has given us these wonderful things called eyeballs and, and these images from the world around us can be reflected on the back of your eyeball.

That inverted, reversed image is translated into your brain and your brain then understands So many different complexities about the physical world around you. You are able to look at things and you can look at an image. You know that you can look at an image and your brain will remember that image the rest of your life.

Somewhere in your brain, your brain has stored all the images that you've seen. The problem is retrieving them, but nevertheless, your brain has stored all those things. And your brain has translated all those images into precisely defined memories. You know that you can, see, identical twins, and you know how identical twins can look so much alike?

But it's actually really, really difficult for identical twins to not be discernible because there will be just the tiniest difference between them and your eyes will memorize it and your eyes will notice it right away. And the same is true for so many different things. You think about, well, you just think about the, the whole Subject of counterfeit money and how people have trained their eyes to immediately perceive the tiniest differences in those two different pictures What an

incredible thing the gift of sight is and in addition to that just think of the emotions and the pleasure that can come to us through our gift of sight seeing a long lost friend or loved one or beholding some beautiful landscape And then combine that together with the other senses that God has given us.

Maybe, maybe, imagine in your mind, sitting on a hillside, looking across a distant mountain view and all the bright fall colors are just turning. And there's the smell of a, of a fall morning in the air. And then the crisp coolness of the fall temperatures touching your skin. And all those things are coming together to just.

bless you in a way that only God could have by giving you such incredible ways of interacting with the world around you. Then of course, the sense that we haven't talked about yet is a sense of hearing. And I think that's probably the one of the most underappreciated senses that we have is our sense of hearing.

God has gifted us with this ability to hear the world around us, to perceive things in the world around us in this stunningly beautiful way known as the sense of hearing. Now you probably are familiar with a little bit, at least of how this works, but it's, it is incredibly complex how your hearing works.

We think of how we hear, and you think of this thing on the side of your head that we call ears. And that's only just the start of it. This thing that's on the outside of your head that we get. Maybe so wrapped up about how it looks or the size of it, and women will stick a hole in it and hang some jewelry from it.

That's only just the beginning. That's, that just traps these airwaves, these disturbances of the air. But inside of that, of course, goes into your outer ear, through the ear canal, into the middle ear, into the inner ear. And as those vibrations, the tiniest little disturbances of air. Enter into the ear canal, they vibrate off this tiny little eardrum and those vibrations are then transferred to those three tiny little bones called ossicles, not to be confused with icicles, which is how I remember what ossicles are, by the way, but they translate into those three tiny little bones called ossicles and those vibrations are then carried into the inner ear where they, those vibrations are transferred into this fluid called the cochlea fluid.

And from that fluid, the vibrations are then transferred to tiny little hair follicles and those tiny hair follicles pick up on those vibrations and they transmit that information to your auditory nerve, which then takes the information to your brain and your brain interprets these tiny little disturbances of the air that came to it by way of the Electrical signals down the auditory nerve, which came from this, the tiniest little movements of these hair follicles, which came from the little tiny little sack of fluid, which was vibrated by the three tiny bones, which was vibrated by the eardrum and your brain takes those signals and it discerns from those signals the most incredible information that you can imagine.

Your brain discerns from those signals, things like music. And your brain hears tones that are just the right tones that are placed at just the right spacing at just the right speed with just the right texture of tone to produce a piece of music that can move you to tears. Think about that. That your emotions can be so stirred by those tiny little disturbances in the air that your brain interprets so precisely that your brain is capable of receiving vast amounts of information through such channels as that.

So we all have our types of music that we like. Whether it be maybe something classical or some piece of classic rock or something, something from your, from your past. And you hear that song and it just takes you to another place. To another time and all that came through these little disturbances in the air that your ear picked up on and Translated into signals for your brain or think about speech Speech is one of the most fantastic realities of human existence That I can even imagine right now I am communicating to you and ideas in my head are going to your head by way of these tiny little vibrations in the air that I'm manufacturing by the vibration of vocal cords and the movement of, of lips and jaw and tongue just right, so as to send just the precisely correct disturbance in the air, the little wave in the air, so that it meets your ear and vibrates all those things just right, so that your brain then thinks the same thought I was thinking.

Does that fascinate you? We were truly, fearfully, and wonderfully made. It's such an incredible thing, the gift of hearing that God has given to us. So oftentimes we think of our gift of sight and we think, well, if I was ever faced with the choice that I had to lose, I had to forsake one of my five senses, the last one I'd want to give up would be my gift of sight.

And I don't know, I don't know. I'm tempted to say a silent world would be a very difficult world to live in. Imagine a silent world. Now, if you're like me, the parent of small kids, then the thought of a silent world is actually pretty pleasant. But that's, that's a temporary silent world. That's, that's a period of silence that I'm thinking of.

I'm speaking of permanent silence. Imagine a silent world in which there's no interaction with the world outside of you by way of your ears, that there is no communication of, of either information or emotion. By way of your ears and the sounds that come through the air. Just think of what that would be like.

Just think of what it would be like to have never experienced sound. One who is born deaf never has the development of language that we just talked about earlier. In which we associate sounds with reality. And we take those words and we use those words in order to think about the world around us. Have you ever noticed how your thoughts, even the thoughts that you never speak to someone else aloud, those, just those personal thoughts, like when you talk to yourself, have you ever noticed that your thoughts are still organized in verbal words, even though you never verbalize them?

