

By: Rev. Mark Breese

*Pastor Mark is the Agency Minister and the Director of Ministry & Community partnerships at Community Missions.*

**It Shouldn't be a Secret**

In the Gospel of Mark there is a story where Jesus heals a deaf and mute man ([Mark 7:31-37](#)). After the man is healed and can hear and speak, everyone is “overwhelmed with amazement,” and understandably so! Jesus, after this miracle, commands those present to not tell anyone. They, of course, don't listen to this, and tell everyone they can find.

**Mark 7:36**  
“Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.”

In Biblical Studies, this thing in the Gospel of Mark where Jesus says ‘Don't tell anyone’ is part of what has been called “The Messianic Secret.” Now, I don't want to get in the biblical interpretation weeds here. The “Messianic Secret” idea has fallen in and out of favor over the years, changed and been repurposed a bunch of times, like an old milk crate being used for a bookshelf, then a tool box, and then as a piece of modern art. So, just know that you can look at it a lot of different ways.

The thing I want us to focus on here in this reflection is not *why did* the writer of Mark included this thing where Jesus asked people to keep certain things he did for them on the down low. I just want us to focus on why they didn't. And really, when you think about it, why would they! And in this particular story, it is totally improbable that people would keep mum. The dude could not hear or speak. Then suddenly he could! If he kept quiet, that would kind of defeat the purpose of being healed in the first place. Plus when he was walking down the street and someone who knew he was deaf and mute waved hello, and then he waved back and said, “Hey! Great to see ya!” people would know that something kind of amazing happened. Blessings that change our lives for the better are going to be noticed, and well they should! What's more, when we receive a blessing from God, we want to share it with others.

I had a blessing recently. It was a car accident. Totaled my car completely, and that is certainly a huge bummer. On the other hand, I walked away with only

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I had a blessing recently. It was a car accident. Totaled my car completely, and that is certainly a huge bummer. On the other hand, I walked away with only



small cut on my thumb. The other driver also walked away... well ran away actually, but that is whole other story. The point is this: a difference of half a second or so, and I most certainly would not have walked away. I feel so blessed that I kind of don't think about the car being totaled at all.

Now all our blessings are not that dramatic. But they are worthy of giving thanks to God nonetheless. They are also always worthy of sharing so that others can learn to see the blessings that come their way as well.

Maybe it is that you came down with a cold, which is normally just an annoyance for anyone, but these days a troubling thing, indeed. Normally we would not call a doctor over a cold but today we might-- in fact we probably should. And when we do make that call, we will certainly be told to be tested for Covid-19. Pretty scary, even though the amazingly vast number of people who test positive will be just fine in the end. But when we get that test, and it does indeed turn out to be just a common cold, it becomes a blessing—like a totaled car that does not lead to bad injuries or worse!

Maybe it is being forced to become aware of how racism and injustice have, tragically, remained a reality in our societies even though society wanted to believe they were the exception rather than the rule. It is disconcerting to think that so many were so (willfully?) blind to the suffering this reality causes each and every day. With the ugly truth laid bare, the blessing is seeing how God has convicted the hearts of so many to confront this reality head on and demand change and justice—and demand it now!

I guess what I am saying is this: For all that we have been thrust into a strange, stressful, and unsettled time like this, and for all that what this time reveals may be difficult to confront, we need to celebrate and share the blessing and good news that God is endlessly bestowing upon us the gifts of grace, compassion and justice.

Pastor Mark

Image: Christ Healing the Blind, by El Greco, Date: ca. 1570



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