

September 6, 2015 23rd Sunday in Ordinary time

Pray that your faith in the Lord increases!

Isaiah 35:4-7

Psalms 146:7-10

James 2:1-5

Mark 7:31-37

The Lord instructs Isaiah to console the frightened and encourage them to be strong and not to fear because God comes with vindication and will help the weak and the ill. The eyes of the blind will be opened, the ears of the deaf will be cleared, and even the lame will leap. There will even be streams in the desert and the burning sands will hold pools of water.

In the Psalm it is noted that the Lord, the God of Jacob secures justice, feeds the hungry, sets captives free, gives sight to the blind, loves the just, and protects the strangers, but the ways of the wicked will all be thwarted.

James tells the brothers and sisters in faith that God chose those who are poor to be rich in faith. Hence they are not to be fooled by outward appearances and show partiality to those who come into the community and appear wealthy.

Jesus was brought a deaf man with a speech impediment. He took him aside, raised his eyes to heaven, and prayed, "Be opened." The man's ears were opened and his impediment removed. Jesus ordered onlookers not to tell anyone of this but they proclaimed it to others all the more; they were amazed and exclaimed, "He does all things well."

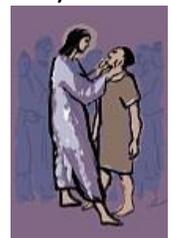
The Father sensitizes our spiritual seeing and hearing
So that the Son's words and actions become understandable while
The Holy Spirit reminds us that outward appearances can be deceiving.

Healing Our Deafness

Isaiah's reading is a reminder that our faith should remain secure because the people of God are constantly being saved in a variety of ways. The Psalmist praises God's mighty saving acts and God was identified as the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the patriarchs in faith. James notes that our faith will affect how we treat each other and reminds us not to show partiality to the well-to-do. The miracle of healing the deaf man fulfills Isaiah's prophecy and confirms Jesus' message that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

"The deaf-mute, of whose marvelous cure by our Lord we hear of in the Gospel, represents those members of the human race who merit being freed by divine grace from the error brought on by the devil's deceit. Man became deaf, unable to hear the word of life after, being puffed up as he was against God; he listened to the serpent's deadly words.

When our Lord came in the flesh, with the exception of a few of the faithful from among the Jews, almost the entire world, now deaf and mute, was wandering away from recognition and confession of the truth. But where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more. Our Lord came to the Sea of Galilee, where he knew that there was a disabled person whom he would heal. He came by his benevolent grace to the proud, disordered, and inconstant hearts of the nations, since he knew that among them were some who would be receptive to his grace."



(Saint Bede the Venerable, 735)

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