

Mark 7:31-37, "What Did He Say?"

Opening remarks

- Why don't more Christians regularly read, understand and enjoy the Bible for themselves? Consider Jesus' question, "Have you never read . . .?" (e.g., Mark 2:25) That was His question to the most Scripturally well-read people of His day. So there must have been something wrong with the way they were reading, something getting in the way of true understanding.
- Maybe it's *how* we read the Bible. What might be getting in our way? We will begin to unlearn some habits that hinder good reading.
- Approach every passage as if you have never seen it before. One of the biggest enemies of good Bible reading is the statement, "I already know that."
- How we learn in this class will assume that the Bible was written in a way that ordinary people could understand it.
- In one sense, you already know what you need to know to begin understanding the Bible: you how to read.
- Think about how you already read various kinds of literature (e.g., a recipe, a novel, a love letter). Let's begin by learning to read Biblical narratives like we read other stories.
 - Review the **R-E-A-D** acronym from the Reader's Guide to explain how to use the natural reading process to read Scripture well.

Procedures for each Bible dig

- ✓ Using the Reader's Guide page 2, prepare the class on what to look for in the "Examine" phase.
- ✓ Lead the class in reading the text aloud together.
- ✓ Allow "platform time" for participants to re-read, mark and share observations about the words of the passage with one another.
- ✓ Come back together for class discussion. Begin by asking for observations only about what the text says, then move through the other phases when appropriate.

Digging into Mark 7:31-37

Recognize—What am I reading? (narrative)

Examine—What does it say?

- Some words to notice

Place names	"implored"	"spoke with difficulty"
"by himself"	"spitting"	"utterly astonished"
- Questions
 - ✓ If you had never read this passage before, what would catch your attention? What clues did Mark include that indicate the important elements of his narrative?

- ✓ Why might the crowd have thought that Jesus could do something to help the deaf man?

Analyze—What does it mean?

- ✓ Enter the scene mentally. If you were the deaf man, what might you be thinking as you were being led toward Jesus? As Jesus took you aside by himself, put His fingers in your ears, spit, touched his tongue, looked up to heaven and sighed?
- ✓ Could Jesus have given the man hearing and clear speech without doing any of that? Then why might He have done it?
- ✓ Since the crowd brought the deaf man to Jesus with some expectation, why might they have been “utterly astonished”?

Decide—What does it mean that I have read this?

- ✓ Based on what Mark wrote, what words would you use to describe how Jesus approached the deaf man?
- ✓ Based on this portrait of Jesus by Mark, do you think that Jesus knows how to approach you in a way you can understand and appreciate? What might change in order for you to more fully experience that?
- ✓ Take some time to experience Jesus’ personal attention to you. As you pray, don’t do all the talking. Get to know His habits better and learn to listen for His personal communication to you.