Have you ever noticed that? Have you ever just thought about how it is that you sit and think to yourself? You're just going to sit and think for a while. And as you think, and as you're processing thoughts and ideas, If you just would just pay attention to how it is that you process those thoughts, you would realize that even in your silent talking to yourself world, you are still using words just without sounding them out.

Your brain is still associating the sounds with the thoughts that you're processing. That's how deeply and that's how intricate language works for us in such a way that those who have spoken and heard their whole lives. That's how you perceive the world around you. You, you really, it's impossible to really perceive the world around you without using words, if you've grown up with words.

That's how God has designed the human mind. Now it maybe makes a little bit more sense for us. When we begin to think about some of the things that God says to us in his word, such as the

word became flesh, the logos became flesh and dwelt among us, or things like God said, let there be light. And there was light, or God said.

Let there be land and there was land and that theme of God speaking God Creating by speaking is a theme far too great for us to even delve into right now But maybe that just sheds a little bit of light on on why it is that God places so much Emphasis on words because our human minds are so dependent upon Language and words to even not just communicate with others, but to even communicate with ourselves Now, the world of a person born deaf is a world devoid of language, is a world in which there are no words to form their thoughts and to organize their thoughts.

I don't even know how to begin imagining that. I don't even know how to begin imagining what it would be like to have never had words that associated with the reality around me, that I could use those words to think for myself. This is why throughout the majority of human history, those who were deaf, particularly those who were born deaf, were usually considered insane.

Because the vast difference, the chasm between a person who has never had words and the rest of the world, is so great. That, again, until recent human history, people have always thought them to be insane.

With all that, that really, I think, sets the frame for us to begin looking at one of the most powerful stories in Mark's Gospel. The story, of course, of one who lived in a silent world and how Christ came to him and why Christ came to him and what was done and what that means. So with those thoughts in mind, let's now Turn our thoughts.

Let's not forget about that, but put those in the back of your brain, if you will, and let's hold on to those. We'll return to those in just a little bit later. As we're thinking about that, as we're thinking about a world, a silent world, a world without words, think about what the world around you, just think about how different that world would be if your world was silent.

Think about the fear. Think about the anxiety. Think about the uneasiness. That all of life would be if your world was silent and everybody else's world was hearing, think about how differently you would have to interact with the world around you. Think of how distinct you would be the, international mission board, which is the sending the mission sending agency in the Southern Baptist Convention, the largest mission sending organization in the world.

They approach their task by trying to make their task more. The task of taking the gospel to all those these people groups that haven't heard they approach that task by dividing the whole world into affinity groups By affinity groups they divide all of the world's population into nine groups of people these nine groups of people that they say have Affinity with one another and that affinity largely may be a geographic area that they share perhaps a language that they share or similar languages Culture and similar cultures and I just find it helpful helpful to divide the world up into these affinity groups One affinity group would be Eastern Europe or Western Europe one would be sub-saharan Africa One would be the Far East and China and by dividing the world up into these groups They're not saying all these people are exactly alike, but they're saying They share language commonalities, they share cultural commonalities, they share geographical commonalities that help us to just approach those affinity groups more, efficiently, more effectively.

And so of the nine affinity groups that they've divided the world into, do you know that one of those affinity groups is the deaf? And so they have considered, rightly, that people without hearing have more in common with one another than they do with any hearing person. In other words... A deaf person in China has more in common with a deaf person in America than they do with a hearing person in China.

Isn't that amazing? But that's true. That's how drastically the lack of hearing the absence of hearing. That's how that's how much that changes your reality to be in a silent world. So imagine now the fear and the anxiety and just imagine the trepidation that all of life presents to you as a non-hearing person.

Now with that said, let's now turn to our text from verse 31. Then Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis. And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. And they begged him to lay his hand on him and taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears and after spitting, touched his tongue and looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, If I thought that is be opened and his ears were opened, his tongue was released and he spoke plainly and Jesus charged him to tell no one.

But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. And they were astonished beyond measure saying he has done all things well. He even makes the deaf here and the mute speak. This is indeed one of Jesus's oddest miracles to perform. Here Jesus is spitting, sticking his fingers in somebody's ear.

So it's certainly one of the oddest miracles that we come across in Mark's gospel, and it's worth slowing down and just Thinking a little bit about what Jesus is doing. Why is he doing these odd things? What's going on in this passage for us to see and for us to learn? So let's just begin once again from verse 1 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis So have you ever taken a journey and realized about a third of the way through the journey or halfway through the journey?

Now, you took a wrong turn, and your wrong turn has put you on the long route, but you've been on the long route too long to turn around and go back and get on the right one, and so you say, well, it's just easier and quicker for me to just continue on the long way. And so your long way is going to take you twice as long as if you had gone the right way to begin with.

That seems a little bit like Jesus's journey here. We're told that he, he leaves the region of Tyre and goes through Sidon, Sidon is north of Tyre. So he leaves Tyre, we're told that he goes north through Sidon and then through the whole region to the Decapolis and down to the Sea of Galilee. That's a journey of at least 120 miles.

120 miles. If Jesus and the disciples walked all day, every day, stopping for the Sabbath, that's a full week. And knowing how Jesus tends to stop and there's crowds and he's delayed here and there's teaching there, and there's healings over here, I mean, we're talking about several weeks of a journey that Jesus takes here to get to this region on the shore of the Sea of, of the Sea of Galilee known as Decapolis.

So why does Jesus take such a long and odd route? We don't know. We don't know. We can only really speculate. Perhaps there were some along the route that were sheep of Jesus pasture,

and he sought to rescue his sheep. Perhaps he also wanted to spend some time with the disciples, the apostles, who will be the foundation of the church.

