



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 7:31-37.

Jesus left the district of Tyre and went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, into the district of the Decapolis. And people brought to him a deaf man who had a speech impediment and begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him off by himself away from the crowd. He put his finger into the man's ears and, spitting, touched his tongue; then he looked up to heaven and groaned, and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!") And immediately the man's ears were opened, his speech impediment was removed, and he spoke plainly. He ordered them not to tell anyone. But the more he ordered them not to, the more they proclaimed it. They were exceedingly astonished and they said, "He has done all things well. He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I come to you once again in prayer. Even though I cannot see you, my faith tells me that you are present. You are ready to listen and desire to speak with me. Your presence gives me hope, because you are the all-powerful God, the creator of heaven and earth. You are the source of all that is good in my life. Nothing happens to me without your knowing and permitting it. My hope leads me to love. I want to be one with you in mind and heart, identifying myself with your will and your standards.

Petition:

Lord, teach me how to be alone with you. Help me to encounter you.

1. Away from the Crowd:

Why does Jesus take the deaf man off by himself away from the crowd? Jesus wants to be alone with him, away from the noise and activity of the crowd. He wants to be able to communicate with him in silence and solitude. Jesus invites me also to go away from the crowd, away from the activity and noise of life, away from other people and distractions, in order to pray. Jesus invites me to be alone with him so that he can reveal himself to my soul and heal the impediments that keep me from communicating his love and truth to others.

2. The Human Effort to Heal:

Many times in the Gospel, Jesus works a miracle with a mere word. But sometimes he performs miracles with a physical act, as in this case, when he puts his finger into the man's ears and touches his tongue with spittle. What are we to make of this? What can we learn from it? Many times, our healing requires a human effort. Action must be taken. We are not purely spiritual beings, but body and spirit woven into one. So our physical side plays a part. We kneel to pray. We go into the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. We make an effort to read Scripture. We do all of these physical things so that our entire being, both body and soul, can be healed of sin and grow closer to Christ.

3. To Speak Plainly:

The fruit of this encounter with Christ and of the effort that Christ makes is clarity — plain speech. The fog of imperfection is removed and the deaf-mute begins to speak with the clarity and the forcefulness of truth — so much so that the people are astounded. If I have truly encountered Christ, the fog that veils my mind and muddles my speech will be removed. The double-edged sword of God's truth will shine through my words and actions so much so that people will be astounded.

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, I want to be your disciple. I want your truth and love to shine in my life. Open my intellect so that I can perceive your truth as it really is. Soften my heart to love you with a pure love that overflows into the hearts of those around me. Strengthen my will to choose you and your ways steadfastly.

Resolution:

I will make the effort today to set aside some time to pray away from the business of life.