

*Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.*

*Opening the Eyes of the Blind Series*

*Jesus Heals a Demonized Man, Blind and Mute (Matthew 12:22-37)*

*A Teaching Sermon, Dr. Mary Craig*

*Teleconference March 29, 2020*

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As conflicts between Jesus and the religious leaders intensify, Jesus heals a demonized man who is blind and mute. This remarkable healing is given only one verse in Matthew 12:22:

Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

A confrontation with the Pharisees comes right to the edge as Jesus is then accused of being empowered by Satan. This blasphemous accusation by the Pharisees brings Jesus to respond about the source of power behind His working of miracles and also how words reveal what is in a person's heart, words for which one is accountable. Let's read it in Matthew 12:22-37.

<sup>22</sup> Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and the mute man both saw and spoke. <sup>23</sup> And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" <sup>24</sup> Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

<sup>25</sup> But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. <sup>26</sup> If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup> And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

<sup>29</sup> Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

<sup>30</sup> He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters abroad. <sup>31</sup> Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven people. <sup>32</sup> Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

<sup>33</sup> Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of his

heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.<sup>36</sup> But I say to you that for every idle word people may speak, they will give account for it in the Day of Judgment.<sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Right before this passage we have Jesus as the prophesied Servant who comes to heal and to restore. We see the peace of Christ as suffering servant contrasted with the growing hatred of the Pharisees. For our purposes, we want to focus on the healing of this demonized man, blind and mute. So what do we have?

A demonized man is brought to Jesus. He was blind and mute.

Before Jesus heals this man, light lies outstretched, beyond the reach. He was mute; deaf and dumb. Sound lies outstretched, beyond the limit of his reach. This man is lame in hearing and/or having the ability to speak.

He is possessed, demonized. He is under the power of an evil spirit or demon. A true believer cannot be possessed by Satan because possession has to do with ownership. When one is born again, born out of God, the Holy Spirit indwells that person. Such a person is not his own. He has been bought with a price. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. We are to understand that. However, here is **the progression**: regression (moving back); repression (restrain/holding back); suppression (Put down by force; quell); depression (press down, lower in value, weaken, sadness); oppression (weigh heavily, keep down by cruel and unjust use of authority; possession (fully controlled, owned).

Jesus also healed those oppressed by the devil. Acts 10:38. 1 Corinthians 10 warns believers not to lust after evil things, not to become idolaters, nor commit sexual immorality, nor tempt Christ. Rather, let the one who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. Temptations are not unique, be they God permitting testing for the purpose of strengthening faith and character or be they Satan enticing to evil for the purpose of destruction (Cf. James 1:2-4, 12-15).

So here is this man: demonized, blind, unable to speak, most likely unable to hear. He is in, as it were, a dark and lonely prison, and possessed by a demon. His situation comes across as hopeless, a winepress of oppression. Demons can afflict and can dethrone our sense of reason and take the throne themselves. They seek to dethrone a person's consciousness of self. They indwell someone possessed or they oppress seeking to gain entry. Psalm 38:12-15 comes to mind.

Jesus was sent by the Father to open blind eyes, to open deaf ears, to cast out demons, death, and destruction brought on by sin, and to save.

The condition of every one of us was that of blindness, spiritual blindness. Our eyes must be opened to comprehend, to understand, to see. We need to be in hearing range, hearing the Word of God calling us to Jesus Christ, who alone saves. Our spiritual ears must be opened that we might hear the call and our hearts must be turned that we might believe in Jesus, believe Jesus, and believe what Jesus believes. We see, we hear, and we are delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We are bought with a price; we are not our own. The ransom has been paid. We are redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, by the once-for-all-time sacrifice of Jesus Christ who offered up Himself in our place and stead that we might be brought into the family of the Living God by adoption and know the love of God and the peace that passes all understanding.

The healing of this man takes only a few lines, but when Jesus healed him and this man could talk and see, his whole life changed. Satan no longer had a grip on this man. The prison doors opened and this man was loosed, delivered, set free. We don't know what happened after Jesus healed this man, how exactly his life changed. What we do know is that whoever "they" were, "they" brought this man to Jesus. We have no conversation, no method of healing described, nothing but that Jesus healed him and this man could talk and see.

We talk about leading someone to Christ. Some speak of this as "saving" a person when that person prays "the sinner's prayer." The fact is that we can save no one. Only Jesus saves. We can get a person to where the gospel of Christ is preached. We can give a person the gospel of Christ if we are able to share it. We can share our personal testimony, pray, and encourage and answer people's questions as best we can or "google," seeking answers. But only Jesus saves, heals, and delivers. We are ambassadors carrying the message of reconciliation with the Living God. We are just the messengers.

Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *the just shall live by faith.*" Romans 1:16, 17.

This healing provoked two very different responses: amazement of the people and blasphemy of the Pharisees. Jesus addressed the blasphemy issue: every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. It's either a miracle whose origin is Satan or a miracle whose origin is the Holy Spirit. Likewise, the strong man's house will be bound and plundered by a stronger man. And then, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Finally, a tree is known by its fruit.

"This couldn't be the Son of David, could it?" Messiah was expected to perform miracles and look at this! Is Jesus the Messiah? Jesus' words and works will testify. Words reflect the heart.

"James focuses on speech, showing that good things should come from a good heart. Our difficulty is that we do not always show by thoughts, words, or deeds, that our hearts have been cleansed and created anew. We who know that Jesus is the Messiah, who know that He did His works by the power of the Spirit, who know that He is coming to judge the world, ought to make sure that our words and works harmonize with that faith." (Allen Ross)

What is needed is a radical change of heart, to receive a new heart, we would say, and find forgiveness. The way to do that is to believe in Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior of the world. (Ibid.)

Salvation is a miracle wrought in the heart of a holy God, "worked" by Jesus Christ who was sent by the Father to save and by the Holy Spirit, who applies what Jesus Christ has accomplished in behalf of those for whom He died. It is all of God, all by the grace of God, and all to the glory of God.

Bibliography:

Dr. Allen Ross <https://bible.org/seriespage/18-beelzebub-or-holy-spirit-matthew-1222-37>

Craig, Rev. Jim. Sermon, *Prophecy Fulfilled: the King is Coming. Palm Sunday 2014.* [www.mcmtffr.org](http://www.mcmtffr.org) Archived Sermon © 2017.

Side Note:

“Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would be the rejection of the same truth in the full awareness that that is what is happening--it is the thoughtful, willful rejection of the work of the Spirit of God even though there can be no other explanation of the healings of Jesus. Blasphemy against the Son and against the Spirit then means the complete and willful rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and the crediting of His works to Satan. Thus, this is not a sin that a true believer can commit, for the true believer has already accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

Or to put it the other way around--there are two witnesses that will condemn a person: the rejection of the truth of the Gospel of Christ, and the attributing of his miracles to Satan. This adds up to complete and conscious rejection of Jesus. For those who maintain that opposition to Christ throughout their lives and never recant and turn, there is no forgiveness...” (Allen Ross)

Declaring Jesus Christ, who heals, saves, and delivers,

## *Mary Craig*

Mary Craig, D. Min.

“That word which God sent the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. Acts 10:36-38



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