

## BE OPENED (MK 7:24-37)

The Rev. Corinne Hodges, Sun., Sept. 6, 2009, SJOC

- I. Stories of opening
  - A. Man who lost his job, twice
    - 1. New career, new reality and way of life
    - 2. Opening of mind to new sense of self, ID
  - B. Man who was against female clergy
    - 1. Opening of mind, receive from others
    - 2. Through love & care, opening of heart, experience God's love in new ways
- II. "Be opened" in Gospel today
  - A. Gentile woman pleads for daughter
    - 1. Jesus at first resistant—come for Israel
    - 2. Woman is persistent & gives good argumt
      - a. Even lowest/dogs (offensive lang. for unworthy outsiders) get crumbs/scraps
      - b. All she wants, enough for all
    - 3. Jesus heals daughter from distance w/ words
    - 4. Some say Jesus' mind was opened here—Gentiles, not just Jews, could have great faith
      - a. Or was he testing strength of her faith
      - b. Was woman's faith a sign time had come to expand his ministry to non-Jewish believers
    - 5. Either way, healing that takes place frees young girl from demons possessed her
  - B. Man who cannot hear & speech impediment brought by his friends—no statement about his faith
    - 1. Healing requires great effort from Jesus
      - a. Takes man away from crowd/private
      - b. Puts fingers into his ears
      - c. Spits & touches tongue
      - d. Looks to heaven, sighs, "Ephphatha"  
More than most healings
    - 2. Healing is a process
      - a. Unknown cause of closing of man's ears & mouth (physical, mental, social) silenced by society?
      - b. Jesus able to free him as well, give him hearing & clear speech, make whole
      - c. What that must have felt like?
- III. College swimmer's ear so serious almost lost hearing
  - A. Closure of ears gradual—muffled voices, pain, tears as cried myself to sleep, eventually couldn't take it
  - B. Doctor's visit—washing
    - 1. Blast of water through ears
    - 2. Crackle>Burst of opening
    - 3. Hearing crisp & clear, like never before
    - 5. Pain & relief, new hearing
- IV. "Be opened!" Jesus' words speak to each of us
  - A. Christ wants to give us whole, healthy lives, yet we all have areas in which we are locked up, either by ourselves (unreceptive), others or situations in life
  - B. Where are you blocked?
  - C. Where is God trying to burst through and offer you newness of life: purpose, new understanding of world around you, new ideas & people, new sense of self or faith?
  - D. Stories today physical, mental, spiritual and social openings--How is Christ trying to break in and touch you? How long will we continue to be deaf and blind to God's messages?
  - E. Like mirror last week, we can resist & walk away, but God will not give up. For God is even more tenacious than the Gentile woman.
  - F. Wherever we are closed off to God's touch, may open up & let God in.
  - G. "Ephphatha! Be opened!" Do we dare?