

A Mute Man Speaks

Call to Worship: Psalm 75

1st Scripture: Matthew 9:1-8, 18-31

2nd Scripture: Matthew 9:32-34

Introduction

We've been working through a large section of miraculous signs and wonders which our Lord had performed, recognizing a unique sense of the glory of our Lord's power and authority revealed by each sign. And this morning, we come upon an additional unique sign, which will lead into the closing out of this particular section of signs, before our Lord commissions and sends out His twelve Apostles beginning in Chapter 10.

You will recall that I have often said that our Lord's miracles were first and foremost used as a means of authenticating His Messianic office, calling and teachings, while pointing to the glory of the perfect resurrection and restoration of the whole of His people, whom He would redeem by His coming sacrifice. That is why sections of His teachings are often surrounded by these signs and wonders in the Gospels.

Looking backward and forward, we can see this pattern so clearly. It's no coincidence that immediately following the Sermon on the Mount, the very heart of Matthew's message to the Jews, we are inundated by a flood of all manner of unique and profound miraculous signs. The Sermon on the Mount ends at the end of Chapter 7. Then in 8:1-4, Jesus cleanses a leper. In 8:5-13, He heals the Centurion's servant from afar. In 8:14-15, He heals Peter's mother-in-law, and in verses 16-17, many who were demon-possessed and sick were healed. Moving forward, in 8:23-27, the Lord calms the winds and the waves on the Sea of Galilee; in 28-34, He heals the two demon-possessed men; in 9:1-8, He heals the paralytic; in 9:18-26, He heals the woman with the issue of blood and then raises Jairus's daughter from the dead. And then, last time, in 9:27-31, we found our Lord healing two blind men. This morning, we will find Him healing a demon-possessed mute man, and then next time, Lord willing, we will come to a summary conclusion, grand finale, where we are told that he heals every sickness and every disease among

the people throughout all the local cities and villages, while teaching in their synagogues (vs. 35-38).

And then, it is no coincidence that we move into a new section, where the Lord, having had His office and teachings thoroughly authenticated by His signs and wonders, commissions His Apostles to go out and to preach, while performing signs and wonders in His Name, which would serve to authenticate their Apostolic calling, as well. First, He begins by providing them with critical instructions in preparation for their ministry. To this end, *the recording* of miraculous signs on the part of the Lord (by Matthew), slows down dramatically, until we get to Chapter 14, with the exception of a few in Chapter 12, which are directly relevant to His teachings there. And so, looking forward, if you have a “Red-letter” Bible, you will see a lot of red in the next several weeks.

All of that said, let us then look at the short text in front of us, where, once again, we will find our Lord performing a unique and powerful sign, which will further attest to His Messianic authority.

I. A Mute Man Speaks

“As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed” (vs. 32). And so, here we are told of a man who was brought to Jesus, who was mute (that is to say, he was incapable of speaking), and demon-possessed. The fact that this man was *brought* to Jesus, would seem to indicate that, unlike the demoniacs from the region of the Gergesenes, this man was more tame and manageable. Recall, they were violent, breaking out of chains and shackles and living among the tombs. That said, this man was clearly afflicted and was unable to speak because of his possession. Without making this into a major theological discourse about demons, though they are all evil companions of satan, clearly, there are different kinds of demons which affect people in different ways. That said, the fact that the two demoniacs from the region of the Gadarenes were possessed by a multitude of demons, might have also made their situation quite unique. Suffice it to say that it was clear that this man was possessed by a demon, and one of the consequences of this possession was that he was mute.

“And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke” (vs. 33a). Jesus deals with the root of the problem, and the man’s primary ailment is fixed. He casts out the demon, and the man speaks. And immediately, we can note two facts that proceed out of this very plain and short amount of information:

1) As we have seen in the past, while every ailment and sorrow of mankind cannot necessarily be linked to some direct “sin-cause,” ultimately, every single ailment and sorrow of mankind is the fruit of sin’s curse on mankind. There is no single amount of suffering or wrong or evil or harm done (or endured) by anyone in this world, that is not a product of the fall of man, and his rebellion against God. People don’t suffer because God designed this creation to be a torture chamber for living creatures, as if, He enjoys watching people in agony. God doesn’t take delight in watching people suffer. No, people suffer as a consequence of having incurred the righteous judgment of God, because of the sin of mankind. That is why, in Genesis, Chapter one, God goes out of His way to reiterate the fact, numerous times, that all that He had created was very good. Evil only enters the world, when Adam and Eve disobey God, bringing the curse of separation from God, and death, into this world. And so, it is important to realize that while God uses and ordains suffering in this world unto righteous ends, He does so, in the context of unfolding His plan of redemption, whereby, He is graciously rescuing a people from the curse of the fall, which we have caused. This then brings us to the second critical fact, which comes out of what we have just read in verse 33.

