

Possess the Land | Be Open

Echo Church | Week 10 | March 9, 2025 | Rich Saunders Jr. |

Mark 7:31-37 (NKJV)

31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.

32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him.

33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.

34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.”

35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.

37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

#### Introduction:

Jesus had a way of showing up in unexpected places, encountering people in their worst moments, and leaving them forever changed. Mark 7 gives us this beautiful scene where Jesus heals a deaf and mute man in a way that might seem odd, but it reveals something deeper about what it means to live open to God, His power, and His purpose.

This isn't just a scripture about physical healing; it's about spiritual transformation. God doesn't just want to fix your hearing or your speech; He wants to open your life. Somebody shout, “Be open!”

We're going to walk through three powerful truths from this text that will challenge us to live lives wide open to His presence, power, and purpose.

#### Point 1: Open to His Presence (Stop Walking Like You're Unreachable)

Verse: “Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him.” (v. 32)

If we're honest, a lot of us struggle to come to God fully. Whether it's shame, pride, or just noise from the world, we distance ourselves. This man had people bring him to Jesus. Do you have people in your life who won't leave you stuck?

Here's the truth: sometimes, being "open" starts by letting others bring you to Jesus when you feel like you can't make it yourself. Don't dismiss the people who drag you to church, text you scripture, or pray over you! God uses relationships to get you into His presence.

**Relatable Connection:** Have you ever used earbuds with noise cancellation and had no clue what was going on around you? Y'all, some of us do life like that—not realizing we're missing the opportunity to hear God because we're too isolated. Don't block Him out. Open yourself to His nearness.

**Challenge:** Remove what's blocking you from hearing Him. Be open to His presence through prayer, worship, and relationships that point to Him.

**Point 2: Open to His Process (Healing May Look Weird, but It's Worth It)**

**Verse:** "And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue." (v. 33)

Whew! Talk about an unconventional method. Jesus could've just spoken a word, but instead, He touched the man in a way that might seem uncomfortable. He put His fingers in his ears and spat before touching his tongue. Why? Because God's process isn't always pretty, but it's always purposeful.

Here's the lesson: What God's doing in your life might feel weird. You might be thinking, "Why do I have to go through this struggle? Why is this door not opening?" But it's not about the method; it's about the Master. His ways are higher than ours!

**Relatable Connection:** It's like going to the gym. Nobody wants to be sore, but the pain is part of the process. The muscle has to tear before it grows. Jesus might be taking you through some stretching and healing that feels awkward, but don't resist it. Lean in and trust Him.

**Challenge:** Don't run from what feels uncomfortable. Trust that His process is working for your good. Open your heart to His methods—even the ones that are messy.

**Point 3: Open to His Purpose (Your Healing Is About More Than You)**

**Verse:** "Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it." (v. 35-36)

This moment was bigger than the deaf man. His healing gave God glory and caused others to marvel. When Jesus opens us up, it's not just for us to feel better; it's so others can see His

power. Your openness leads to obedience, and your obedience leads to others encountering Him.

Your story matters. The way you've been healed, restored, and redeemed isn't meant to stay hidden. You're not just open for yourself; you're open so that others can see Jesus and know that He's still in the miracle-working business.

**Relatable Connection:** Think about your favorite restaurant. You tell everybody about it, don't you? Why? Because it was a good experience. Y'all, that's how it should be with Jesus! When He changes your life, you can't keep it to yourself. Your story is the Yelp review someone else needs to hear!

**Challenge:** Stop keeping your testimony silent. Be open to sharing what God has done in your life. Your story is a seed that plants faith in someone else.

**Closing:**

When Jesus healed this man, He simply said, "Ephphatha," which means "Be opened." That same word echoes to us today. Be open to His presence, His process, and His purpose.

Don't resist what He's doing. Don't stay closed off because of fear, shame, or doubt. God is ready to do exceedingly abundantly above all you could ask or think—but you've got to open up.

**Call to Action:** Where do you need to be open? Maybe it's your heart to His presence, your trust in His process, or your willingness to walk in His purpose. Whatever it is, today's the day to say, "Lord, I'm open!"

Shout, "Be open!" And watch what happens when you make room for God to move.