

Thoughts from your Pastor -

Again, 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 hands 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 then he groaned and said to him Ephphatath - 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 said, "He had done all things well."

The bottom line here is when we see something good, how can we not share it. And with this miracle Christ performed, regardless of His command not to tell anyone about it, the good news traveled. It's our human nature not to keep good things a secret, but rather to share that good with others. Perhaps this is precisely the intent of this and other great miracles of Our Lord - to make sure the word gets out, to live a life in Christ...and become partakers of all the good He offers.

We can all identify with the deaf man's feelings; not being able to wait to share good news. Most likely we too have not hesitated to share happiness with a spouse, family, friends. Can't we remember running home to tell our moms and dads we passed our exams; or today, instantly using our cell phone to say we got the job, or our computers to blast all our friends that we were getting married? This is touching others, sharing good things and the light of life itself.

And so, this is why Our Lord chose to give sight to a blind man, or to give sound to a deaf man and utterance and speech to the dumb. In all these healings and acts of God's power, Jesus is capturing our attention, telling us that it is very important spiritually to see the wonder of God. First, WE have to seek Him, hear Him and let Him touch our minds and hearts. This type of sight of soul and spirit is called Faith. Yet how do we reach people who are spiritually deaf, dumb and blind as this man's physical condition and help them recognize the goodness and light of God that can transform their lives? There are millions of such lost souls.

We all have heard about Helen Keller, born deaf and blind. It wasn't until she was 7 years old that a woman by the name of Annie Sullivan saved her. In a sense, Annie performed a great task - a miracle of sorts - pulling Helen out of the physical darkness to a life where, in spite of the dark, light came to her with a physical touch. Not only did Annie maintain a loyal relationship and companionship, but more importantly the loving perseverance that only love could bring. From love came light even to Helen in her dark life and condition. By Annie's touch, embrace, comforting ways Helen Keller learned to speak, and with her spirit learned to hear, becoming herself light and an inspiration and a

transforming legacy that we remember today. To use a familiar cliché, even in the dark, there is light at the end of the tunnel.

This Gospel account shows to us, how Jesus touched and communicated with the deaf man who could not speak and defied his condition by saying BE OPENED. For all those who saw the miracle and participated in it, for them their faith too was strengthened as Christ unleashed a progression of might and power that changed every one, not just the man, but all who were there.

Life can be so hard for us who do believe, but even harder and difficult for those who don't know Christ, who don't worship Him and celebrate Him. This miracle shows how one's human desire, driven by FAITH, can become the touch of Christ to our ears, to our minds, so we can proclaim God's glorious power to the many Helen Keller's who still sit in spiritual darkness. This is a miracle of both a physical and spiritual touch.

Therefore, there is more to the gospel story than just the miracle itself. It is how the story impacts our hearing it and reading it. Our Lord's particular miracle becomes a question. Who will you touch, whose friend will you be, how will you communicate with people that you know who are still spiritually blind, deaf and dumb, living in the dark? Miracles heal the physically wounded, and at the same time inspire the spirit of those who witness it.

Looking around us in the most simple of situations, every day we just might notice Christ appearing and offering His touch through a friendly and encouraging smile, a gesture of good will, and assistance, an unexpected visit or phone call from a friend. Miracles can and do still happen when we have faith, and let God touch us as Christ did the deaf and dumb, and pray the He can touch others we love.