2) Not only is God *not* the ultimate cause of the suffering of mankind, but through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, He actually provides the *only* cure for mankind, dealing with both the cause and consequence of our suffering, by dealing with our sin. You see, God doesn’t merely address symptoms, as many in the medical field do today. God always gets down to the root, which will, in turn, deal with the discomfoting symptoms. Imagine if Jesus gave this mute man his voice back, while leaving the demon in place. What good would that ultimately do? The primary cause of the problem would still exist. But here, Jesus focuses on the root of the problem; He casts out the demon, and then, the man is fully restored, such that he speaks again, as well. Is this not a picture of how God deals with the ultimate problem of mankind’s suffering?

What if God should grant us *only* all of the comforts of this life, eliminating all forms of temporal suffering, while leaving us in our sin, and forever alienated from Him? What good would that really be? But God so loves His people, that He would rather ordain to use suffering as a means of driving people to His Son, so that, they could be cleansed of their sins, granting them eternal life. And this, would ultimately lead to the resurrection of the body, in a new and glorified state, where suffering will no longer exist. We ought to keep this in mind, brethren, when we are tempted to complain about our sufferings. God always has the greater and deeper good in mind, and I believe that we have that pictured here, by way of illustration, in some significant way. This man is brought to Christ because of his ailment. He meets Christ because of it. And the Lord casts out the demon, which in turn, restores the man, first and most importantly to God, and then, to a state of physical wellbeing. Jesus deals with roots and foundations, and not merely symptoms. He heals the soul, and then, physical restoration takes place. And He is the only One who can do this! No one else; no other means of getting to the root exists in all of creation; at best, every other cult and religion puts band-aids on cancer, perhaps providing temporal, physical alleviation, while leaving the demon of sin in place. Jesus alone redeems body and soul, beginning with the soul, in this life.

Sadly, modern psychology will often use all manner of modern methods for alleviating guilt in the hearts of the lost, so that, they can ease mere symptoms, which could actually serve to drive individuals to Christ. They convince people to throw personal guilt at circumstances, at past upbringing, at social issues, or at anyone or anything else that can sever it from their own conscience. And in doing so, with the addition of a bit of medication, they prevent people from finding the real cure and solution in Christ, who alone can take away guilt. They hook the mute up to computers, as it were, enabling them to speak, while failing to deal with the true guilt of their sin, which remains in them. And in all fairness, they can't remove that guilt, because only Jesus can do that, having borne the guilt of sinners in His own body on the cross. And so, here we see that Jesus is the only, perfect and complete solution for sinners, dealing with the root first, before bringing about relief from the consequences.

“And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!” (Vs. 33b).
Once again, testifying to the authenticity of the Lord Jesus's Messianic office and calling, while

also validating His teaching, the people marvel over the unique power which He has exhibited here, in healing this mute demoniac. Nothing like this had ever been done in Israel before. Clearly, God was attaching a billboard to His Son, so that, people would come to embrace Him as their Messiah and Lord. But, the religious leaders, further hardening their own hearts in the face of such a profound and obvious miracle, respond in the most heinous way possible, actually blaspheming the Holy Spirit, who worked in and through Jesus.