So he wants this time to spend with them, teaching them some things, or perhaps a mixture of both, or perhaps neither. We just don't know. We can only speculate. But nevertheless, He does take this long route, and if there was something on the route that we needed to know, if there was something along the way that would have been needful for us to know in order for us to realize salvation or to live a godly life, then the Holy Spirit would have told us, but He didn't.

So He takes this long journey, we don't know how long it takes, but then He finally comes to this place known as the Decapolis on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Now, we recognize this, Because Jesus has been here before, in chapter 5, He goes to this same place, and He's met by one person. He's met by the man known as Legion.

And then there's the casting out of the demons known as Legion, and the freeing of the man, the residents there ask Him to leave, there's that whole story, and He leaves. But as He leaves, you remember what He tells the, what He tells the man whom He has freed from the demons? He wants to come with them.

And Jesus says, no, you cannot come with me. Instead, I want you to stay and I want you to tell everyone of what the Lord has done for you. So apparently this man has done a wonderful job of that because as Jesus now returns to the Decapolis, we find that there's a crowd there not only waiting for him, but anticipating that he is now here to provide healing for them.

Verse 32, and they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment. So the word has spread that Jesus is this mighty healer, this mighty prophet. And presumably, presumably the word has at least begun by this man that was known as Legion. And so now many people have heard of it. He seems to have done a wonderful, incredible job of being a witness to the transformation, the radical transformation that Jesus has brought about in his life.

And so people have heard about this and they've now brought this crowd to him. And so they were not told who, but they bring a man to him. Reminds me of chapter two, when they bring the paralyzed man to Jesus, they can't get in the house. So they lower him down to the roof. So we see this throughout the gospels again and again, we see people bringing people to Jesus.

And here we see unnamed people bringing this man to Jesus, whom this man we're told was deaf and had a speech impediment. So the speech impediment, we can understand, I think right away that the speech impediment was a result of the deafness. Because we understand how it is that the, this, the speech, our speech is connected with our hearing in such a way that you can't have one without the other.

You can't have speech without hearing because it's necessary, it's needful for us to hear the sound that not only we're making, but other people are making. It's needful to hear that sound. In order to form the sound properly. And so, those who have lost their hearing, or lost a significant amount of hearing, or lost all of their hearing, they, we often find that after a period of time, their speech really becomes very, very difficult to understand.

Those who are born without hearing almost never learn to speak at all because there's no way for them to understand how to form sounds unless they can hear those sounds. So his speech

problem, his speech pathology, is, likely a result, almost certainly a result of his deafness, or his hard of hearingness.

So, though, though he is able to speak to some degree, we're not told that he's mute, we'll get to that a little bit later. So we're not told that he's mute, but he's able to speak somewhat, but his speech is strained. It's difficult. It's a speech pathology. And so the fact that he's able to speak some probably means that he wasn't born deaf, but he has become deaf, probably for some quite, quite some time now, to such a degree that his speech has deteriorated.

to be described as this severe, this difficult speech impediment. So they bring him this man that's deaf with a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. So that recalls for us, of course, Jairus who comes and asks Jesus to come and lay his hand on his daughter. The laying on of hands.

Must have been something that Jesus did so regularly that people just associated with G with Jesus. Of course, Jesus doesn't need to touch anyone to heal them. We saw that just in the previous story, but we also have seen that Jesus. Jesus wants to touch. Jesus doesn't want to heal from a distance. He doesn't want to heal from the other side of the room.

He wants to interact. He wants to touch. He wants to be near. So they ask him to come and lay his hands on him, verse 33. And taking him aside, meaning the man, and taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting, touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, If I thought that is be opened and his ears were opened, his tongue was released and he spoke plainly.

So that is quite an odd sequence of events for us. And one of the things that we must caution ourself at the beginning here is to remind ourself to just endeavor to not place upon ancient cultures. Modern social mores, modern social customs, modern social taboos. It's important for us to understand we are talking about a different culture in a different time that did not have the same cultural taboos that we have today.

If I were to spit... And then whether it's whether Jesus spat on the ground or whether he spat on his finger, we're not told. If I were to do that and then touch your tongue, then you would be quite shocked, rightly so, because we don't do that in our culture. But this is a different culture. So let's be careful not to associate our present day social norms with Jesus's culture.

But nevertheless, isn't it still such just an odd way of going about this? So, the first question to ask ourself, really before we even begin looking at the miracle, the first question to ask is why is this miracle here? Because Jesus, as we've said countless times before, Jesus healed innumerable numbers of people.

He healed thousands and thousands of people. And of the thousands of people that He healed, we have only the account of just a handful of those. So the accounts that we have, the Holy Spirit has obviously selected these accounts for a reason. So the first question to ask ourself is why would Holy Spirit choose such an odd miracle in such an odd place?

Certainly, this wasn't the only deaf person that Jesus healed. Why would Holy Spirit choose this man, this occasion, this miracle? What is it about this that Holy Spirit wants us to see? And so to



begin answering that question, I think that the place to begin is to remind ourselves of Mark's purpose, Mark's purpose statement.

Mark is one of the most disciplined writers that we find in the New Testament. I believe that he is Perhaps the most disciplined gospel writer meaning the very first sentence of his gospel told you what his purpose was and every sentence that followed that Also was put there for the furtherance of that purpose if you've ever written an academic paper Then you know the importance of negative editing taking out all those things that just don't have to be said if it doesn't have to be said This is what I was taught in seminary.

