

He Has Done Everything Well!

✦ **Hearing** (vv.31-32)

✦ **Sighing** (vv.33-35)

✦ **Guiding** (vv.36-37)

In the name of Jesus, the soul's best Friend, dearly redeemed:

Twenty-eight years ago today, on September 13, 1987, we held our first worship service in Snail Lake Elementary School for New Life Lutheran Church. All these years later we are still enjoying the miraculous way our dear Lord makes streams flow in the desert. Where heartache and turmoil tried to dry up our souls, our Savior sent His Holy Spirit flowing freely with Word and sacrament to soothe us deep inside. Looking back, I don't always understand why God has done what He has done. But I can say without a doubt, **He Has Done Everything Well!** Is that not what faith cries when courage comes so hard, and we long for a kind, encouraging word? You're in the right place. God's Word gives you...

✦ **Hearing** (vv.31-32)

In all we have four Gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke, John – but only Mark reports this miracle. Comparing especially with Matthew helps us see what an important time this was in Jesus' ministry. He has already passed the peak of His popularity when He fed 5,000 families with a little boy's lunch. He suffered the plummet of His popularity when everyone left but the Twelve. Most could not accept Jesus is the only Way to heaven. News had come of John the Baptist's beheading. And Jesus had taken His disciples far away to the north where He healed the daughter of a Gentile woman whose faith would not give up praying. Jesus wanted to be alone with His disciples, to teach them, to prepare them for His *Resolute Journey* (Luke 9:51 – 19:41) to Jerusalem and the cross. Are you **Hearing**...?

“Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.” Literally, the *Ten Cities*, was a large area east of Galilee stretching from Damascus south along the eastern side of the Jordan River. Today it includes the Golan Heights with bombed out villages, blackened hulks of tanks and land mines that mean you should stay on the roads with a guide but don't stay too long. Wars fought for land are nothing compared to the battle for souls.

There are days when you really need a friend. And what would have happened to this man without his? *“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.”* Throughout Mark's Gospel account we hear how people brought their friends and family to Jesus for healing. As with this man, there was no help without Jesus. Their modern medicine failed. Home remedies failed. No help from false gods of nearby nations. If his friends had not brought him to Jesus, the man would have stayed deaf and dumb, not in intelligence but unable to speak clearly with tongue tied and speech garbled. Worse yet, he would have missed **Hearing** Jesus.

What about you? Was it friends or family who first brought you to Jesus? Did your parents insist even when you were too stubborn or spiritually deaf to go? My tongue tied and mind went blank in a vicar sermon for Campus Ministry. But the LORD's words to Moses helped me as I now recall for this man: *“Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”* (Exodus 4:11 NIV84) What will happened to your children or your friends if you are not that friend who brings them to Jesus? Won't they stay deaf to God's Way to heaven? If you buckle to fatigue or kids complaining, how will they receive the miracle of Sunday School where Jesus opens vistas of God's love worth praises from every tongue? He gives us **Hearing** while He is...

✠ Sighing (vv.33-35)

But why was Jesus **Sighing**? Why does He take this man *“away from the crowd”*? Why *“put his fingers into the man’s ears”*? Why *“spit and touch the man’s tongue”*? Looking up to heaven seems normal for a miracle. But why Jesus’ *“deep sigh”*?

We aren’t told specifically, but you can see it from Mark’s Gospel reporting so far. Remember last Sunday? We heard how hypocritical Jewish religious leaders went after Jesus for not making His disciples obey their traditions. Yet their rules did nothing to make hearts right with God. Our unclean hearts spew *“evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.”* (7:21f) Plenty of reason for God’s Son **Sighing**.

Was Jesus **Sighing** because His people had so many advantages but so little determination to enjoy them with God? He had told that Gentile woman with her demon-possessed daughter way up in Tyre: *“It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “but even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”* (7:27f NIV84) Such great faith, but not among God’s people! Sometimes I’m amazed at the simple, childlike faith of folks who don’t get to study God’s Word as much as I do. We’d all be lost without it. It was so encouraging when my ailing stepfather said, “Hospice is like a window to heaven where you get to wake up and say, ‘Good morning, Jesus!’” How often have I given Jesus reason for **Sighing** when my faith was fickle, faltering in doubt?

Has Jesus been **Sighing** for you lately? **Sighing** in sadness because you don’t listen during the sermons, your mind somewhere else? Or you don’t take time on Saturday to rest up for God’s house on Sunday? Dear heart, Jesus is **Sighing** because He loves you so. Watch how He shows His deep love for you. He takes you aside and communicates so you can understand. *Here is where I help you; feel my fingers in your ears? Your mouth must be cleansed; let me show you with my spit and my touch. I look up to heaven. Read my lips as I say, “Ephphatha!” Now your ears are open; your tongue is loosed. You speak plainly when you learn how much I love you, how I am Guiding you home to eternity!*

✠ Guiding (vv.36-37)

We’ve been hearing for years Jesus’ Great Commission to *“go into all the world and announce the Good News to all creation.”* (16:15 literal) God guided us to hear again today: *Be of good cheer. Your sins are all forgiven.* Have you been begging Jesus to heal your friends, as these friends begged Jesus?

Would people listen better if Jesus said not to tell? He wanted to suffer for us first, die on the cross, then conquer our worst enemies of sin, death and hell. But they wanted a bread king. So *“Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did, the more they kept talking about it.”* In Mark 1 a healed leper *began to talk freely, spreading the news. So Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet people still came to him from everywhere.”* (1:45)

There is a proper time and place for everything, especially now when we are commanded, when people need to hear **He Has Done Everything Well!** Jesus still makes *“the deaf hear and the mute speak.”* See how kindly He has been **Guiding** us and our children all these years? Today a new Sunday School / Bible Class year begins. Will you trust Jesus to do **Everything Well** for you, your family and friends? Trust while **Hearing**, trust His **Sighing**, trust His **Guiding**. **He Has Done Everything Well!**

*Whether my pathway leads to hilltops fair and high or through the sunless valleys where the shadows lie, it matters little, for I know that Thou art with me and that underneath are Thy everlasting arms. Where Thou dost lead me I shall gladly go. Oh, guide me unerringly on life’s uncertain way here to my heavenly homeland there. In Jesus’ precious Name. Amen.*¹

¹ *My Prayer Book.* (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), pages 9f.

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