Notice, verse 34, “But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.” Since our Lord will later respond to this accusation, for now, I will limit my comments, for the most part, to the utterly ridiculous and wicked accusation itself. What exactly are the Pharisees claiming here? Well, they cannot deny that a profound wonder has taken place, and that such a thing as this has never been seen in Israel before, as the multitudes had stated. And so, they have two options here. They can humble themselves, confess their sins (and especially their wicked opposition to the Lord), and turn to Him for grace and forgiveness (even now), or, they can dig their heels into the soil of their pride, and look for some utterly insane way of discrediting the Lord’s work, trying to divorce it from being a true work of God. Providing us with a profound illustration of the utter power of pride in the heart of man, they choose the latter route, going to the extent of claiming that Jesus has here drawn from the power of satan himself, rather than the Spirit of God, leading to the exercising of the demon from this man. If ever we ought to appreciate the hardness of the human heart, brethren, see it in the religious leaders here. And remember, these were the spiritual leaders of Israel, who studied the Scriptures and were in the position of teaching the people God’s will! If ever a testimony needed to be provided which avows that miracles alone cannot bring an individual to embrace the truth; and if ever a testimony were needed to affirm the extent of mankind’s natural hardness, which only God can overcome, we see it right here, don’t we?

And consider the irony here, brethren, as well? Is it not amazing to find that the ones who were truly in the grip of satan; the ones whose father was the father of lies, could actually accuse the Lord of being the one who was in that grip Himself? Now, their hypocrisy and deception were real and without excuse (make no mistake about it, this was as intentional as it gets), but let it be known how powerful the sin of pride is in the heart of man, that he should,

with no sincere consideration of the welfare of his own soul, deny even the obvious, rather than humble himself and embrace life. Man would rather be seen as right, and lifted up in the eyes of other mortals for the brief moments of this life, than humble himself and seek the free and glorious grace of God which would grant him eternal life. Man would rather proudly go to hell than humbly enter heaven. And so, the Pharisees here, to their own self-condemnation, seek to diffuse the obvious truth which the uneducated multitudes confessed, by attributing the miraculous work of Christ to the ruler of demons. Next time you are told that all of the great scholars and educated pillars of this world speak differently about essential matters related to your faith, brethren, remind them of this event, and that, God gives grace to the humble but resists the proud.

II. Concluding Applications

1) Recognize the powerful organization of Matthew's testimony to the life and works of Jesus, to his Jewish audience, and carry that with you, as you seek to minister the Gospel to others. Jesus's authority and the full affirmation of His Messianic office, teaching, and His very divinity for that matter, have been so thoroughly displayed before large multitudes when He walked this earth. These are real, historical events, my friends. These things actually happened.

And I would definitely recommend encouraging Jewish unbelievers to read through Matthew's Gospel. It gets right down to the foundation of exposing the utter uselessness and corruption of the Judaism, put forth by the Pharisees and the religious leaders of our Lord's time, which serves as the basis of the Jewish faith today. Matthew wonderfully exposes the true nature of Pharisaical Judaism, and how it fails to get down to the heart, and why it puts forth a "dead end" practice of empty religious rituals that could never make one right with God. And in the process of doing this, He presents Christ, in all of His glory, as the only One who gets down to, and deals with the root of the matter, the gross stain and infection of our sin. Jesus alone opened the eyes of the blind, caused the deaf to hear, the mute to speak, and raised the dead. And the message which accompanied all of His signs and wonders stands today as it did then, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!"

2) Often times, terribly painful, debilitating and humbling illnesses are what drove sinners to Christ. Let us pray unto these same ends, for our lost loved ones and friends. Blindness, deafness, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, accidents and all manner of injuries, can be sweet friends when they lead the lost to find Christ. They have a way of humbling us, and teaching us to number our days, don't they? Let us pray that God would use such messengers to drive many more to find grace in Christ.

3) To the unsaved, recognize that your greatest enemy will often be your own pride, which is satan's greatest companion in your utter downfall. You will never find Christ until you humble yourself and seek Him in truth, and for His free grace. Consider that there is a death sentence in you, at this very moment. It is in all of us. Although you may not realize it at this very moment, you are dying my friend. We tend to only acknowledge this when someone is overcome with a terminally ill disease, but the fact of the matter is, you are dying right now. Your body is set to a clock; God's clock, and just like everyone else who has gone before you, there is appointed for you a *very specific* day, when God will set your body in a casket for mourners to view. And that might be much sooner than you realize, but either way, it is true nonetheless. And so, I would plead with you, don't die unprepared. Don't die in your sins. Indeed, seek God now; enjoy fellowship with God now, in this life, and find abundant life and usefulness in the present, serving a true and lasting purpose in accordance with the will of your Creator. Life is so much more, now, in the present, when you know Christ, and then, you will enter into your eternal reward where there is joy at the right hand of God, forevermore! [The Gospel!]

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25