

THE VERDICT SOUGHT FOR ONE'S SERVICE: DOING EVERYTHING WELL

MARK 07:31–37

Introduction: Decision and Judgment

This passage includes a phenomenal verdict about Jesus: “He has done everything well” (v. 37). This was the verdict of this particular crowd, but it was not and never has been the verdict of every man. Yet every man has to make a decision about Jesus; he has to pass judgment upon Jesus. A verdict is required.

Note something else: the day is coming when God is going to pronounce His verdict, His judgment upon every man. Every man is determining exactly what God's verdict will be. How? By the way he lives.

The verdict Christ wants pronounced upon every man is, “He has done everything well” (Mk. 7:37). “Well done good and faithful servant” (Mt. 25:21). How can we be assured of such a verdict by God? Jesus shows us how in this passage.

- I. He looked after His own personal needs and the needs of His loved ones (the disciples) (v. 31).
- II. He listened to the pleas of people for help (v. 32).
- III. He was considerate of the feelings and condition of others (v. 33).
- IV. He trusted God for power (vv. 34-35).
- V. He sought no personal applause or praise of men (v. 36).
- VI. He demanded a verdict: “He has done everything well” (v. 37).

I. Mark 07:31 Training of His Disciples

Jesus looked after His own personal needs and the needs of His loved ones. This is a strange verse, for Jesus was in Tyre, and He wanted to go to Galilee which is south of Tyre. But note: the verse says He travelled north from Tyre to Sidon. Jesus withdrew to Gentile regions. He withdrew to the northern border of Tyre and Sidon. The word *regions* (ta mere) means the ports or borders. Why would He go north to Sidon if He wished to go south to Galilee? Probably for two reasons. First, He needed a period of quietness before facing the opposition and storm that awaited Him in Galilee and beyond. Second, the disciples also needed a long period of quiet training.

The cross was lying immediately before Jesus. The end was at hand. The Gentile area was the only place He could be free from the crowds and have quiet with the disciples. Jesus was deliberately withdrawing to the borders of Gentile country. He needed time and quiet to prepare both Himself and His disciples for the end. The only place He could find freedom from the crowds and from His opponents was in the northern area, the area bordering Gentile territory. No Jew was likely to enter Gentile areas. He and His disciples

needed to be prepared for the end. Apparently the disciples had six months or more of uninterrupted and intensive training at the feet of Jesus. (Mt. 16:21-28; 17:22.)

Thought 1. Quiet is needed — freedom from crowds and from the hustle and bustle of daily responsibilities. However, rest does not mean inactivity. Even when resting, we should be meeting with God, preparing ourselves for what lies ahead.

1 Sam 12:7 *Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the Lord as to all the righteous acts performed by the Lord for you and your fathers.*

Job 37:14 *“Listen to this, Job; stop and consider God’s wonders.”*

Psa 4:4 *In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.*

Psa 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth.”*

Thought 2. Imagine six months of training on the death and resurrection of Christ. How supreme is its importance!

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.”*

1 Cor 15:3-4 *For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

Rom 6:3-6 *Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

II. Mark 07:32 *Listening to the Pleas of People*

Jesus listened to the pleas of people for help. After six or so months, Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee in the district of Decapolis. Some friends brought a deaf man to Him, and as is so often the case with deafness, the man's speech was affected. He “could hardly talk”; he was tongue-tied.

The man could not hear. When the sounds of nature sang forth, he could not hear their beauty. When men carried on conversation, he could not participate. When strangers

spoke loudly to help him hear, it only added to his embarrassment. He could only sit “as deaf,” in stone silence.

The point is that Jesus felt compassion for the man; He listened to the plea for help. He was tender toward all men who had need. The man's friends “begged” Jesus to help by touching the man, and in compassion Jesus responded. He did exactly what He should do: “He did all things well” (v. 37).

Thought 1. We should listen to the pleas of people for help. Listening is part of “doing everything well.” Listening demonstrates a *Christ-centred heart*, a heart that belongs to a sensitive, godly servant of the Lord.

Mat 25:35-36 *‘For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’*

Luke 6:36 *“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”*

Rom 15:1 *We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves.*

III. **Mark 07: 33** *Consideration, Compassion and Care of Jesus Christ*

Jesus was considerate of the feelings and condition of others. Note two things.

