

Sermon Mark 7 31 37 11th S af Tritiny 1 Year Series

Sermon: 11th Sunday after Trinity

Text: Mark 7:31-37 (v. 32): “There some people brought to Jesus a man who was deaf and could hardly talk; and they begged him to place his hand on the man.”

Theme: How we can help disabled people.

Goal: To raise awareness about our responsibility toward disabled people in their physical and spiritual needs.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: Why do we have a Disability Awareness Sunday? Do we have some disabled people among us? Yes, we have. Hunter, for whom we pray every Sunday and also remember him in our private prayers, is a visible example. We have some other people with special needs.

Some disabilities are not that visible as others. Do you have any disabled person in your family or among your circle of friends or colleagues?

We cannot close our eyes to the special needs of disabled people. How can we help them? Just giving them some financial support? Yes; but they need more: they need love and people who spend time with true and sincere concern for them.

I – To give physical support to them

Jesus was coming from a trip through a gentile region, Lebanon. And he was now in Decapolis – the region of the Ten Cities. There was a mix of Gentiles and Jews living there. Remember the demon possessed man who was healed by Jesus and wanted to go with Him? Jesus didn't allow him to follow Jesus, but said to him: “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you” (Mark 5:19). He was from Decapolis and was the first missionary in that

region. Maybe those people who brought this deaf man to Jesus had heard about Jesus from that healed man.

It is important to notice that the deaf man had friends who were giving support to him. He was not alone. Deafness isolates a person. I have a niece who has severe hearing impairment; and sometimes, when all are together talking, she is by herself, because she cannot follow the conversation. The man of our text had family or friends who were giving support to him. He was not alone.

If we have any relationship with some disabled people , we have to be aware not to leave them alone. Some parents still hide their disabled child or elderly relatives, confining them into a room. Some clinics do the same, giving sleeping tablets to the patients to hold him/her in bed. This is not the correct way. These people need stimulation, company, entertainment, attention, activities. They need to be exposed to the sun, to walk, to experience the world. Depending on the disability, some just need someone who sits with them, holding their hand.

II – To give spiritual support to them

The friends of the deaf man of our text were not only giving physical support to him, but when they heard that Jesus was around, they gave also spiritual support to him: They brought him to Jesus.

I could tell you several experiences during my ministry when just a smile caused the eyes of a disabled person to shine brightly! A hymn, part of the Liturgy, a special Bible text awoke hope in the person. I will tell just one experience: At the beginning of my ministry, I used to go to visit an Old Age Home twice a month. One of the ladies had become blind and she was complaining all the time. She had grown up in a very wealthy family in France, and was now living in darkness in an Old Age Home in Brazil. Before Christmas, I took some children from the mission to sing to the elderly ladies. When they sang the “Gloria in

Excelsis”, she began to cry, remembering her childhood. The hard crust of bitterness was broken, and hope and faith in Jesus were restored. She was a new person after that experience.

Love and hope is what everyone needs, especially disabled people. For some, there is no hope to be healed. But if they have the love of Jesus and the hope of eternal life, where God “will wipe every tear from their eyes, there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:4), this gives them strength to support the current situation.

To bring someone to Jesus. This is a missionary appeal that each of us can do. Not by force, but by a good witness of life, words and deeds, sharing with others what Jesus means for me, for you.

III – To intercede for them

Those friends of the deaf man of our story not only brought the man to Jesus, but they also interceded for him. “They begged Jesus to place his hand on the man.” They had faith that Jesus could do something and they prayed for this. The man himself hadn’t heard from Jesus because he was deaf. We don’t know if he had faith or not. But his friends had faith. And they prayed for him.

I know that we all have people related to us who don’t have faith in Jesus. Some disabled people are unable to understand when we speak about Jesus to them. Maybe some are mentally disabled. But we still can pray for them and take their names and situation before Christ. He will listen and attend our prayers according to His will. At least, God knows that someone is concerned about that person. And we have His promises that He listens to our prayers. What He will do, we don’t know. But we pray in confidence.

Conclusion: The reaction of the people to Jesus’ healing is something remarkable: “People were overwhelmed with amazement. ‘He has

done everything well', they said. 'He even makes the deaf and the mute speak.'"

The miracles of Jesus were not just miracles. They were signs that he was the promised Messiah sent by God to redeem His people. Several prophecies from the Old Testament pointed to this (Isaiah 35:5,6). Even when John the Baptist sent some of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who was to come?", Jesus didn't reply immediately. He performed some miracles and said to John's messengers: "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Luke 7:20-22). Through His resurrection, the golden promise of His messianic work was accomplished. No more signs are necessary to prove that He is the Messiah, the Son of God and our Redeemer. We have His words and promises in the Bible. Blessed are those who believe in Him.

We will never have an answer to the question, '*Why is someone born with disability?*'. When a man born blind was brought to Jesus, His disciples asked Him: "Who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" And Jesus answered: "Neither this man nor his parents; but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:2,3). If we face a situation of a disabled person in our family or circle of friends, let us not just complain about it; but let us try to see what God is saying to us and what He is teaching us through that experience. Two of my colleagues in Brazil, and one of my sisters, who had seriously disabled children, miss them a lot when they passed away at the age of 20 and so. - What can we do? To give physical and spiritual support to them, to pray for them, and to share the love and the hope of Jesus with them. Amen.