If it doesn't advance your argument, take it out. If it doesn't move the ball down the line to the goal post, it doesn't need to be there. It either moves the ball or take it out altogether. And that's how Mark has written his gospel. Everything is moving the ball toward the goal line. The goal line is the conclusion in which the centurion says, Surely, this man was the Son of God.

So everything that he writes is moving us down that, and so that's what the purpose statement was. Remember what it was? The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. So Mark is at pains to show us this, this man, Jesus, the good news that this man, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus is the Son of God and He has come.

That's the whole point of Mark's gospel and everything that he says in the gospel wants to advance that. It wants to convince you of the identity of Jesus Christ. It wants to convince you of the goodness of the news that Jesus is the Son of God and to convince you of not only the goodness of the news, but the reality of the news that He has come to us.

And so as we look at this, this passage through that lens. What is this saying to us about the good news that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God and He has come? So to begin seeing this, let's look once again at how the man is described. Verse 32, and they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment.

Now that word that's translated speech impediment is the word *mogilalon*. That's, you say, well, that's really interesting. Not really. Well, actually that is not the standard word for mute. A couple dozen times in the New Testament, mute shows up. The word mute shows up. In fact, it's going to show up in chapter 9 when we think about the father whose son was possessed of the demon and the demon we're told was a mute demon and it made his son mute.

Different word is always used. All together every time and that word just simply means the absence of the ability to speak without the ability to speak That's what the word that's translated mute always means this is not that word instead This is a different word that literally means deeply constrained To form proper sounds, it means that his mouth is severely impeded from the ability to form proper sounds.

He can form sounds, but the formation of proper sounds is something that he's just unable to do, and it's a severe and impediment, it's a strong word, and it only shows up this one time in all of our New Testaments, out of a couple dozen times that we come across people. who are unable to speak. This is the only time that this particular word is used.

So then we ask ourselves, was there significance to that? Is there significance that Mark seems to intentionally have used a word that elsewhere he uses the normal word for mute? But is there, is

there a reason that he uses this unique word here? So then we look throughout the rest of our New Testament. We don't find it anywhere in any of the gospels.

In Acts, we don't find it in any of the epistles. But then when we turn to our Old Testament, and our Old Testament was, as we know, written almost completely in Hebrew. About half the book of Daniel and parts of the book of Ezra are written in Aramaic, but nearly the entire Old Testament is written in Hebrew.

But we also remember that A couple of generations before Jesus time, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated into the language of the day, which was Greek, and that's known as the Septuagint. Now the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, is very significant for us. It's significant because that tells us that when the Hebrew scholars were translating the Old Testaments...

The Greek words that they chose were very meaningful because that shows us how they understood their Old Testament Scriptures. You follow what I'm saying? So the Septuagint is helpful for us in that way. So when we turn to the Septuagint and we look for this one word, we find that it is absent in all of the Old Testament except for, you guessed it, One place it shows up in the New Testament one time in the Old Testament exactly one time and the place that it shows up In the Old Testament is in the prophet Isaiah Isaiah chapter 35 verses 5 and 6 you probably have a footnote at your Bible in your Bible that tells you so much Alright, so Isaiah 35 verses 5 and 6 say this then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped Verse six, then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the, and here it is, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. So there we found our word. That's the only other time it shows up in Scripture and you say, well, okay, still not quite sure what the significance of this is. So to see the significance, let's just do what we always, what's always helpful for us to do, and let's just look at this within the context.

Context, context, context. context. You can never leave the context behind or you'll end up in trouble. So let's back up just a little bit in Isaiah's prophecy back to, say the beginning of chapter 34. And when we back up to the beginning of chapter 4 and begin to see the context that leads up to this statement, this statement that quite plainly and quite obviously it's beyond beyond question that Mark had this statement in mind when he wrote that verse.

Clearly, Mark had this verse in mind. When he wrote that one. So what about that verse? What about the context tells us? What was Mark thinking? What's this leading us up to? So if we go back to the beginning of chapter 34, we find that what's beginning of chapter 34 is Isaiah begins to pronounce God's judgment God upon, not Israel, but the nations.

God is pronouncing His judgment upon the sinful nations, the nations who don't have His law, but nonetheless, they know that God exists and God has created them, Romans 1, and they have sinned against this God that has created them, they failed to worship Him properly, so they know that they stand condemned, and God is pronouncing judgment upon the nations.

And so I'm just going to read parts of this chapter, beginning from verse one, just sort of sections. You'll get, you'll quickly sort of get the idea. Draw near, O nations, to hear and give

attention, O peoples, let the earth appear and all that fills it, the world and all that comes from it. For the Lord is enraged against the nations and furious against all their hosts.

He has devoted them to destruction. He has given them over for slaughter. You've sinned. The nations have sinned against the Lord. And by the way, where is Jesus? He's in the nations. He's not in Israel. He is in the nations. He's outside of Israel now But God is declaring that they have sinned and he's declaring his wrath against them The Lord has a sword it is sated with blood and is gorged with fat the blood of lambs and goats and the fat of the Kidneys of rams for the Lord as a sacrifice in Bozrah a great slaughter in the land of Edom Wild oxen shall fall with them.

And young steers with the mighty bulls, their land shall drink its fill of blood, and their soil shall be gorged with fat. For the Lord has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. So Isaiah's painting this picture, this picture of a God. who has lost patience. He's, he has used all the patience.

