

How is your hearing? The deaf mute at Decapolis

Welcome Tim Middleton to lead this morning

Main reading: Mark 7:31-37

Sermon: How is your hearing?

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [21_02_21.mp3](#).

Welcome and pray

Not hearing well, will have very different consequences.....

- It could be selfish as the lady switches off her hearing aid when she wants some peace and quiet – like leaving the phone off the hook.
- Or for survival in the workplace - as the teacher with selective hearing; he only listens to those he wants to above the noise in the classroom.
- Poor hearing can be frustrating: Trying to listen to one voice in the middle of a room full of chatting people requires great effort.
- Not hearing properly can even be amusing... In a café a group sat at one table listen to a couple a another. One whispers "they have been to the zoo because I heard her mention 'a trained deer.'" No says another "they said reindeer". A third pipes up. "I am sure they were talking about musicians, for she said 'a trained ear. Not at all says a fourth "I'm sure she said: 'Find out about the train, dear.'" At this the lady leans across to the table "actually I was asking my husband if it rained here last night."

It can be more serious....

- Not hearing the call to board at the airport could leave you stranded.
- Not hearing the cry/warning that a lorry is reversing towards you is fatal.

How is your hearing? Somethings are important, some less so, missing a plane is not the end of the world, - being run over will be.

Like a good Baptist there are three points again this morning: 'the event, i.e what happened', 'why it happened', 'And the message for you and I' x2

The event what happened

Firstly where are they? Jesus has been travelling around and he is now in the region east of lake Galilee. "31 **Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.**

32 **There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.** Mr 7:32

They did this because earlier when Jesus had healed the demoniac in Mk 5 he had told him to go home and tell his family but instead "**the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.**" Mr 5:20

So all the people knew of Jesus' power because the man has told them. So they bring this man to Jesus.

Matthew notes in his parallel passage 30 **Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. 31 The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.**" Mt 15:29-31

Here is a man in a sorry state. He had probably become deaf and therefore his speech was increasingly incoherent. He was tongue-tied. the word means "scarcely speak,"

The crowd brought this poor man to Christ, they pleaded, they **begged him to place his hand on the man** - they wanted Jesus to do what the prophets did – to take notice of his case, to bring divine healing, to imparted a blessing.

33 **After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spat and touched the man's tongue.**

Jesus did not speak to the man - but put is fingers into his ears - these very visible acts don't contain power in themselves - make sure we understand that - Jesus used different methods – whatever method he used – the power is in Jesus. - His fingers, his spittle, his touching the tongue show all those watching that the power is from him.

He looks to his father in Heaven **34 He looked up to heaven** from whom all things come and to give Him the Glory. Jesus often looked up; **Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves.** Mr 6:41 *Let us also look up with thankful hearts*

Everything you have, all good things come from Him, as the psalmist said: **My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.** Ps 121:2 **and with a deep sigh** in pitying the sufferings of the man before him, **said to him, "Ephphatha!"** *plenty of front teeth which in Syriac means, "Be opened!"*

Christ's words have power. By speaking, he can immediately remove this or any such disorder. **35 At this,** - that is at his words - **the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.** When Jesus opens the ears - the mouth speaks.

36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. Now he could speak – he spoke of Christ Jesus was concerned not to short circuit the ministry lest it spread through distorted gossip, nor prompt the people to set him up as a temporal king, nor excite the jealousy of the Pharisees, and endanger his life before his time.

The crowds saw what had happened and we read the **People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."** Mr 7:37

Why? the bigger context for more detail on the journey route see 20_08_23.doc

Title This account is only in Mark. Mark, like the other gospel writers arranges his content to make a point. So although it is good to read parallel versions/harmonies don't miss what Mark, writing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, is saying to you.

- **Laying a wreath on the cenotaph in Whitehall is only significant because of the context. So it is true here.**

Follow through the plan on the screen. The context spans **Ch 7&8.**

We start with the run-in with the **Pharisees 7:1-23** notice that considerable time is given to this. What is the problem? **These people honour me**

The disciples didn't understand so Jesus explains it to them, they still didn't see it - so he takes them on a long journey to the region of Tyre – and Sidon.

- **Come let me show you real faith** See the map on the bulletin.

It's a long walk. Plenty of time to talk. Plenty of time to teach. On arrival he 'hides'. A determined **Syro-Phoenician** woman comes and falls at his feet to plead for her demon possessed daughter "Here you see is **genuine faith**"

It's a long walk back... and they don't stop at the western side of the lake or even the north but continue to the other side, down to the Decapolis.

