

He Has Done All Things Well

Mark 7:31 – 8:10

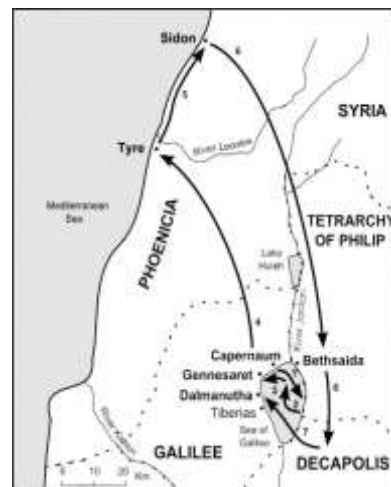
Proposition: No matter how busy Jesus was, He always made time to meet the needs of those in distress.

Application: Set aside time to seek the Lord in prayer and in His Word. Whatever challenge you are facing get it into the Lord's hands. Get to know the Lord as a wonderful Saviour who does all things well.

In 1973, Princeton Seminary Professors, Darley and Batson, gathered a group of students and asked them to go across campus to preach a message on the Good Samaritan. As part of the research, some students were told they were late and needed to hurry up. Along their route across campus, Darley and Baston hired an actor to play the role of a victim who was coughing and in distress. In their hurry to get across campus, ninety percent of the “late” students in the study ignored the distressed person. “Indeed,” the study reports, “on several occasions, a seminary student going to give his talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over the victim as he hurried away!” No matter how busy Jesus was, He always made time to meet the needs of those in distress.

I. Including Healing People (7:31 – 37)

Long Journey (7:31): This was a long journey for Jesus and the 12 (see **map**). It may have taken up to eight months to complete this trip on foot. This amounts to nearly 20% of Jesus' earthly ministry. Other than casting out unclean spirits from a little girl, we have no record of what took place during His time in Tyre and Sidon. Most Bible scholars believe Jesus went into these regions so He would not be noticed. He wanted to use the time to instruct His disciples in private to prepare them for future leadership. The trip ended in the *Decapolis* region. The last time Jesus was in Decapolis He healed a man possessed by a legion of demon spirits. These demons went into a large herd of pigs drowning them in the Sea of Galilee. As a result, the people of Decapolis were eager to see Jesus leave (5:17). Jesus returned to this place. and gave them a second “*chance*”.



Notice a very different response in Decapolis. Rather than asking Jesus to leave, they received Him. They were open to His message and miracles. Why? Because the man healed of demon spirits went home and told everyone in the region what great things the Lord had done for him

(5:18 – 20). This restored man was a powerful witness for the Lord. We never know the full impact our testimony might have on a person.

Lost Hearing and Speech (7:32, 33): It appears this man may have lost his hearing in his younger years. This likely explains why his speech was impaired. He lost his ability to speak because he lost the ability to hear. Notice the special attention Jesus gave this man. The Lord removed him from the excitement and clamour of the crowd. The Lord did not want His miracles to become a show. He wanted to bring this man into a one-on-one relationship with Himself.

The Lord used diverse ways to heal people. Sometimes He healed people by laying hands on them. Other times a sick person would touch His garment and receive healing. Still at other times Jesus healed people from a distance. In this case, He pushed His fingers deep into the man's ears. By doing this He was in effect saying, "*I am opening your ear canals so you might hear.*" Whatever method the Lord used, the power to heal came from above.

Looking Up (7:34, 35): By looking up, Jesus made known to this man where his healing would come from. Even the Lord's prayer begins with an upward look (Matt 6:9a). God in heaven is the source of power on earth. Unless we look up to heaven, we will have no power to minister to others to earth.

Jesus' upward look not only involved *prayer* it also involved *pain*. Jesus groaned because of the distress and sorrow that the curse of the Fall brought upon the world. The closer we get to the Lord the more grief we feel at the effects of sin and death. Jesus mourned because His Father's world was in a mess. What Jesus saw was not what God planned for His very good creation. Jesus knew how God's creation was supposed to be and grieved that it was not that way (Rom 8:22, 23).

He also grieved for this troubled man. Bible preacher Dr. Morison once said, "*the deepest sympathy for man springs from the highest communion with God.*" If we cease to look up, we cease to have compassion for those around us.

One day a little boy came home from school, and he looked rather sad. His mother said, "*Honey is everything all right?*" He said, "*Well, I guess so. But Billy came to school today and told the class his daddy died. They just buried his daddy yesterday mom.*" His mother said, "*Well, what did you do?*" He said, "*I just laid my head on my desk and cried with him!*" That is a picture of the heart of Jesus. He shares in our pain (Isa 53:3a, 4a; Heb 4:15a).

