Come and See a Wonderful Life

Second in the Advent/Christmas series for 2013 called, “Come and See.”

# Scripture: 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 him to place his hand on the man.
* 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."

# Key Text: “He has done everything well!” Mark 7:37

# Key Question: Why did the people say that Jesus had done all things well?

# They Sensed His Powerful Prayer Connection

it is instructive to reflect upon the fact that Jesus disciples never asked him to teach them how to preach. It is not recorded that they asked him to teach them how to heal. The one thing that is recorded in Scripture the disciples asked Jesus teach them was how to pray. This tells us that that was the thing that impressed them most about Jesus example in front of them, the power of his prayer life, of his connection with his heavenly Father. There are some powerful illustrations of that connection in this passage.

Jesus’ prayer habits.

For special needs, “He looked up to heaven,” as is recorded in verse 34.

* Jesus prayed regularly and often. “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:16

Jesus’ prayer attitude.

* One of the passages that reveals the intimacy and confidence of this Father-Son connection is the dialogue between Jesus and his heavenly father as he prays at the tomb of Lazarus. John Jn 11:41-42 “Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." NIV
* Another characteristic of this connection was Jesus’ humility. “I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me” John 8:28

## He had a strong Awareness of God’s presence

* “I am in the Father and the Father is in me” John 14:11

## He easily discerned his Father’ will

* In Luke 4:43, the historian records that after Jesus had gone apart to pray, he sense his father’s direction to preach in a different place. When the disciples came to get them because the people were all looking for him Jesus greeted them with the news that they were going to other towns because that was why he was there.

## He Showed Perfect Dependence Upon the Holy Spirit.

Power through depending on God.

* “I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.” John 14:10 NIV

## Jesus had Powerful Faith

* He trusted God to answer and things happened when he prayed. The disciples were constantly amazed at the results of Jesus prayer. Here in this passage the man’s ears were healed so that he could hear and his ability to speak was restored as well. It was the powerful restorative beneficent results of Jesus prayers there are one of the great reasons that people said, “He has done everything well.”

# They Saw Jesus’ Perfect Life

## Jesus was sinless.

* “We have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-yet was without sin.” Heb 4:15-16 NIV even his enemies, the Pharisees, recognize this. Listen to the Scriptures description of their words as they set him up for what they thought was a trick question. Mt 22:16 “Teacher," they said, "we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are.” They had that part right!

## They Saw Jesus’ Perfect Love

* He was perfect in love and compassion. He treated women with compassion and respect. He showed mercy and charity to those who are ill and poor and oppressed. He recognized repentance and a seeking heart in all kinds of people, Samaritans, tax collectors, the thief on a neighboring cross--- all these and so many more were beneficiaries of his gracious compassion.
* It is no wonder that Jesus disciple John wrote, “God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.” (1 John 4:16)

# They saw the results of his fruitful life in people’s lives.

Jesus taught that we would know one another by the fruit that was born out of our lives. He said a good tree bears good fruit. Certainly it was true of Jesus, that those who watched his life could see the wonderful results of the presence of God in his life. In fact it’s almost too weak to say the presence of God in his life because he was God. Yet at the same time, Jesus made clear that he operated in dependence upon the Holy Spirit and upon his Father just as he wants us to learn to live.

* The miraculous healing in this passage is a good example of the many miracles that came from Jesus life. At one point Jesus said to his enemies if you want believe my words at least believe the works that are coming out of my life.
* Another part of the results of his life were the spiritual insights that came from his clear and well-illustrated teaching. People flock to hear him teach. Even today we read with wonder the many parables that Jesus gave and seek to discern the levels of meaning that are in them.
* His followers were renewed in mind and spirit. Take the man in this passage for example. This man another’s could not help but talking about what Jesus had done even though Jesus did not want them to make a big public thing of it. I think of Zacchaeus, whose life was totally transformed after he met with Jesus. The testimony of the disciples themselves shows transformation and inspiration. In the book lacks the Jewish leaders who questioned them observed, “These men have been with Jesus.” The power of his influence was obvious.

# Our Response:

Christmas is upon us again. And the unspoken question for us is this. What will Christmas be about? It is so easy for us to just do the things that come by habit that Christmas time. We have a list of people that we contact whether by cards or phone or email or nowadays by Facebook. We have special treats that we make the kitchen. There’s a gift lists and procedures that each of us have to get gifts lists from our loved ones. There are office parties and ways of avoiding office parties. There are family get-togethers that we treasure some that are more just necessary. So it’s easy not to think too much about what Christians is about. The same is true in the church. We have our liturgies for the holiday, our social events, our decorations. Much of this is fairly scripted. And if we want we can go through the motions without really trying to answer the question again, “What is it about?” But I was suggests that our holiday will really not be as meaningful as it could be unless we do take time to think again about the question, What is Christmas really about?” That’s one of the reasons I titled this Christmas series, “Come and See.” My desire is that we will ask God to open our spiritual senses again to understand more deeply the meaning of Christmas. We started on this journey last week as we talked about who Jesus was, fully God and fully human; the complete mystery and miracle of the incarnation. This morning we continue the journey. Today we look at Jesus life, his actions, his attitudes, his character. These too were a miracle. And looking at his life as a whole helps us also to understand how blessed we are that Jesus came at Christmas.

How do we respond when we think about the life that Jesus lived? When we have reviewed for ourselves the events in the Gospels and have said with the people that observed this miracle of Jesus, “He has done everything well!”

# Key Thought: When we see the wonderful exemplary human life of Jesus, we respond with worship and with renewed desire to follow him.

# The 1st is worship.

* Filled with wonder and awe.
* Adoration and praise
* Modelling after His prayer life.

# And the second is living our lives in ways to please Him.

* Forsaking intentional sins
* Growing in love and compassion
* Serving God and others

## Conclusion:

* This Christmas, I invite you again to “Come and see” a Wonderful Life—not the famous movie of that title—but the life of Jesus. I bid you to think again about who Jesus is and what he did here on earth. I suggest that you read from one or two of the gospels again to refresh your memory.
* I encourage you to follow Jesus’ example of prayer. Don’t worry about saying the right words, just pour out your heart to God. He’s waiting to talk with one of his created children.
* When you draw near to God, He will draw near to you. Jesus said that he stands at our hearts’ doors knocking, just waiting for us to lift our voices to him. When we do, Christmas will mean more than ever and our lives too will be transformed by the living Christ of Christmas!