

## The Gospel According to Mark - With a Deep Sigh

### With A Deep Sigh Mark 7:31-37

“Let us become more aware of Your Presence!” Folks, that’s what we so desperately need! That’s what our hearts should long for, but so many, too many, have hearts set on things that will never satisfy and they have become sickened by the constant chasing after things that cannot and will not bring the peace they seek. What if we let the Jesus we claim lives in our hearts, change our hearts? What if we let Jesus heal our spiritual blindness, our spiritual deafness ignorance? We will find the words in our text today...”With a deep sigh!” Those words give us an insight into the very heart of Jesus! Let’s pray and ask God to teach us how those words apply to our daily lives. Pray!

I read the following words from a Max Lucado book titled, “Just Like Jesus,” and they so moved me I wanted to read them to you. They have great application to our message today. Listen carefully...

“What if, for one day, Jesus were to become you? What if, for twenty-four hours, Jesus wakes up in your bed, walks in your shoes, lives in your house, assumes your schedule? Your boss becomes his boss, your mother becomes his mother, your pains become his pains? With one exception, nothing about your life changes. Your health doesn’t change. Your circumstances don’t change. Your schedule isn’t altered. Your problems aren’t solved. Only one change occurs.

What if, for one day and one night, Jesus lives your life with his heart? Your heart gets the day off, and your life is led by the heart of Christ. His priorities govern your actions. His passions drive your decisions. His love directs your behavior.

What would you be like? Would people notice a change? Your family—would they see something new? Your coworkers—would they sense a difference? What about the less fortunate? Would you treat them the same? And your friends? Would they detect more joy? How about your enemies? Would they receive more mercy from Christ’s heart than from yours? And you? How would you feel? What alterations would this transplant have on your stress level? Your mood swings? Your temper? Would you sleep better? Would you see sunsets differently? Death differently? Taxes differently? Any chance you’d need fewer aspirin or sedatives? How about your reaction to (your spouse, your children, your parents, your ....)Would you still dread what you are dreading? Better yet, would you still do what you are doing?

Would you still do what you had planned to do for the next twenty-four hours? Pause and think about your schedule. Obligations. Engagements. Outings. Appointments. With Jesus taking over your heart, would anything change?

Keep working on this for a moment. Adjust the lens of your imagination until you have a clear picture of Jesus leading your life, then snap the shutter and frame the image. What you see is what God wants. He wants you to “think and act like Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5ff).

Phil 2:5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Phil 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

Phil 2:7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Phil 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Phil 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Phil 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil 2:11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God’s plan for you is nothing short of a new heart. If you were a car, God would want control of your engine. If you were a computer, God would claim the software and the hard drive. If you were an airplane, he’d take his seat in the cockpit. But you are a person, so God wants to change your heart.

Eph 4:22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;

Eph 4:23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds;

Eph 4:24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

God wants you to be just like Jesus. He wants you to have a heart like his.  
Lucado, M. 2001, c1998. Just like Jesus (electronic ed.) . Word Publishing: Nashville

And what does the heart of Jesus look like? The title of our message today is...

## **With A Deep Sigh**

Let's read our Scripture verses and you'll see where this comes from. Mark 7:31- 37

Mark 7:31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

Mark 7:32 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.

Mark 7:33 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.

Mark 7:34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!").

Mark 7:35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

Mark 7:36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.

Mark 7:37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Jesus sighed deeply! Why? Because Jesus cared deeply! Jesus loved deeply! Jesus taught deeply! Jesus lived deeply! Jesus lived His heart and His heart was definitely to bring honor and glory to His Heavenly Father, and He knew what His Father desired. It's found in Jeremiah 31:3...

Jer 31:3 The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.

This was the very reason Jesus had come to the earth. We talked about it last week.

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

And for this very reason it could be that Jesus also sighed because He knew the man had much deeper needs than the physical handicaps he faced. To be sure, Jesus cared about those things as well, He did after all, heal this man. However, too many times we only focus on our physical needs and totally miss the spiritual needs. Again, it's not that the physical troubles we have in this life are not important, it's just that many times we let those things become the priority all the while ignoring the spiritual things that have implications in this life and for eternity.