He has been patient and long suffering for the nations, yet his patience is expired and his wrath is coming. And Isaiah's painting a picture. It's a picture. It's a, a long drawn out word picture, if you will. It's a long drawn-out metaphor. For the wrath of God against sinful man. So continue to listen to this metaphor here.

And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch. So the streams turned into pitch or turned into tar and her soil turned into sulfur. Her land shall become burning pitch night and day. It shall be quenched. I'm sorry. It shall not be quenched. Its smoke shall go up forever from generation to generation.

It shall lay waste. None shall pass through it forever and ever. Now listen to this. But the hawk and the porcupine shall possess it. The owl and the raven shall dwell in it. He shall stretch the line of confusion over it, and the plumb line of emptiness. Its nobles, there is no one there to call it a kingdom, and all its princes shall be nothing.

Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches. And wild animals shall meet with hyenas. The wild goat shall cry to his fellow. Indeed, There the nightbird settles and finds for herself a resting place. There the owl nests and lays and hatches and gathers her young in the shadow.

Indeed, there the hawks are gathered, each one with her mate. Now, those words, again, what Isaiah is doing is he's drawing, he's painting a lengthy word picture. As we listen to those words and phrases, we again must be careful not to understand them as the modern person because they weren't written. To the modern, they were written to all people, but they were written to a culture, not ours.

And so our modern culture in our modern day, we hear these images such as the hawk will protect her eggs and the land will belong to the porcupine and the hawk. And we hear those images and we think what a wonderful picture, what a wonderful picture of nature being left alone and nature just growing up as, as God intended it to be.

And the reason we think that is because we're moderns. is because we live in a modern world, a modern world that has tractors and machinery, a modern world in which the conquest Nature is

no longer something that's up in the air because we have machinery and we we have we have the ability To eke out our living.

We don't have we don't live our lives in subject to the power of nature Such as these people did so the image for the ancient person for Isaiah to paint this image of the land Returning to the hawk and to the porcupine and now it's the abode of the ostrich. That's not a pleasant picture for the ancient person.

Instead, that's a picture of disaster. That's a picture of defeat. That's a picture of the wrath of God taking the hard, bone numbing work of taking some of the land back from the thorns and thistles and the hawks and the bear and cultivating it to eke out a living. That's a picture of all that bone breaking hard work.

Going back to the animals you see we would think of that totally different because we've got bulldozers today, and we don't think of Making a field a field that can grow crops that we can grow food and eat And being sustained by that, we don't think of that in terms of just such hard battle against nature, against the animals that would take it back and the thorns that would take it back.

But these are the days in which tools were a stone tied to a stick, or a crude metal tool. And in these days, the imagery of the land going back, reverting back to being completely dominated, By the wildlife and the animals was a picture of God's abandonment of God's judgment a picture of disaster a picture of death Because once the land then goes back reverts back to the to the rule of the animals of the land then the humans can't live It's not like they can, well, our crops kind of fail.

Let's just go down to the supermarket and guess we'll have to just buy groceries for the winter. That, that wasn't an option. You see? So you see what God, what Isaiah is painting for the picture, for the people, the picture that he's painting is not a pleasant picture of nature. Instead, it's a picture of disaster.

And the disaster is being brought upon them because of their sin. So God is saying to them, you have sinned. You stand before me as condemned sinners. And this is the wrath that I'm pronouncing will come upon you. Unless the one who delivers you from your sin comes to you. Because you see, in Scripture, when God speaks of His coming wrath, virtually every time He does that, He also gives hope.

Whenever He speaks of the wrath that is to come, virtually every time He will say, Unless you repent. Until that blessed day, that blessed day when the rescuer comes to deliver you from this sinful state that you are in. And that's exactly, that's exactly where Isaiah is taking this. So now that was the end of chapter 34.

If we continue into the beginning of chapter 35. We begin to read this, and listen to how the picture now changed. The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad. The desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus. It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Do you see that? They shall see... The glory of God. They shall see the majesty of the Lord, strengthen the weak hands, and make

firm the feeble knees. It says, say to those who have an anxious heart. Who has an anxious heart in the story? Who has an anxious heart?

Say to those who have an anxious heart, be strong, fear not, behold, your God will come with vengeance and the recompense of God. Your God will come. He has pronounced this doom and barrenness of the land. The bears are taken back over, the thorns have overgrown, and it's a picture of desolation. But he says, fear not, for your God will come, your God will come, and He will come and save you, says Isaiah.

He will come. Now remember, that's the purpose of Mark. The purpose of Mark is to say, not He will come, He has come. The purpose of Mark is to say, Jesus of Nazareth, the good news is that He is the Son of God, and He has come. So right after... That beginning part of Mark's gospel, if you think way back to chapter one, when we're, we start everything off on the note, Jesus is the son of God, Jesus of Nazareth is the son of God, and he has come and this is good news.

Right after that, we hear the ministry of John the baptizer, who is proclaiming the one who will come. I'm here to make straight the path, to make straight the road for the son of God, for Messiah to come. And where is John proclaiming this message from? Remember? The wilderness? Anybody remember that? He's proclaiming this from the wilderness.

What's John, what's God pronouncing the judgment? How is God pronouncing the judgment? The judgment is the wilderness is going to overtake you. Right after John's prophecy from the wilderness, where does Jesus go? Into the wilderness to be baptized, to be anointed. Where does he go immediately after that?

Further into the wilderness. Deeper into the wilderness, into the metaphorical wilderness that he's talking about here. The wilderness will overtake you. The nations will be overtaken by the wilderness as consequence of your sin. Now John the baptizer is here to say, God is coming. I'm here to pronounce.

