

Read: Mark 7:31-37

Words of Power

Mark 7:31-37

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"Quiet, please!" the teacher said. Suddenly all the talking in the classroom stopped. "Attention!" barked the army sergeant, and all the troops stopped what they were doing and stood perfectly still like statues. "Stop!" said the police officer who was directing traffic. All the people waited at the corner for cars to pass by and for the command to walk across the street.

There are a lot of people who have power and authority in their words. When they speak, people listen. When they say something, things happen. The coach tells her team what play to run. The teacher tells his students what they should do next. We respect and listen to people who are leaders because we know that their words are important.

This is even more true with Jesus! Did you hear his power today? Jesus said one word in his language—*Ephphatha*—and a man who couldn't hear or speak suddenly was healed. Incredible!

But we shouldn't be too surprised! This is what our God has always done. God simply spoke in the beginning, and he created the heavens and the earth. He spoke his promises, and they were always fulfilled. Then God came here in human flesh, and Jesus did the same. He spoke, and he calmed a storm. He spoke, and he healed people. He spoke, and he raised people from the dead. And best of all, Jesus said "It is finished" on the cross, and all our sins were paid for and the gates of heaven were opened for us. When God speaks, amazing things happen!

Since God's words are powerful, true, and trustworthy, it is our joy as Christians to simply listen to God speak in his Word. We may have troubles and difficult things happen in our lives, but just like the man in the story, God comes to us and speaks words of power, love, and forgiveness. Trust God and his words. They are always powerful and always true!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What did Jesus use his words to do in the story today?
- Think of at least two amazing things has God done simply by speaking?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How do we know for sure that God's Word is powerful?
- If God's Word is so powerful, what does that mean for our time in devotions, Bible studies, or church?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why doesn't God need to perform miracles today like he did in this story?
- God's Word is more powerful than your words. Explain why that is comforting for Christians when we share our faith with other people.

Closing Prayer:

God, you have the power to heal both body and soul. Help me to trust what you say in your mighty Word. Amen.

Hymn: CW 353:1 – Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness

Praise the one who breaks the darkness With a liberating light;
Praise the one who frees the pris'ners, Turning blindness into sight.
Praise the one who preached the gospel, Healing ev'ry dread disease,
Calming storms and feeding thousands With the Father's word of peace.