## **We Live in A Shallow World**

In the rush for instant gratification people's lives become shallow. People no longer take the time to go deep. Deep is where you find strong foundations for every area of life. Deep requires time and energy. Shallow is the easy way. It's easier to wade in the shallow than to learn to swim in the deep! Living life in the deep means you will have to expend time and energy to swim! Focusing on our spiritual well being is easy to ignore or neglect and not so easy to keep a priority. As a result, we become shallow in things that matter deeply. Things like...

Commitment/Integrity/Honor/Relationships/Spirituality/Serving

Let me say two things about going deep when it comes to spirituality.

1st - People like to say "Well I feel, or I think" as apposed to learning what God's Word teaches! Where's the authority behind "I feel"? It's not "I feel" it's "God's Word says"!

2nd - You won't ever really get deeper until you apply what you've learned. It's not just knowing God's Word, it's living God's Word!

Let's go beneath the surface of our Scripture, dig a little deeper and see what we find...

## **#1. Jesus cared for all people including gentiles**

Mark 7:31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

Jesus reinforced His desire to reach the non-Jew by continuing His ministry to people in the region of Decapolis - The Decapolis was a group of Greek cities referred to in Matthew 4:25; Mark 5:20; and Mark 7:31, originally ten in number but including more cities at a later time. They were centers for the spread of Greco-Roman culture and had no great love for the Jews. But Jesus, a Jew, spent considerable time there because He loved them, gentiles. We talked about that last week and this is good news for us! Jesus wanted us to have the opportunity to hear the gospel and to make a decision to have a relationship with God. Most of us are not Jewish by birth! We've been adopted by God into the family. Make no mistake about it, Jesus loved the Jewish people and wanted so desperately for them to turn back to God!

However, it should be clear to us who God loves . . .

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Andrew may teach a series on the Gospel of John later this year, so I don't want to steal his thunder, but look at these verses...

John 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--

John 1:13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

If you notice here in these verses John is letting people know that you aren't born into the kingdom of God by birthright, or race, or because some human decides to let you be a part the family of God, but a person is born of God when they receive Jesus, believe in His name and thereby become a child of God! You see there was a process by which a non-jew could become a Jewish proselyte, but it was not easy and not always welcomed. However, Jesus invites all who are willing to repent and believe, to call on His name, and when they do, He adopts them, saves them, forgives them, and begins transforming their lives in powerful ways. Is this just a New Testament thing? Nope. Listen to these verses found in Isaiah. They are powerful and really speak to the heart of God in the matter of His desire for all who cry out to Him to be saved...

Isa 56:3 Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely exclude me from his people." And let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree."

Isa 56:4 For this is what the LORD says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant--

Isa 56:5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.

Isa 56:6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD to serve him, to love the name of the LORD, and to worship him, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to my covenant--

Isa 56:7 these I will bring to my holy mountain and give them joy in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations."

In other words, God has already predetermined He wants you in the family and if you want in, no man or manmade rule can keep you out! Thank You Jesus!

In our text it says Jesus looked up to heaven and sighed. I believe His sigh may have been an expression of His deep, deep desire for the lost to come to know Him whether Jew or Gentile! And here He was taking the Gospel to a pagan people and they were responding. Now this leads us to another interesting part of our story...

## **#2 Some people cared enough to bring a helpless man to Jesus**

Mark 7:32 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.

Who were these “some people”? Were they family? Were they friends? Were they neighbors? We don't know who they were, but we do know they cared! They evidently cared deeply because they begged Jesus to place his hand on the man and heal him.

When is the last time you pleaded in prayer on behalf of someone else? When's the last time you pleaded with God for someone's spiritual healing? Listen to Paul's prayer for the Ephesians...

Eph 3:14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,

Eph 3:15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Eph 3:16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,

Eph 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,

Eph 3:18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

Eph 3:19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Eph 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Eph 3:21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!  
Amen.