I'm here to announce to you. He's coming and he makes that announcement from the wilderness Jesus goes to him in the wilderness He's anointed goes deeper into the wilderness and does his time of testing and then he emerges From the wilderness and what's the first thing he says? Chapter 1 verse 15 the kingdom of heaven is here.

I'm here to proclaim the kingdom of heaven is here

Do you see the significance from out of the wilderness the Son of God comes? To say The kingdom is here now from out of the wilderness The Son of God comes perhaps that was the reason for his long journey through the nations So that upon exiting this long journey from the through the nations. He is now here to proclaim The Son of God is here God pronounced the curse.

The curse was that all of your civilization would revert back to wilderness. But out of the wilderness, you will be saved. And out of the wilderness comes the Son of God to proclaim the kingdom of God is here. Now, listen to what Isaiah says next. Then, he's just said, he will come to save you. Your God will come to save you.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened. And the ears of the deaf unstopped and the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute. And there's our word. There's our word that connected this passage to what just happened in Mark chapter seven. Then the tongue of the mute shall sing for joy.

And then he sums it up by saying. Four, waters break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. You see what Jesus is doing here is this is a powerful word picture. To say to the nations, the Son of God is here. The Kingdom of God is here. And it was prophesied hundreds of years ago. The way that you would know this is that out of the wilderness would come your Savior.

And when he came, the blind would see, the deaf would hear, the mute would sing, and streams of living water would come forth from the wilderness. The connection is unmistakable. It's beyond question that Mark had this passage in mind when he recounted this miracle. Mark could have recounted any of thousands of miracles.

But he chose this one and this situation to recount to us this, this particular miracle, because this is saying the same thing, in essence, that Jesus answered John the Baptizer. When John the Baptizer, in Matthew 11, is losing faith and he sends the message to say, Are you really the one that is to come that we've been waiting for?

Jesus answers him by saying, Send word to John. Say to John, Tell John what you're seeing. Tell John that you're seeing the blind see, and the deaf hear, and the mute speak, and the lame walk. In other words, Jesus is saying, John knows his Scriptures well enough to know that God told us centuries ago that when you see that, it means that the Son of God has come upon you, that the Kingdom of God has come upon you, which is what Jesus said in chapter 1 of Matthew.

Verse 15 and 16. The kingdom is here. The kingdom is now here, which is the purpose of Mark's whole gospel. So this is why this particular miracle is recounted for us because this one man Most likely one of hundreds of deaf people that Jesus healed This deaf man was the one that mark chose to say That is the perfect representation for me to write this down, to show the readers how God is fulfilling this Scripture, how this particular miracle is the perfect representation to say the Kingdom of God is here.

So that tells us a little bit about why... Jesus or why Mark chose this particular miracle. Now, let's ask the question. Why did Jesus perform the miracle so strangely? Why did he do such odd things as he's performing this miracle? So now verse 33 and taking him aside from the crowd privately He put his fingers into his ears and after spitting touched his tongue So, odd sequence of events, but the first thing he does is he takes him from the, aside from the crowd privately.

He takes him aside, from the crowd privately and he does, he goes about this, this putting the fingers and spitting and, and all those sorts of things. Now, it's interesting to us that we might say, well, why is Jesus doing this? Does Jesus need to revert to these sort of... Spells and magic, witchcraft sort of thing, put your fingers, you speak this special word, Fafathra, is that what Jesus is doing?

Well, this comes immediately on the heels of the story of Jesus casting out the demon from the girl's daughter and the girl wasn't even there. So clearly Mark is not saying, Oh, this is what Jesus had to do. He had to sort of do these steps, these sort of physical things in order to do this.

Clearly, that's not his point because Jesus just cast out the demon in the prior story and the girl wasn't even present.

So there's something else, there's another thing going on. So the first thing he does, he takes him aside from the crowd privately. So think back now to how he began, just really thinking about As best we could, I guess, what it might be like to be a person without hearing. We've talked about the crowds that are following Jesus.

We've talked about the size of these crowds and the immensity of the crowd. And we all know what crowds are like. Does anybody like crowds? I cannot stand crowds. And to be in a crowd is just so, it can be disquieting and uneasy. And what is it about the crowd that is most disquieting? Is it the way they look?

Is it the way they smell? It's the noise, isn't it? Isn't it the noise? When you can be in a crowd and you can hear six conversations around you, isn't that the most unsettling part about being in a really thick crowd? Now imagine one without hearing. Imagine one in a silent world. Perhaps he didn't live here.

Perhaps he has been brought here from a long distance. Who brought him? We're not told. Maybe the man formerly known as Legion Maybe he brought him. I don't know. But perhaps he's been brought here. Perhaps he's in an unfamiliar part of the world, surrounded by unfamiliar people, and he lives in a world of silence.

Do you see the compassion of Jesus? And the empathy of Jesus? Jesus is not going to make a spectacle of this man. He's not going to do what he's going to do in front of this crowd as this person is probably already beside himself with anxiety and fear. Instead Jesus is going to lovingly and carefully take him aside in private.

He is not anything like, you know, the, the fake TV, false healer, faith healer people. They make a spectacle out of everything that they supposedly do. And there's the whole hitting people with the jacket. You make people come up on the, on the stage and you smack them with the jacket and all this kind of thing.

And what's really going on there, what, what, what's, what we know is really going on there is really just pressure. If you're put up on stage and there's hundreds and hundreds of people looking at you, guess what you're going to do? You're going to do what's expected of you. And that's what's going on.