Jesus looked up; He looked at the man; then He spoke a word of healing. *Ephphatha* is Aramaic which means *be fully opened*. When the Lord commands it stands. His words are never empty (Ps 33:9). This man's ears, his mouth even his heart were all opened. He met Jesus that day and his life was forever changed (Isa 35:5, 6a). Jesus changed this man, and He can do the same for you. He can open your eyes to know the truth. He can open your ears to hear His Word. He can open your mouth to declare His mighty works.

Before we move on, let's review six actions Jesus took to heal this man. He took the man aside and gave him His full attention. He put His fingers in the man's ears and put His wet finger on the man's tongue. He looked up to heaven, shared this man's pain and spoke the Word of God into His life.

Miracles are not the message Jesus wants to convey. Jesus does not want to be known as a miracle worker. He wants to be known as the Messiah. His miracles point to the fact He is the Messiah. If we only seek after miracles, we may get the wrong notion about Jesus.

Let No One Know (7:36, 37): Often our heart is eager to do the reverse of what the Lord commands. Things which are not allowed become things we most desire. The more Jesus ordered the crowd to remain quiet the more they made the miracle known. Being impressed with the miracles of the Messiah does not always translate into obedience to the Lord. If our focus is on miracles, we will neglect to focus on the message. Are we more excited about the works of God than the Word of God? Do we prefer the acts of God more than the God who acts?

A display of power may not lead to obedience but it does result in praise. What the crowd witnessed left them awestruck. It takes more than awe to be a follower of Jesus. To follow Jesus requires repentance from sin and faith in the Saviour. If you follow Jesus as His disciple, you will find He does all things well. *All* covers everything. As I reflect on my life, through the twists and turns, through the sorrow and pain, I can still say *He has done all things well!* As I foresee the future, I know He will keep doing all things well. When we leave this world, either by death or by rapture, and stand before Him in glory will we say *Lord, You have done all things well!*

Jesus does all things well in healing this man and in feeding the multitudes.

II. And Feeding People (8:1 – 10)

Large Crowd to Feed (8:1, 2): Some sceptics of Scripture believe this miracle is simply a variant of the miracle of feeding the 5000. They claim the striking parallels of the two accounts prove it is one miracle. But notice what Jesus said about these two miracles (8:19, 20).

Let's explore a few contrasts between the two feedings. Feeding the 5000 occurred on the western shore of Galilee – near Capernaum. This miracle took place on the eastern shore – in Decapolis. Feeding the 5000 involved a crowd of Jewish people, this miracle involved a crowd of Gentiles; Decapolis being a Gentile region. Feeding the 5000 involved five loaves and two fish. This miracle involved seven loaves and a few fish. Jesus fed the 5000 at the end of one day. He fed the 4000 after three days.

This crowd did not want to miss a word Jesus had to say. As a result, they stayed with Him for three days even though they ran out of food. Not only did Jesus do all things well, He spoke well in all things (John 7:46).

This crowd's spiritual hunger was satisfied now their physical hunger must be met.

Lacking Resources (8:3 – 7): When faced with some new crisis it is human nature to forget the past work of God. We tend to first seek ordinary means to solve a crisis. Only when we finally figure out that solving the crisis in a natural way is not an option that's when we begin to hope for a miracle. The 12 believed Jesus could feed the crowd they just did not know whether He was going to do so by way of a miracle.

The Lord expects us to be involved in His work. This miracle highlights three practical principles vis-à-vis serving the Lord. The first is *begin with what we have*. We can fill the jars with water and He will turn it into wine. We can bring the bread to Him and He will bring about the increase. *Begin with what you have*. The second principle is that *what the Lord supplies always meets the demand*. Notice the Lord did not build a great pile of bread and fish and then tell His disciples, "Take from the pile and hand it out." He met the need bit by bit and piece by piece.

The passage highlights practical principles of service. First, *we begin with what we have*. Second, *the Lord's supply will meet the need*. And lastly *when the Lord is in it there is a surplus*.

Loaves and Fish Multiplied with a Surplus (8:8 – 10): When Jesus fed 5000 the basket used was a small wicker basket large enough to carry a day's supply of food for one person. The basket used in this case was like a hamper large enough to hold an entire person (Acts 9:25). Even though this miracle involved fewer people the surplus was far greater. When the Lord does a work, He does it in a big way.

Is the Lord calling you aside so that you might seek Him? Is He calling you aside so He might speak kindly to you? Set aside time; pull away from distractions and look up to Him in prayer; d then look into His Word and He will open your ears to hear what He has to say. He will open your mouth to declare His mighty works.

Is the Lord calling you to be involved in His work? You may not have enough resources to meet the challenge before you. Whatever challenge you are facing get it into the Lord's hands; *offer to Him what you have*, and He will give increase to meet any challenge you face.

Have you discovered that the Lord Jesus does all things well? Do you know Him in personal relationship? Today you can know Him as your wonderful Saviour. *Admit your sin. Believe* that Jesus died for your sin and rose again on the third day. *Call* on Him and you will know Him as a wonderful Saviour who does all things well!