

Trinity 12

Looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “be opened.” Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

Our Lord, Christ today addresses two organs of the human body.

Because the kingdom of God is founded on the Word, which cannot be apprehended or understood apart from these two organs.

Thus in Romans Paul says, *“how can they believe unless they hear and how can they hear unless it is preached?”*

So *“faith comes by hearing”* and *“every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.”*

Barring the tongue and the ears, there is no perceptible difference between Christians and unbelievers.

Outwardly, the Christian has the exact same duties as an unbeliever. You go to work, plant, and act as a citizen, like everyone else.

Tongue and ears make the difference. You speak and hear differently.

The Christian tongue praises and confesses Christ as Lord.

“His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

The world does not do this, it praises greed and lust and confesses its own accomplishments.

The Christian ear tunes in to the same preached word that the tongue confesses and the heart believes.

But the world prefers to hear of her own wisdom, honor and glory.

Certainly Christ foresaw the damage done by ears and tongue.

It is bad enough when Christians are persecuted and killed.

But this doesn't penetrate but only makes them bolder and fearless.

Hence the power of tyrants is not nearly as strong as the power of the little organ that hides behind the teeth.

The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. James 3:6

The damage done by a false sermon, or a false confession—even one false word concerning Christ can cut off a great number of souls.

This is one of the things that causes Christ to sigh, as if to say, “beware of deceitful tongues that meddle with Scripture. They are far more dangerous than a backbiter or gossip can ever be.

“I have opened the ears of the deaf and loosed the tongue of the dumb but they nevertheless persecute the Word with both.

“Their tongues subvert the true doctrine and speaks things contrary to My commands and promises.

“Their ears will hear nothing else but what the false evil tongues say.”

As St. Paul says, *“The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn aside unto fables.”*

When you tune in to listen to something other than God's word...

When you speak things that are against God's word...

This is real deafness and this is real blindness.

Our Lord opens the ears so that the Gospel is heard; yet when a false preacher speaks up, the people immediately accept him.

Therefore Christ's looks up to heaven and sighs because of this.

Normally, we hear of the Lord looking down from heaven upon us.

As Moses says, *“Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel.”* (Deut 26:15)

But today the Lord looks up to heaven for you.

The Lord who looks down upon you, who created you and your tongue and your ears...

Now has taken your ears and tongue as His own.

He restores them to their right uses by using them rightly.

With true ears He listens to the pleas of His people

With true tongue He groans to God.

With true ears He listens to the will of His Father.

With true tongue He speaks to His people.

“See how great a price that I have paid to release these tongues to confess their God and to open these ears to hear My Word!

“I've shed My blood and given My life but they prefer to remain deaf and dumb, ignoring My Word and telling others to do the same.

“Will you pay heed to My Word? Or will you be like the crowd who witnesses the miracle and then shuts their ears to My command?”

Thanks to God, His sigh is not alone.

It is also accompanied by action.

After praying with inexpressible groanings, He prays on your behalf to loose your tongue and open your ears.

He reaches and places His fingers into your ears.

He spits and grabs hold of your tongue.

In the Divine Service, the Lord takes you aside and separates you from the rabble of the crowd.

In the Sacraments of Holy Baptism, and the Supper, He touches your head and your tongue with His own sacred hand.

In the prayers of the Church, Jesus lifts up His eyes to heaven and intercedes with the Father on your behalf.

And with His Word of preaching, He commands your ears and mouth, “Ephphatha—Be opened,” that you might be restored.

And today, by the power of His Word and Spirit, you are restored.

This is how your prayer is answered which says, *“O Lord, open Thou my lips and My mouth shall show forth Thy praise. Make haste, O God, to deliver Me: Make haste to help me, O Lord.”*

And we answer, *“He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”*