But it's the whole spectacle thing here. Everybody watch this. Everybody look at this. It's not Jesus. His wife. Jesus is not here to make a spectacle of the man. He's going to carefully and lovingly take the man aside in private, taking him aside privately. He put his fingers into his ears and then he spits.

So he puts his fingers in his ears. What's that all about? Well Jesus can't talk to him. Can you imagine what the man is feeling right now? Can you imagine the fear and anxiety? We don't even know if the people that brought him here were able to communicate to him why they're bringing him. Maybe he's just been brought here and he doesn't even know what this man Jesus is about.

He certainly never heard Jesus teach. Jesus' heart language, Jesus' native language is Aramaic. We assume that this man is not a Jew. So he probably speaks perhaps Greek as his first language, maybe Persian, maybe, some other language of the day, Latin or something. And so for Jesus to even speak to him and he read Jesus's lips, we're told by those who are, familiar with lip reading that people can, you can develop, deaf people can develop the ability to read lips, but only in your native language.

You cannot develop the ability to read lips in a foreign language. That, that would be something that would be extraordinarily difficult. So Jesus isn't able to say to him, even slowly and articulating carefully, Jesus is not able to say to him, it's okay, here's what I'm going to do. So what does Jesus do?

Jesus touches his areas of need. He touches his ears as if to say, it's okay. What I'm going to do is I'm going to open these, I'm going to open these ears. And then he spits. We don't know if that's on the ground or on his face. We don't know what that is. By the way, one of three times, one of three times that Jesus is, that Jesus uses his spittle to perform a miracle.

The next one is coming in chapter 8 with the blind man. And then another one happens in John 9 with the man born blind. All three times that Jesus does that is for the same purpose. It's to communicate to the person what he's about to do. So then Jesus touches the tongue as if to say, I'm also going to loose this.

I'm also going to open this. I'm going to unchain this. It's as if Jesus is wanting to just put him at ease to say, it's okay. Here's why you've been brought here. This is what I'm going to do. Fingers in the ear. I'm going to open these looking up to heaven. Jesus is so gentle with the man. Like we read in Isaiah, a smoldering wick, he will not extinguish a bruised reed.

He will not break and looking up into heaven. So now he looks into heaven. Do you know how we communicate through our eyes? You know how you communicate? We can say things to people with their eyes. So he says to the man with his eyes, This is who's going to do this. God in heaven. The true living God. This is the one I look to.

God will do this. It's not some magic power. This is not some magic phrase. God will be doing this. And looking up into heaven. He sighed.

Now, we communicate through our sighs, and our communication through our sighs is not just audible, right? When we sigh, when there's this deep sigh, it's not just an audible thing, it's also a visual thing. So when you sigh, I mean, that's something you see as well. And if you don't, if you don't get that, then just look to any teenager and you'll see what that is all about.

But there's this sigh. And so the man can see, what does he see as Jesus sighs? I think what he sees is Jesus is communicating to him something that he often communicates in those times in which we see Jesus overcome with emotion, the tomb of Lazarus. The Garden of Gethsemane or, the instance in which they come and they, they are pressing Jesus for a sign and he sighs.

What we often see Jesus doing is, is he has these deep sighs. It's as though the weight of the consequence of sin is heavy upon him. It's as though you can just see the weight that he bears that this is what sin has done to this man. This is what sin has done to this world. Sin has made this world what it's not supposed to be.



Sin has taken from this man, the gift of hearing. It's taken from this other man, this, the gift of sight, it is taken from this other person, their health. And Jesus just sighs to say, what a burden, what a distressing thing that to see the grief that sin has brought upon us. I'm reminded of Isaiah 53 in verse 4.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrow. Now, verse 34. And looking up into heaven, he sighed and said to him, ephphatha, that is. Be open. So there are a handful of words in our New Testament that are left in the Aramaic Talitha kumi, we've looked at that one or With the words that Jesus says from the cross Eloi Eloi, Lema sabachthani a handful of times that the Aramaic is left.

This is one of those times What a, what an odd word. What an odd word. Three consonants that you have to breathe to speak them. Ephphatha. So, the word, Mark tells us what the word means. Be opened. And he's going to open the ears, he's going to open the mouth. And what Jesus is really doing here, he is really undoing the curse of Babel.

You ever think about the curse of Babel? You ever think about what happened at the Tower of Babel? It's one of those stories that's a favorite Sunday school story, building the tower, they're going to build a tower to heaven, and God comes and confuses the language, right? It's one of the most significant stories in all of the Bible.

Because what the Tower of Babel is, is the beginning of the kingdom of evil. That's where the kingdom of evil begins. All through Scripture, the kingdom of evil is called, somebody tell me, Babylon. That's what it's called until the end of Revelation when we hear Babylon has fallen Babylon has fallen and so the kingdom of Babylon the kingdom of evil started at Babel Because Babel was the very first time in Scripture that man organized to rebel against God Man has rebelled against God since the fall But they've never organized And so to organize together at Babel was the very first time that man came together to say we will rebel against God.

And so hence that's the beginning of the kingdom of evil. So what does God do in response to their organized rebellion? He confuses their language. And so the confusion of language is the curse of the kingdom of evil upon man. Now, the Scriptures tell us that one day that will be undone, but the Scriptures also tell us that God is doing that in steps because the day of Pentecost, Acts chapter two was a foreshadowing of the day that that will be ultimately undone.

