

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Mark 7:31-37  
September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### He Took Him Aside from the Multitude

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who by Thy almighty Word didst make the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak, we draw nigh unto Thee in all our bodily and spiritual needs, for there is none to help us save Thou alone; and we humbly beseech Thee, touch with Thy divine power our diseased members and our diseased hearts, open our ears to hear Thy Word, loose our tongues to speak righteousness, and fill our hearts with the power of Thy Holy Spirit that, beholding the wonders of Thy grace, we may confess Thy Name before men, and praise and glorify Thee, Who doest all things well, and Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Evangelist St. Mark tells us in this Gospel reading from his Gospel that our Lord began in the region of Tyre and Sidon. These two cities are on the Mediterranean Sea. They are the far western border of Israel. Sidon, which is the farther north of the two cities, marks the upper northwest corner of the land of Israel. St. Mark then proceeds to tell us that our Lord + Jesus went forth from that region to the region in between the Decapolis. The Decapolis, which means the “ten cities” is on the far eastern side of the land of Israel. All ten cities are on the eastern side of the Jordan River. In between Tyre and Sidon and the Decapolis is the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord’s home, Capernaum, is also located on this sea; on the northwest side of the sea.

It is here that our Lord is brought a man who was both deaf and had trouble speaking plainly; an impediment of speech, as is the case with most people who cannot hear. If you cannot hear the words that you are speaking, it is hard to pronounce the words properly and clearly. The people who brought this deaf and mute man begged our Lord to heal him. Our Lord therefore takes this man away from the crowds so that He may have this man’s full attention.

What St. Mark is relating to us in telling us these seemingly simple geographic details is that our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, traveled from the far western border of Israel in order that this man might be healed. Our Lord not only travels a long distance, but when this man is brought to our Lord by his friends and family, our Lord takes him away from everyone else, in order to have his full attention. He does the same thing for us.

It should be no surprise to us that we are all born spiritually deaf and mute. We are born in sin. We have inherited sin from our first parents. We sin daily and much. Our Lord opened up our deaf ears and loosed our mute tongues when we were baptized by the Holy Ghost in the waters of Holy Baptism. By water and the Word of God our ears were opened to hear His Word, so that by the working of the Holy Ghost we might be able to hear the promise of the Gospel, and believe on the Lord + Jesus, Who

has done all things well. He has made us to hear His Word, which continues to create and sustain faith in us, so that we continue to cling to our only means of salvation. He has loosed our tongues so that we might proclaim Him the more widely; telling all of the good things that He has done for us; telling all that He has won salvation for us by His death on the tree of the holy cross. Through the waters of Holy Baptism, we have been washed clean and free from sin.

By this washing and renewal of the Holy Ghost, He draws us to Himself so that He might have our full attention. This washing is just the beginning. Holy Baptism is always connected with teaching of the Word of God. This was the command that the Lord gave to the Apostles. They were to go and teach all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost opened our ears at our Holy Baptism with the Word of God, and He continues to keep our ears open—He continues to strengthen our faith—by all the means of grace in which He comes to us with the Word of God. He is continually working on our deaf ears and our mute tongues. He gathers us to Himself in this place—away from the siren songs of the world—in order that we might hear only Him; hear only the promises of the Gospel; hear only that our Lord perfectly fulfilled the Law of the Lord God on our behalf and suffered our punishment on the tree of the holy cross.

He comes to us in this place by His means. He comes wherever two or three are gathered together in His Name, just as He promised. He has come to us today in His Word and Sacraments. Wherever the Word of God and the Blessed Sacraments are found, there is the Lord + Jesus come unto His people. There He is in the midst of them. There He is drawing us to Himself so that He might open our deaf ears and loose our mute tongues.

It is well for us that He does this for us, for this world is full of distractions. This is why He takes the deaf and mute man away from the crowds, so that there would be no distractions for this man. He would have this man's full attention. In our daily lives, when we are away from this place, the world presents many distractions for us. Our jobs, the media, our families, every thing in the world is tapping on our shoulders begging us to listen to them. Many of these things draw us away on a daily basis. They draw us away from our study of the Lord God's Word. They draw us away from our prayer and devotions. If we are honest with ourselves, we spend way more time on Facebook, or watching TV than we do in prayer and study of the Lord God's Word.

This is why our Lord + Jesus has established His Church here on Earth. This is why He has placed His Church in this place. He has given us a place away from the world where we He can come to us with His gifts and He will have our full attention. Every part of the Liturgy is meant to focus our attention on the Christ; it is meant to give us the gift of forgiveness, life and salvation. We are reminded at the beginning of our Holy Baptism, when the Pastor blesses us with the sign of the holy cross and the Words of Institution. But the Name of our Triune Lord God rings throughout the Liturgy. His Name is proclaimed to our ears throughout the Divine Liturgy, as we sing His Name over and over again.

All of this brings us to the point where we meet our Lord + Jesus personally in His Body and Blood given in bread and wine in the Lord's Supper. Here at this altar, we receive the Word of God in bread and wine. We receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life and salvation. He proclaims to us by His Word that He has suffered and died to win for us forgiveness of all our sins, and He proclaims that by this Body and Blood given in bread and wine we actually receive the promised forgiveness. As He opens our ears to hear this wonderful Gospel message through the Words of Institution, He also places upon our tongues the very means by which our ears are opened and our tongues are loosed.

Having received the forgiveness of sins through His Body and Blood given to us, He declares to us that our sins are forgiven once more by declaring to us through the Pastor that we can now depart in peace, knowing that our sins are forgiven; that we have eternal life and salvation in Him. We respond with the word of faith that this promise is true. We say, "Amen" and make the sign of the holy cross

reminding ourselves that we have this promise because of the work our Lord + Jesus did on the tree of the holy cross. Through these means our Lord draws us closer to Him through faith. He creates and sustains our faith in Him, so that we continue to be drawn to Him and away from the world and its distractions.

My dear friends, our Lord + Jesus traveled a long distance to see the deaf and mute man. He took him away from the crowds to deal with him by Himself. In this place He does the same thing for us. Therefore, my dear friends, let us never neglect the gathering together around the Word of God here in the place. Let us continue to hear His Word and receive His gifts. For He desires to take us away from the allurements of the world, in order that He might prepare us to be taken to our eternal home in Heaven to live with Him and all the saints and angels forever in His Kingdom without end. May our ears ever remain open to hear His promises, and may our tongues be loosed to proclaim that He has done all things well for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*