

St Paul's Lutheran Church (Latimer, IA)
Trinity 12 – August 27, 2023
Mark 7:31–37 – In That Day
Pastor Peter Wagner

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

In that day. Or in Hebrew, *Bayom hahu*. The whole book of Isaiah might be summarized by this one phrase, *In that day*.

According to Isaiah, in the great day of the Lord, God will execute judgment on all his enemies, but he will work salvation for all who trust in him. Salvation not for the Jews only, but also for the Gentiles, for all nations. So Isaiah's vision begins in chapter 2, "It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it."

Yet in the same chapter Isaiah also warns of that day as a day of judgment, "For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up... And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the Lord alone will be exalted in that day."

As we continue reading through Isaiah, we learn that the day of the Lord will be the day of the Messiah. The day of the righteous branch, the root of Jesse, the day of victory of the king. Isaiah 11, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord... With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins... In that day the root of Jesse, shall stand as a signal for the peoples – of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious."

On that day, God's people from all nations will rejoice in the presence of their mighty king. So Isaiah 12 declares, "And you will say in that day: 'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth. Shout, and sing for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel."

And Isaiah 17, "In that day man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will look on the Holy One of Israel."

For on that day God will bring a remnant of the unbelieving nations to himself in faith. All nations will inquire of him. His name will be made known in all the earth, his deeds proclaimed among the peoples. So Isaiah 19 singles out Egypt and Assyria as representatives of all nations. "The Lord will make himself known to the Egyptians, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and worship with sacrifice and offering, and they will make vows to the Lord and perform them... In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and Assyria will come into Egypt, and Egypt into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians... In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth."

For God will convert the nations and gather the remnant of his people from them. Isaiah 28, "In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of his people." And Isaiah 27, "In that day a great trumpet will be blown, and those who were lost in the land of Assyria and those who were driven out to the land of Egypt will come and worship the Lord on the holy mountain at Jerusalem."

So the great hope of all the earth will be fulfilled in that day, when all nations flow to God's holy mountain, when God redeems his people and brings them into the church. Isaiah 25, "It will be said on that day, 'Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.'"

So at last we come to the Old Testament text appointed for today, to the words of Isaiah 29. "In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see." Dear friends in Christ, you are living in this great day of the Lord. Today is that day. On this day you – who once were deaf, who could not speak rightly or confess your God, who were enemies of God and had no hope of seeing him – you now hear the words of a book. This book declares to you in 1 Peter 2:9 that you have been brought out of darkness, that your blind eyes have seen the brightness of the marvelous light of the gospel in Christ Jesus. "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the

excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” And this book declares to you in 2 Corinthians 6:2, “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

Today in the word and sacraments you see what the patriarchs and prophets longed to see, you hear what they longed to hear. As Jesus himself said, “Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son.

So today’s gospel from Mark 7 about the healing of a deaf and mute man reveals the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. It reveals the coming of the day of the Lord in Jesus. When Jesus returned from the region of Tyre and Sidon, from the land of the Gentiles, when he went through Galilee of the Gentiles, the region of the Decapolis, then the Gentiles rejoiced to see the day of the Lord. For as Isaiah 9 foretold, “In the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.”

We are all Gentiles. On us light now shines. The Gentiles rejoiced to hear and see the Messiah. They rejoiced to see his miraculous salvation. “They brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, ‘Ephphatha,’ that is, ‘Be opened.’ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke rightly.”

On that day one deaf and mute man had his ears opened and his tongue unstopped. But on that day our Lord opened the hearts of a whole crowd of Gentiles to hear and believe his word. And he set their tongues free to proclaim his praises.

So the Gentiles of Galilee testified about Jesus their Lord, zealously proclaiming his glorious day. They rejoiced to witness firsthand the fulfillment of Isaiah 35, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.” They marveled, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” They rejoiced to come into the day of the Messiah, the day of Christ Jesus.

But strangely, Jesus commanded the crowd to be silent. Because on that day his great day of salvation had not yet come to fulfillment. It came to fulfillment on the cross. And that day was not without price. Just as he groaned when he healed the deaf man, he groaned on cross, on the day of judgment and thick darkness. On that day your king hung dying for you. As his eyes went dark and his ears ceased to hear and his tongue ceased to speak, he fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53, “He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” But on that day he said to the thief on the cross, and he also says to you, “Today you will be with me in paradise.” And on the third day, his eyes opened once more, his ears returned to life. And he spoke peace. On that day he rose and said to you, “Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Now he lives and reigns to all eternity to hear your prayers, and on the last day you shall see him face to face.

Dear friends, today you live in the day and year of our Lord, Anno Domini 2023. Rejoice that your Savior is here with you today. He comes to you in this place, to speak his word, to open your hearts, to set your tongues free. Jesus comes to you in blessing, to heal your sin in baptism and speak in your deaf ears. “Ephphatha, be opened!” He comes to set your tongues free to declare his praises forever. Oh you who have waited for him, be glad and rejoice in this day of his salvation. Rejoice in the Word of God, come down on earth for you. “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, unto life everlasting. Amen.