Because in Acts chapter two, what happens? The languages that are confused, the speaking that's confused and the hearing that's confused. There's the miracle of speaking and hearing where those in other languages hear in their own language. And so it's a partial overcoming. So the birth of the church, the initiation of the church is in some way a partial overcoming of the curse of the kingdom of evil.

The curse of the kingdom of evil is the confusion of languages. The church is born and at the birth of the church, there's the miracle of speaking and hearing in your own language. And all that points us to the day when we look before the throne and we see all nations, tribes, and... Tongues before the lamb worshiping the lamb.

And so the language confusion is then forever and eternally overcome, but that is yet to come here. What Jesus is doing is just a little bit of a foreshadowing of the foreshadowing, a little bit of

a foreshadowing of the birth of the church. When Jesus overcomes, he opens the ears, the mouth, you see, because all of that was.

Symbolically, metaphorically, a result of the curse of the kingdom of evil. So verse 35, and his ears were open, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Mark uses the word *orthos* right there, which means right or correct, like orthodontist, one who makes your teeth right. Or correct, or orthodoxy, which means correct doctrine.

So, correct speech, right speech. So notice, the ears are open, the mouth is open, the tongue is open, and immediately, the speech is right. The speech is correct. There's no period of therapy. Jesus never... Engaged in therapy. Jesus was not a therapist. His healings were all immediate. Immediately they could see immediately they could not only walk, but leap and jump and dance.

Immediately they were cleansed of leprosy. Immediately. Peter's mother-in-law gets up and starts serving them, and so immediately he begins to speaking. And this is one of the most astounding miracles in the gospels. Because anyone who has any experience with someone who's having speech difficulties, and you go through speech training, you know the process of retraining the muscles of the mouth to change the way sounds are made.

And you know that's a long and arduous process to retrain the mouth to speak correctly. And here, instantly, this man hasn't heard probably for decades, instantly, his speech is plain and correct and right and precise. Verse 36, and Jesus charged them to tell no one. Why did Jesus tell them that? Because the last time Jesus was here in the Decapolis, remember, the, the, the fellow wanted to go with Jesus and Jesus required him to stay and tell everybody.

Here Jesus says, don't tell anybody. Why? We're not told. I think the best explanation is simply crowd control. The crowds are a problem, they're enormous, they're becoming difficult for Jesus to travel. And I think just quite simply, it's just crowd control. So He charged them to tell no one, verse 36, and Jesus charged them to tell no one, but the more He charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

Isn't that ironic that the God man who commands the sea and the wind and the waves, and he speaks to the storm and says, be still, and instantly it's still. That same God man with one word, the demons flee. And yet he charges them again and again to not tell people, and he can't seem to keep them quiet.

Isn't that ironic? Isn't that ironic that the one who commands the storm... Seemingly can't keep the crowd quiet.

One thing that says to us is the incredible long suffering patience of the Lord to allow mankind to sin against Him. You ever think of that? You ever ponder just the patience of God as He just allows mankind to scandalize His name, to sin against Him. Just the patience of Jesus here. So he charges them to tell no one, but the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

So a couple of things that I see from this, first of all, is this says to us something very important about the human heart, doesn't it? It says to us something very important, very dark and very unpleasant about the darkness of the human heart. First of all, it tells us that within the fallen human heart, there is something, there's something in our heart that for certain sins.

When we learn that they displease God, it actually awakens a desire in us to do it. Isn't that an ugly thing to see about ourselves? Think of what Paul says in Romans chapter 7, What shall I say then that the law is sin by no means? Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, You shall not covet.

But sin, seizing upon an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. So Paul says that once that I really learned that the law prohibits coveting, it's like that awoke something in me that said, Oh, coveting, that's what I want to do. Now this isn't true for every sin, but it is true that all of us have some sin within our heart, that something about God's prohibition actually awakens more desire for it.

So something about this, as Jesus told them, don't tell anybody, the more he told them. The more they disobeyed and told so that's a very ugly truth about the fallen human heart and reminds us of just how Desperately we need Christ secondly this shows us something about the true disciple The true disciple needs something a whole lot more than just excitement.

You need something far more than just amazement to be a disciple because they were amazed at Jesus's ability. They were amazed at Jesus's power. In fact, Mark uses a phrase here that really just goes over the top. He says, immeasurably astonished, exceedingly astonished. They were so astonished it just went beyond words to describe how astonished they were, yet they weren't astonished enough to obey.

So something more than just amazement is required. in order to be a disciple. You need to be more than just amazed at God's power or his love or his compassion or his forgiveness. God needs to do a whole lot more than just amaze you for you to be a disciple because the mark of a disciple is not amazement.

The mark of a disciple is obedience. As we read in John chapter eight, verse 31, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. So now finally, verse 37, and they were astonished beyond measure, saying, He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak. So that phrase, he has done all things well, that's a very emphatic phrase.

In fact, the word that's emphasized is the word well. So, so well. Has he done all things, all things he's done incredibly well. The emphasis there is just on his excellency. He does all things well, and certainly a truer statement has never been said. God certainly does all things well, hearkens us back, of course, to Genesis one and the creation account as God sees what he has made and he declares, this is good.

This is good. This is good. It is all good. He has made all things and he has done all things well. So they lift up this praise, this acclamation, this, these words of adoration. This man does all things well. This is the literal fulfillment. of Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapter five.

So let your good works so be done before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Jesus is the literal fulfillment of this as they see his good works of freeing this man from deafness and muteness. And they lift up this praise, these words of adoration, He does all things well.