

He Began to Speak Mark 7:31-37

The Gospel is huge – it is the grand story in which Jesus makes all things new – where everything is restored to what God intended when He created the universe.

As the Church, we are both Partakers of God's Grace, and Participants in the work of His Grace.

1. We are Partakers

Jesus came to make all things new – to restore all things to Himself. What does it mean? The key to understanding this is found in vs. 37, where those who witnessed this man's healing said, 'He has done everything well,' which takes us back to the creation narrative in Genesis where we read the recurring phrase, 'it was good,' which means that it was complete as it was created to be – beneficial and right and beautiful.

So when we say that Jesus came to restore all things to Himself, we mean this – the reversal of sin's curse.

Jesus came to restore all things by paying the ultimate price for the curse of the Garden – by giving His life on the Cross. When He died and then rose from the grave He insured that the curse of the Garden had been reversed forever to those come to Him in faith.

Jesus' miracles were intended to serve as visible signs that He had come to restore and renew what had been destroyed by sin. He healed bodies to demonstrate that God can heal all creation, including us.

Matthew 11:5 – “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.”

We have partaken of this Grace.

2. We are Participants

This man’s friends were participants in the grand story of his healing. They were the means by which this man met Jesus. They couldn’t hear for him and they couldn’t heal him – but they were crucial in his restoration.

What a beautiful picture of the Church’s calling in this broken world – but also, how sad that the Church is often guilty of taking another path.

Imagine, if instead of taking this man to Jesus, they condemned him for his condition:

- ‘How could you speak so poorly?’
- ‘God is going to judge you for your impediment!’

And yet every day we see examples of this from within the Church as people, out of their own insecurities decide that the best way to protect from being infected by the world is to respond in condemnation rather than in love. Instead of entering into the world’s pain, we add to it.

But here we see a group of friends who are not content with their own health but who are compelled to come to Jesus with their friend’s malady.

They share in the divine reversal.

This is how it played out: Jesus was delivered by God into this world, into the hands of men – and mankind gave Him death. But here people deliver this man into Jesus' hands – and He heals him – He gives him a life.

So the Church has been invited to enter this grand story of God's reversal of the curse – one life at a time.

How do we apply this?

- Be His – I think we often get calloused to the world's condition because we distance ourselves from who we are in Christ – we forget who we were and are apart from His Grace.
- Be There – There is no magic formula – You have no idea the impact of being there – As Jesus stuck His fingers into the ears of this man, we can enter into the pain of those around us – and in doing so we become Christ to them.