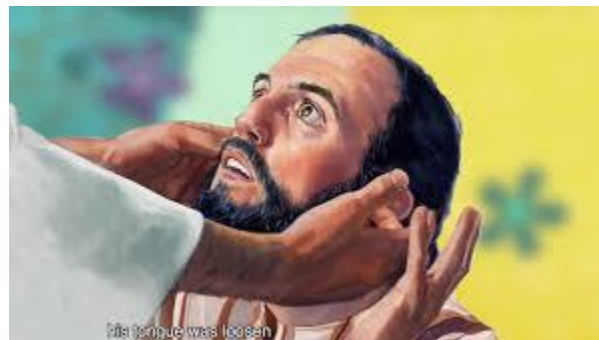


Jesus cares about individuals

Friends bring a man to Jesus to heal his hearing and speech Mark 7:31-37

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.^[a] ³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.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. ³⁴ He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means "Be opened!"). ³⁵ At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly. ³⁶ Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. ³⁷ People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."



As we read and compare the accounts of Jesus' ministry in the gospels we can observe that he doesn't stay in one place for very long. He seems to be moving about all the time, going back and forth between Galilee in the North and Jerusalem and Judea in the South, approximate distance of 126 kms, taking 4 days if directly through Samaria, however 6 days by the usual alternate routes. Jesus ministers firstly to his own people the Jews, but also visits the Gentile non – Jewish regions. Why is Jesus always on the move? Jesus indicated in John 9:4 that he only had a limited time to do what he came to do, which included preaching the good news of God's kingdom and introducing himself as the Messiah of the Jews and Saviour of the world, to as many people as possible.

Jesus had been in the region of Tyre, delivered the Canaanite's daughter from a demon, and then left there heading North through Sidon before turning South. Travelling around the Eastern side of the Sea of Galilee he arrived in the region called Decapolis, the region of Ten Roman cities. This is probably the only visit of Jesus to this region called Decapolis, however we are told in Matthew 4:23-25 that news of his healing ministry spread throughout all Palestine very early once he started healing people from all types of sickness and problems. So when Jesus arrived his arrival was soon noised around. The friends of the deaf and dumb man must have seen this as an opportunity to get help for their friend, so they took him to Jesus and pleaded for Jesus to heal him, and He did, as described in the passage. Note that Jesus took time out to give this man special attention, one on one. Mark tells us Jesus "took him aside". What would be the significance of Jesus doing this and also actually touching the man's ears and tongue? No doubt Jesus could have just spoken for the man to be healed. For the Canaanite woman's daughter, Jesus healed her from a distance without even speaking aloud. We're not told why the difference in this case, but it seems the Lord is wanting to communicate what He was doing. The man wasn't be able to hear Jesus' audible command like his friends could, but he could feel the Lord's fingers in his ears and the touch on his tongue. He would have seen the compassion in Jesus' eyes looking at him and he

would have seen the Lord's lips move in prayer. It was a close contact implying acceptance and connection. Immediately the man and all were rejoicing and naturally were compelled to express amazement and that "Jesus had done everything well."

*Now, in a song of grateful praise,
To my dear Lord my voice I'll raise;
With all His saints I'll join to tell—
My Jesus has done all things well. Samuel Medley*

People were attracted to Jesus in droves because as Peter reminded Cornelius in Acts 10:38 "he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Jesus chose to live it rough, why?

Where did Jesus and his disciples sleep at night during his travels? Sometimes on the hillside and sometimes as guests with those they knew. Do you remember what Jesus said about the foxes having holes and the birds having nests, but where was his resting place? Knowing Jesus chose to live it rough so he could be available for people, what can we say? And we have homes with our conveniences during these "hard times". We still have hot water for hot showers, toilet conveniences and warm beds at night.



"You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9

Christ, the Son of God, gave up his rights, became nothing, and obediently died a criminal's death for others.

No wonder the disciples who lived with him, loved Jesus. Can we dare to claim we also love him?