

*“Renewed by the Word of Jesus”*

Text: Mark 7:31-37

In one of England’s famous churches there is a grave stone with the inscription written by the one in the grave. It reads: “John Newton, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slavery in Africa, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith that he had long laboured to destroy.”

John Newton heard Jesus’ liberating word, “Be opened!” This is the word heard by the blind man in our text for this morning (evening) John Newton gave a grateful testimony of that action of the word of Jesus in his famous hymn “Amazing Grace”:

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found—  
Was blind, but now I see. (LSB 744 vs. 1)

John Newton was changed by the word of Jesus. There have been many throughout history that has had this renewing and recreating word change their lives as well.

St. Paul said: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Romans 1:16-17) The Apostle Paul like John Newton had been changed by the word of Jesus.

The shorter and longer readings of the gospel for this Sunday include the woman and the deaf man who were

changed and renewed by the power of Jesus' word. After much delay and testing the woman displayed a great faith and her daughter was healed. The deaf man with the speech impediment received the gift of hearing and speech. As was true in their life is also true in ours in one way or another as we are-

## **RENEWED BY THE WORD OF JESUS**

**I. His word speaks to the conditions of our lives**

**II. What Jesus has done for us is a message  
to be shared**

### **I.**

**A.** The Roman Centurion certainly knew something about authority and commands. He also had great trust in the word of Jesus. He did not want to trouble Jesus with coming under his roof to heal his servant. He said, "But say the word, and let my servant be healed. For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." (Luke 7:7-8)

That same word that the Centurion appealed to healed the man in our text and is at work today as well. The people who brought the man to Jesus certainly believed that and the power of Jesus to heal. They desired the work of Jesus to take place in the man's life.

Only St. Mark tells us this miracle. Jesus took the man to the side and restored his hearing and speech. He put his fingers in the man's ears and then spit and touched the man's tongue. Before our stomach's turns in our germ conscious world of today, consider that people of that day believed that saliva had healing qualities. The commentator R.C.H. Lenski said that in healing this man, Jesus used sign language. Think about it.....The man could

not hear, so Jesus communicated with him in a way that he could understand very well.

The word of Jesus always speaks to our lives. As that word is taught and proclaimed it should always speak to people's everyday lives. That is the way that God has intended it. That is why he sent Jesus into the world to accomplish our salvation.

**B.** After the miracle was accomplished, the people said, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." When God created the world we are told, "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) With the work of Jesus the beginning of that restoration has begun

In Martin Luther's Small Catechism, question 107 asks the question as to whether people still have the image of God. It tells us that people have lost the ability to know and please God. The good news is that in you and me this image has been partially renewed. Jesus cares for all of our needs. There is not a part of our lives that he does not care about. He is concerned with us, but also those around us.

## II.

**A.** Imagine yourself in the presence of Jesus on that day. What would you do? Jesus issued the word, "Be opened." The man began to hear and could now speak correctly. Not only had Jesus healed the man of his illness, but he equipped him to tell of what God had done for him. If you wish to look at it symbolically this healing has everything to do with the word, the hearing of it and the speaking of it.

Jesus warned the people not to tell anyone, but the more he did, the more they did. This strikes us as strange and some have attributed reverse psychology to Jesus. That isn't it at all, but rather Jesus protecting his God-given mission for the salvation of the world. This journey was

done in order to avoid those who wanted to take Jesus by force in order to make him their king. That was from a worldly view and would deter him from accomplishing our salvation.

The end result was that the people could not stop from speaking of what Jesus had done. In the book of Acts St. Peter said, “For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20) There is a lesson in that for us today as well. If these people reacted that way, this makes a good vision for us today and a reality in our lives and the lives of others.

**B.** Several years ago, this congregation developed a new mission statement or vision statement. It is-“Sharing Christ-Meeting Needs” In the bulletin there is an article about our voters meeting on September 14. It is not for voters only, but the entire congregation. What do you value and what do we as a congregation value? Your participation is important for the future of this congregation

Sharing Christ is telling what Jesus has done and is fairly obvious to us. That is done through the preaching and teaching of this congregation to its members and those who visit for weddings, funerals, and worship services. It is also done by you in your daily lives and associations. That can be done as you share with others in need what Jesus means to you.

The greatest need that we have is our salvation. The work has already been accomplished. As we see Jesus at work in our gospel lesson we see his compassion for a man in great need. We too have many opportunities placed before us individually and as a congregation. By the word of Jesus we have been changed. There are many who have not heard that word or seen it in action. The mission field before us is great. The joy we have can be brought to others as well. Amen.