

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. ³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man. 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."

When I was a child and we would go for our Sunday afternoon drive to visit relatives, most of the roads on which we drove were two-lane and relatively rural. In my memory it seems as if during every trip we would pass small signs stuck along the shoulder, each bearing only a word or short phrase. It was like solving a puzzle to put the individually posted words together into the message. Traveling at the legal speed limit of 35 miles per hour, the signs were a source of diversion for vehicle passengers. They were known as "Burma Shave" signs, being named after the product that made them famous.

As I methodically read my way through the Gospel according to Mark, I experience somewhat of the same phenomenon. Jesus' ministry seems to be arranged like those "Burma Shave" signs along the highways of my childhood. Each encounter is the announcement of an aspect of Jesus' true nature. No incident, in and of itself, is the full message. However, if you follow along with Jesus they all ultimately will add up to the truth.

The sign in this passage is that Jesus "*even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.*" The only other place we encounter such a situation is in Isaiah 35:5-6; one of the traditional messianic passages in the writings of the Prophet. The people see this, but they will need more signs to understand the full import of the message.

In your rush to get through your day and complete your task list, slow down as you read through the Gospel so you can connect the signs. You've read them all before, but this time, review them and seek their full message. Connect the dots and find a fuller picture of Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Jesus, you have revealed yourself to the world in somewhat manageable pieces, develop in me the discipline to take the time to put the pieces together and come to know your fullest revelation. Amen.