Decapolis means 10 cities and covers a large area. It says: **the region of the Decapolis.** The Syriac and Persic versions render the words, "**to the borders of Decapolis**"; the Arabic "**to the middle of the coasts of the ten cities**"

Again there's plenty of time to talk on the way. Long walks and talks are not easily forgotten. When they arrive some people bring to him this deaf / mute. There the healing takes place he is able to hear **Box**

Jesus with his disciples remain in this largely pagan area. Jesus looks at his disciples - they still haven't got the message as to who he is!

He's feed the 5000 - He gives more evidence as he feeds the **4000. Box**

"17 Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?" "Twelve," they replied." Mr 8:17-19

"Don't you remember!" Jesus says: **"Can't you see that I am all** you need".
"Can't you see I am the true bread of life Can't you see that I give true life?

✚ **They are not getting it. It is as if their normal faculties are not functioning. They have, as we say, given leave of their senses**

I repeat **Jesus asks "Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember?"** Mr 8:18 **Box Can you not see? Can you not hear?**

Are you not listening to what I am saying? Can't you see the miracles with your own eyes? You have eyes but still can't see what is in front of you. You are blind to the obvious

Another long walk. This time I suspect there's some silence on the road. On their way round they stop at Bethsaida (5000). What kind of place is this they think, There's nothing good here, "why come here" they mutter.

You won't find people with faith at Bethsaida. They are blind to the things of God. So Jesus **heals the blind man Box** so **he** can see. Now can **you** see?

We are supposed to link these two together for compare these

7:32 **some people brought to him a man who was deaf ... and they begged him to place his hand on the man.**

8:22 **some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.**
The similar wording is saying: "don't miss the connection!"

7:33 **After he took him aside, away from the crowd,**

8:23 **He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village.**

The blind man has his eyes '**opened**' so he can see – and see clearly.

They both are 'opened' The deaf man had his ears "**opened**" he can hear.

Now is time to take stock. The disciples have had plenty of evidence - what have they learned, have they got it? Bethsaida is on the road to Caesarea

Philippi. **Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi.** Have they understood, **Have you learned from the ph's Bli, Deaf**

"On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

27,28

OK so they haven't got it "**But what about you?"** he asked. "**Who do you say I am?"** Peter answered, "**You are the Christ & BOX**" Ah they've got it,. x2 The message – and the miracles (green boxes) to see and hear

Therein lies the message

So lastly - They got it – the question is “have you” “have you got it?”

All of us are naturally like the Pharisees - who could neither see nor hear. They chose not to see or hear. It was a moral choice.

The Syro-Phoenician woman who lived far away in a pagan area had faith She had got it - she had heard clearly - and she saw clearly who Jesus was.

What unstops the ears is the heart. What do I mean by that? We hear what we want to hear and we see what we want to see.

This deaf man resembles that of a sinner in his natural state, one who is deaf to the voice of God, both the law of God and the Gospel of God. He does not respond to the commanding voice of the law, or give any attention to its precepts, nor will he be subject to it. He does not hear its warnings and curses, He is not affected or disturbed by these things and takes no action to avoid the danger ahead.

- To walk around the street with headphones is to take a risk, you cannot hear the dangers around you. Electric cars – one of the concerns is that more people will be run over - you have to listen out more carefully.

The gospel is not a quiet sneaky sound – The Gospel carrier is like the foreman on a building site who shouts: “watch out, the wall is collapsing” x2

The lesson is seen in Lot's sons-in-law in Sodom who, when they heard of impending judgment, - just laughed x2– they're not listening to the warnings

Not only is man in his natural state like the deaf adder who stops his ear to the charming voice of the Gospel; but he despises it, and deep down holds it in contempt. He is deaf to any correction, ..instruction, ..direction, ..caution, .. to pleading, ...pleading from ministers here, but even friends or relations.

The simple truths of God have long been preached in this Chapel. Over the years there have been a number who have sat where you are now sitting - but they have had no experience of God's life changing grace.

✚ That is also true for some here this morning.

The simple truths of the gospel are that we are all sinners in the sight of a Holy God. We are lawbreakers, everyone. Damnation hangs over us all – and we deserve nothing less than eternal punishment for our hard hearts - and years of rebellion against God our maker, - and the Lordship of his Son. But God in his love and mercy intervenes directly into this dead world.

