**Thesis:** It’s hard to keep good news to ourselves. There’s something special about getting to share our joy with others in the highlights of life. But what if someone told you to keep the good news to yourself? What if you were told to keep the greatest news imaginable to yourself? Jesus often commanded those he healed to tell no one of what they had seen. Yet, he knew this was one command that would never be kept. The good news of Jesus can’t be contained. And unlike many of those healed in the gospels, we’re not told to remain silent. We have the joy of sharing the gospel - the good news - with everyone we can.

**Introduction:** Welcome back to The Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m \_\_\_\_ your host from Pray.com. I’m excited to be with you today for another miracle. Help us spread the good news of Jesus by following the podcast as we dive into our story!

**Context:** Jesus’ ministry took him all throughout Galilee and the surrounding cities. Some places gladly welcomed him, while others met him with hesitancy and rejection. As the disciples entered into Decapolis, it was anyone’s guess on how Jesus would be heralded. Decapolis, a grouping of ten cities originally composed of the tribe of Mannasseh, had become primarily made up of Gentiles who leaned heavily into Greek influence. In our story today, it’s clear that Jesus’ fame had already spread to some when a group of people brought a deaf and mute man to him, hoping that the notorious Rabbi would be able to heal him. Jesus will separate himself and the young man from the crowd before performing the miracle. And then Jesus will give him clear instructions to tell no one. But as it often goes when good things happen in our lives, this man’s life of silence was over and he was going to tell everyone he could.

**Message:** As Jesus traveled south from Tyre and Sidon, he once again drew close to the Sea of Galilee into the group of cities called Decapolis. This would be the setting for his next miracle, though perhaps an unconventional one. As often happened when Jesus entered into a new area, a group of people had found him knowing that he could perform miracles. This particular group brought with them a man who was deaf and mute in hopes that Jesus could bring the change that no one else could. It’s likely that these people had tried other means for healing. Perhaps it was medicinal or seeking out the Greek gods that so heavily influenced their culture. But it’s evident that all of their attempts had no effect. So it’s a beautiful scene to see how their love compelled them to continue to seek healing, and how their faith had brought them to Jesus to ask him to perform a miracle. Even if this man couldn’t share his burden with Jesus on his own, his loved ones would. Just like this man’s friends and family, we should be willing to intercede on behalf of those in need. Life is incredibly difficult and we’ll never be able to get through it alone, certainly not in the way that Jesus hopes we will. At times, we’ll be like the deaf and mute man, unable to help ourselves, needing those around us to step on and continue to fight for us. Other times, we’ll be like his friends and family, strengthened with hearts of compassion and care, persevering for the sake of another. To do so is to exemplify and manifest the love of Jesus. Whether it’s making sure to regularly check in on a friend you know is having a difficult time, giving to someone who you know is in need, or creating margin to pray regularly for your loved ones, there are endless ways we can intercede on behalf of others and help them when they need it most.

Once this group finds Jesus, we’re told that he does something he didn’t often do before performing a miracle: He pulls the young man away from the crowd. And then he does something even more bizarre. He first cups his hands around the deaf man’s ears before spitting into his hands and touching the man’s mute tongue. We might be left wondering why Jesus would perform the miracle in this way. Jesus rarely stuck to one method of healing. Sometimes he would heal with a word. Other times he would heal with his touch. And other times he would simply tell an intercessor to return back to the sick one. But never before had Jesus healed quite like this. And for good reason. When Jesus heals, he wants to get the true attention of the one he’s healing. This man couldn’t hear Jesus’ words. He couldn’t respond to a question like, “Do you want to be made well?” So Jesus captured his attention in an unorthodox way. Similarly, Jesus wants to capture our attention. Maybe not in the exact same way. But every one of us responds to different stimuli. We’re moved in different ways. Some of us are moved through words, others through music, and still others from a particular place like the outdoors. Jesus is willing to use any of them to get us to enter into his presence. Just like this mute and deaf man, we just have to be willing to respond once he gets our attention.

Before healing the man, the passage in Mark 7 tells us that Jesus looks up at the heavens and sighs. When we think of a sigh, we might equate it with frustration or tiredness. But that wasn’t the case here. Jesus’ sigh was released from a place of compassion and empathy. His gaze towards heaven seems to indicate that he was contemplating how broken creation was, how far we had drifted from God’s heavenly hope for his creation. He could feel this man’s years of pain and sadness, unable to even express it to another. Jesus relates to us in our pain. He knows what it means to be human because he himself became fully man. We can’t depreciate Jesus from his godhood, but we also shouldn’t think for a second that he cheated his way through this life through his divinity. He accepted every ounce of humanity. Physical pain. Emotional drainage. Tiredness. Grief. Loneliness. He can fully relate to us and empathizes completely with us. In many ways, Jesus’ empathy is even greater than we can realize because he does know the joy of heaven and desperately longs for us to experience its goodness.

God has given us this same sense of longing. Whether we believe in God or not, it doesn’t take much of a look around to see that things aren’t perfect. Most of us could probably take a quick drive around town and see someone without a home or pass by a hospital and be reminded of the countless sick and dying people across the globe. This creation is broken and wired into our souls is what many call a “holy discontentment”. A desire for things to be different. And for the believer, this discontentment is linked to knowing that things aren’t supposed to be this way. But it’s also connected to a hope of knowing that things won’t always be this way.

The apostle Paul says in *Romans 8:22 “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.”*

Creation itself groans to be healed from the brokenness that sin causes. And those of us who know the hope of the gospel inwardly groan for the day that Jesus makes all things new, taking away all sadness, pain, and suffering.

But it was miracles like the one in our story today that remind us Jesus was doing just that. He was paving the way to redeem creation in another magnificent step in his plans to make all things new. And if we look closely at the passage with a few key insights, we find a little easter egg of how Mark was showing this to be Jesus’ purpose.  
We read from *Mark 7:35 “At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.”*

The words “his tongue was loosened” comes from a Greek phrase that is only used once in the New Testament right here. Interestingly, this phrase is also used only once in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Isaiah.

The prophet wrote in *Isaiah 35:5 “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.”*

When Jesus healed this man, he wasn’t just giving him the privilege of hearing and speaking. He was, in that moment, fulfilling prophecy. He was demonstrating that he was in fact the Messiah. As we learn about the Scriptures, linking the Old Testament to the New Testament, our faith should be strengthened in seeing Jesus was everything he said he was!

And as we come to realize the wonders of Jesus, we should tell everyone about him. Though Jesus commanded this man and the onlookers of the miracle to tell no one, he understood this request wouldn’t be kept. He knew quite well that this miracle would spread like wildfire. But unlike those people, we haven’t been asked to keep quiet. Jesus has given us a great mission of spreading his good news to anyone we can. And what a joy it is to know that we don’t have to keep it in. As you see God at work in life, be bold and proclaim the great things God has done for you. We get to be his mouthpieces, active parts in his heavenly mission. We get to spread the greatest news possible: That Jesus is alive and wants to give us life too!