

Mark 7:31-37 ESV

Let Us Think and Be Amazed!

Sunday, September 6 at 8:00 & 10:45

Mondays at 7 PM resume on September 14

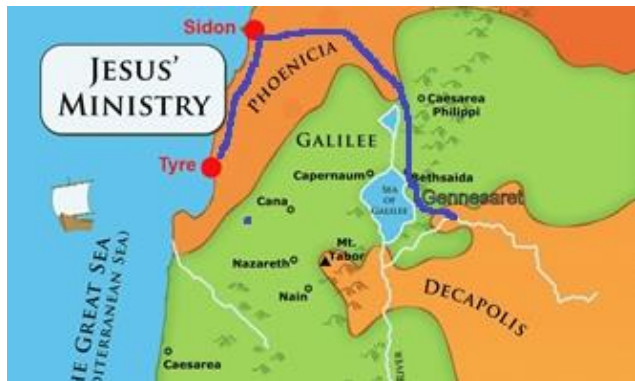
15th Sunday after Pentecost / 14th Sunday after Trinity – 2015

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We live in an amazing age of ✦television, ✦jet planes, ✦organ transplants, ✦computers, ✦cell phones, and ✦space travel! Therefore, it is easy for us to become dull to †God’s awesome creation, †the Son of God putting on human flesh, and †the miracles of Jesus. So today, as Jesus performs a *simple* yet *extraordinary* miracle, let us *think* and *be amazed!*

- The Location:** ³¹ ~~Then he returned~~ [lit. And again {Jesus} going out] from the region of Tyre ~~and~~ went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

// The blue line

on the map shows a possible route of



Jesus’ travels – **from** somewhere near Tyre, **through** Sidon to the north, **toward** the Sea of Galilee to the southeast, and **to** the region of Decapolis – *east and south of the Sea of Galilee.*¹ That is the same general

¹ The **Decapolis** (Greek: Δεκάπολις, Ten Cities) was a group of ten cities on the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire... The cities were grouped together because of their language, culture,

area where Jesus had healed a man with a demon, *as recorded in Mark chapter 5*. The man had an unclean spirit and lived in the tombs; no one could bind him, *not even with a chain*. So Jesus commanded the demon to come out – *and he did!* Then, *immediately*, the man was completely well! Then Jesus told the man, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you...” And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone marveled (1-20 ESV). Then, in Mark 7, when Jesus’ returned to the area, His reputation for healing had become well known!

2. **The Situation:** ³² **And they** [the people in that region] brought to him [Jesus] a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. // So the man could not hear and struggled to talk; but why? Was his condition of the natural or the supernatural realm? Dr. Luther made this comment: “Before the world it may seem...that they be natural ailments; for the world does not know the devil that he does so much harm, makes the people mad and foolish, inflicts all manner of misfortune upon them, not only in the body, but also in the soul” (Kretzmann, NT II:203). This man in Mark 7 is not demon-possessed, *but his ailments can certainly be connected back to* ♦the devil who tempted, ♦the first people who fell, and ♦the spread of sin, suffering, and death to all future generations – *even to us!* Today, *because of sin*: ➡Some are *physically* ill, ➡but all are in need of God’s *spiritual* healing through Jesus!

3. **The Miracle:** ³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴ And looking up to heaven, he sighed [*He groaned within himself*] and said to him, “Ephphatha [*an Aramaic word*],” that is, “Be opened [completely].” ³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. // So the man was deaf, *he could not hear*; if Jesus would have said to him, “Be healed!” The man would have been healed, but he would *not* have understood who did it. Therefore, Jesus communicated with him in ways he could understand – *by putting His fingers into his ears and touching his tongue*. Then, *for the sake of those who could hear*, Jesus said, “Be opened completely!” *Then God granted the miracle!* The man was deaf and struggled to speak; then, *immediately*, his hearing and speaking were *fully functional!* He had no surgery, no therapy; no time for healing was needed! So *let us think and let us be amazed!*
- Today’s OT reading said, “...Behold, your God...will come and save you.” Then...the ears of the deaf [shall be] unstopped; then shall...the tongue of the mute sing for joy” (Isaiah 35:4-6 ESV). Jesus showed Himself to be our God who came to save us – sometimes from physical ailments, *but especially from the condemnation of our sins!*
 - The Bible says that “with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Rom. 10:10 NAS). Dr. Luther wrote: “The ears take hold of the Word, and the heart believes it; but the tongue speaks and confesses, as the heart

believes” (Kretzmann, NT II:204). So let us, *with working ears and tongues*, ✦gladly hear and ✦boldly confess our Lord Jesus Christ!

4. **The Response:** ³⁶ **And Jesus charged them** [*those who witnessed the miracle*] **to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.** 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 why did Jesus charge them to tell no one? *Because Jesus came – not to establish a healing ministry but – to live, die, and rise for our eternal salvation!* The man needed physical healing, so Jesus was merciful to him. But the main emphasis is always spiritual healing; that is our greatest need! So how are such blessings received? Dr. Luther wrote that Jesus works **“within the Christian Church, by means of the Sacraments and through the public** [*or preached*] **Word, that the ears of the deaf** [*the spiritually deaf*] **are opened, and that the [mute]** [*the ones unable to spiritually confess Jesus as Lord*] **are made to speak”** (Kretzmann, NT II:204).

Conclusion: Therefore, God is tenderly inviting everyone to ✓gladly hear, ✓boldly confess, and ✓eternally benefit! In today’s amazing age of ✦television, ✦jet planes, ✦organ transplants, ✦computers, ✦cell phones, and ✦space travel, let us ✦think about Jesus, ✦be amazed, and ✦trust in Him!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**