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, humbled himself and after preaching the good news of another kingdom, the Kingdom of God, sacrifices his own life that others might enter it – and do so freely.

The message has come to you today, this morning, in you hearing, the wonderful news that **Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners. He died for sin the good for the bad,** Jesus Christ the righteous one became the sin bearer, so underserving failed men and women like you and I, can now freely receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life through Him.

His resurrection from the grave sealed it. It proves that Jesus Christ is Lord of heaven and earth, and it proves that the He is the only way you and I can avoid eternal damnation.

There is the message of Christ - to be heard. There are also acts of Christ to see. In every true born again believer is seen the new miracle of re-creation. It is a simple message – have you heard it? – really heard it?

To miss the announcement at the departure gate is not the end of the world, to miss this call – Christ's call - will lead to unrelenting misery forever.

✚ There are some here who have yet to receive this grace and enter.

Can you see the ugliness of your sin and therefore repent of it? Can you see the beauty and grace in Christ and turn to him forsaking all and now receive the bountiful offer of eternal life extended to you?

I can think those who, who have heard it week by week for years, and yet say “I’m a good person”. They haven’t listened. Why because they don’t want to hear the truth of the matter.

“There’s nothing seriously wrong with me I hear one lady say – So there’s nothing I need to do.” And walk out no different from when they came in.

This is exactly what Jesus is highlighting here - the Pharisees were both blind and deaf to Jesus. Jesus says to you: **Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?** Mr 8:17-19

In those four types of soil are the four types of heart - which one are you?

Hard - shallow, fickle – distracted, too much else – or ready, responsive?

The appeal

For some here there is still something to be done To you God says: - **“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”** Eph 5:14

There are many things we may miss out on in life, - so be it - but let no-one miss hearing the voice of God who is now calling you to be saved from damnation!

That is why hearing is so important **let he who has ears to hear - let him hear!**

Jesus said: **“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”** Joh 5:24

Have you heard his voice? Have you crossed over? If you haven’t then call out now to Christ to unstop your ears so you can listen - and respond.

Christ is extending his mighty arm of grace – Will you lay hold of it now? x2

✚ **If you do we will rejoice together with you. A genuine work of Grace shows in a loosed tongue that has a readiness to pray and to praise.**

Joanne Milne, from Gateshead, was born deaf. During her 20s she had the rare medical condition Usher syndrome. At the QE Hospital she was able to have a cochlear implant. Grateful to the team for the successful operation she burst into tears when she heard a nurse reading out the days of the

week. She said she was delighted by the results of the "life-changing" procedure to fit implants. She said: "The ‘switch-on’ point was the most emotional and overwhelming experience of my life and I'm still in shock now. "Hearing things for the first time is so, so emotional, from the ping of a light switch to running water. I can't stop crying. "I can already foresee how it's going to be life changing and the implants will get better and better over time. I'm overwhelmed by it all. I'm so, so happy."

The Joy of that woman who could now hear is a picture of the joy of those who have ears to hear Christ’s life changing message and find new life with God. See how quick she was to speak of it! – That is the proof of it!

✚ **We can tell you have understood - because you speak of it**

The Pharisees, like the deaf man who cannot speak clearly, - can only speak nonsense. There is the sign. If you don’t know the Grace of Christ you will have nothing useful to say to others, you will be mute, dumb.

When Jesus enables this man to hear we read that he **spoke plainly**. Those whose ears are opened have their tongues loosed in a spiritual manner by Christ. That man or woman can speak plainly of what they have heard and seen. They can give a clear account of the work of God upon their souls; how they have been convinced of the sinfulness in their heart. That person can speak of how they have seen Christ to be an all sufficient Saviour. The one who has gone to him for healing can speak clearly to others of what it is to be pardoned, to be given righteousness and everlasting salvation.

That person can tell what promises have been applied to them, and what comforts they have enjoyed; - and how busy Satan has been with them; but also what temptations of his they have been delivered out of, - simply put they can speak plainly of the love of God to them; of the glories and excellences of Christ; of their faith and hope in him, and love to him; and of the operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts; and the certainties of the glorious world to come.

A true Christian is someone who hears Christ clearly – and therefore can speak of Christ clearly. God gave the tongue to man to speak out his glories - A genuine work of Grace shows in a loosed tongue that has a readiness to pray and to praise.

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