What would happen if we prayed like that? Maybe we should start praying like that and find out! You see, the more you learn God's Word, the more you're going to desire to bring helpless men and women to Jesus! Not in a pushy, judgmental, obnoxious way, but as you begin to live the principles of God's Word people will see the difference in your life and they will seek you out! It will happen! I promise you! And this takes us even deeper in our text.

### # 3 Motivation is important

Mark 7:33 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.

Mark 7:34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!").

What a powerful glimpse into the heart of God! Jesus didn't want to make a spectacle of the man! He cared about the man's feelings and self-esteem. He wanted to heal the man not to show people that He could, but because the man was in need! He wasn't into the numbers game (He told them not to tell anyone)! Why did Jesus not want them to tell anyone?

Consider this...

There were many in the crowds that came simply to witness the show! Sometimes they got in the way of those who really needed what Jesus had to offer! Jesus wanted to get to those who needed Him and were willing to receive what He had to offer! It's not that Jesus didn't care about the masses, He did, but numbers for numbers sake is an ungodly activity and Jesus wasn't trying to wow people with His ability to draw large crowds! Jesus' motivation for His ministry was to honor His Father and to reach the souls of men and women and see them transformed into the people God created them to be! I'm afraid there are ministries in this world who are competing for numbers! To see who can be the biggest, or the most recognized. There are ministries that may be more concerned with the bottom line than they are with bringing lost souls into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and helping them become fully devoted followers of Jesus! I pray Northshore Church always remains committed to our vision...

To raise up a healthy church that will impact the Northshore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus Christ!

I pray that we will set goals and let God help us plan the very best ways in which to become and stay healthy and ways to impact our world with the life changing message of Jesus! I tell our staff all the time that I need help in figuring out the best ways to accomplish our vision, but I want to also make sure our motivation is always pure, God-honoring, and deeply tied to life transformation. The very intimate and loving way Jesus interacted with this broken man showed His compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Paul talked about keeping it real and truthfully motivated when he told the Colossian Church...

Col 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

Col 3:10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Col 3:11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Col 3:12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Col 3:14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

And talk about putting on love, which binds all virtues together...

#### **#4 Jesus was willing to get personally involved at the man's point of need**

"Is not the putting of His fingers into his ears and the touching of His own saliva on the man's tongue as eloquent a word and as tangible a call to faith as He could offer?" Henry Turlington

Are we willing to meet people at their point of need? Are we willing to be inconvenienced by the needs of others? Are we willing to be like Jesus? Do you sigh when asked to serve? Is it a sigh of compassion, or is it a sigh of irritation. Is it how privileged am I to be allowed to serve or is it how inconvenient of you to ask me? Paul gave some very important instructions to the Church at Corinth...

2 Cor 5:16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Cor 5:18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

2 Cor 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

2 Cor 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

We are Christ's ambassadors. Ambassadors leave the comforts of their home and go to foreign lands to take a message, to represent, to work on behalf of the nation or individual who has sent them. It is vital for an ambassador to have knowledge, wisdom and a good understanding of their job description, but if they know everything they are supposed to know and have all the tools they are supposed to have, but they never leave home, then all the knowledge and education and credentials do not matter. If they never go on the field and use that knowledge and training they have failed at their job. According to John's Gospel, Jesus was the Word, but in order for that Word to accomplish what it was supposed to accomplish, it had to become flesh and dwell among us in this world. Jesus was the living revelation of the written revelation of God and He lived it! So it's like this: If you just know the Word, but you don't live the Word, then you have missed the point! It stands to reason that you can't live what you don't know, and you can't give what you don't have, but if you have the Word and know the Word, but you don't give the Word by living the Word with intentionality, with passion, with consistency, with purpose, on purpose, then I believe God sighs, because if we don't practice the Word we know, then we have become no different than the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day...We talked about this recently, but it won't hurt to be reminded. I'll end with these three Scriptures that should help us have the heart of Jesus in the way we live our lives...

Mat 23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:

Mat 23:2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

Mat 23:3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.

James said this...

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

The writer of Hebrews says this...

Heb 10:23 Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Heb 10:24 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

Heb 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Wanna get deep in the Word? Start living the principles you learn in God's Word by allowing the Living Word, Jesus, to live His life in and through you! That's deep! Let's pray!