1. Jesus took the man aside, out of the presence of the others. There was tenderness in this act. The man had suffered embarrassment all his life because he could not participate in conversation or activities with others. Life was cruel to him. He knew what embarrassment really was. He was shy and reserved, perhaps even withdrawn. He had experienced embarrassment even standing there before Jesus. Jesus responded tenderly. He *considered* the man's feelings; therefore, He took him aside, away from the crowd.

Thought 1. Doing everything well requires consideration. Consideration, tenderly reacting to the feelings of others, is always to be the way of the believer.

Gal 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.*

Heb 4:15-16 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Psa 103:13 *As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*

2. Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears and spat and touched the man's tongue. Why? The man could not hear what Jesus was saying. He needed to know that it was

Jesus who alone had the power to heal him. The saliva and fingers were signs that the power came through Jesus' body, from within His very being. Jesus Christ, His power alone, was the man's source of healing, of being healed and made whole. The man needed to know this beyond any question. He could not hear, so some symbolic act had to be used.

The scene must have been dramatic for the man. He saw it all; and his attention, standing there face to face with Jesus, must have been glued to every act of Jesus. The man's faith was bound to be stirred enormously when Jesus touched His stammering tongue and thrust His fingers into the man's ears. There was bound to be a tremendous sense of expectancy surging through the man's body.

Thought 1. The source of the man's healing was Jesus. Jesus used whatever was at His disposal to show this.

- 1) Every man must be shown that the Source of healing, the Source of being made whole, is Jesus.
- 2) Believers must use everything at their disposal to proclaim Jesus as the Source of man's deliverance (salvation).

Heb 2:17-18 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

IV. Mark 07:34–35 Source of Jesus Christ's Power

Jesus trusted God for power. Note three acts.

1. Jesus looked up to heaven. (Remember the man could not hear.) Very simply, Jesus was demonstrating a point — a point that must always be made. The power to make a person whole comes from God above. The man must look up to heaven, to God, for deliverance.

Note a significant point: Jesus indicated in this act that He is *The Mediator* who stands between God and man. The source of power is God, and the power is brought to man by the Mediator, Jesus Christ.

2. Jesus *sighed* (*stenazo*); that is, He groaned. Jesus felt for the man; He was able to sympathize with the man's weaknesses. And He was probably thinking of all humanity, of the crowd in all its weakness and sin (see Heb. 4:15). He had just looked up to heaven and felt the great divergence between heaven and earth, the enormous difference between heaven's perfection and earth's sin and corruption. Jesus was bound to groan under the strain of such a spiritual ache — an ache for all men to be made whole.
3. Jesus exerted the power of God and healed the man. He said *ephphatha*: be opened. He opened the man's ears and loosened his tongue, and the man was able to speak clearly.

Thought 1. The miracle shows two things.

- 1) It was proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God Himself. Isaiah had predicted such miracles of the Messiah (Isa. 35:5-6).

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Luke 4:18-19, 21 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” And he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

- 2) It was a demonstration of tender consideration for the needs and feelings of others — a strong lesson for every believer.

Mat 20:28 “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

John 20:21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Heb 13:3 Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

V. **Mark 07:36** A Lesson on Humility

Jesus sought no personal honour. He commanded everyone to keep the miracle quiet, to tell no one. The word for *command* (*diestelleto*) is strong. The order was clearly given. The reason is not known, but there is a lesson on humility in the command. Jesus was not after the applause or praise of men. The miracles were not done for that reason. All that He was and all that He had done was to help men and point them to God. Men were lost, and He had come to seek and save the lost, not to win their applause (see Lk. 19:10).

Thought 1. There are two lessons here.

- 1) A lesson on humility.

Mat 20:26-27 “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.”

Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Gal 6:3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

- 2) A lesson on witnessing. The healed man and his friends were forbidden to share their godly experience, but they could not keep quiet. They were so full of the

presence of God and His power, they just had to bear witness. How much more the disciples! They were bound to learn the importance of being filled with God and His power for witnessing.

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

2 Cor 5:19-20 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. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

VI. Mark 07:37 Demanding a Verdict

Jesus demanded a verdict. Jesus healed a multitude of people at that time (Mt. 15:30-31). The people were overwhelmed with *amazement* (*huperperissos*). They pronounced the verdict: “He has done everything well,” the very verdict Christ was after. The people desperately needed to focus their attention upon *the Mediator and the power of God* to make men whole.

1 Tim 2:5-6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. ■