

CHAPTER 7

In this chapter we have,

I. Christ's dispute with the scribes and Pharisees about eating meat with unwashed hands (v. 1-13); and the needful instructions he gave to the people on that occasion, and further explained to his disciples (v. 14-23).

II. His curing of the woman Canaan's daughter that was possessed (v. 24-30).

III. The relief of a man that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech (v. 31-37).

⌄ MARK 7:1-23

THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS

One great design of Christ's coming, was, to set aside the ceremonial law which God made, and to put an end to it; to make way for which he begins with the ceremonial law which men had made, and added to the law of God's making, and discharges his disciples from the obligation of that; which here he doth fully, upon occasion of the offence which the Pharisees took at them for the violation of it. These Pharisees and scribes with whom he had this argument, are said to *come from Jerusalem* down to Galilee — fourscore or a hundred miles, to pick quarrels with our Saviour there, where they supposed him to have the greatest interest and reputation. Had they come so far to be taught by him, their zeal had been commendable; but to come so far to oppose him, and to check the progress of his gospel, was great wickedness. It should seem that the scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem pretended not only to a pre-eminence above, but to an authority over, the country clergy, and therefore kept up their visitations and sent inquisitors among them, as they did to John when he appeared, ⌄ John 1:19.

Now in this passage we may observe,

I. What the tradition of the elders was: by it all were enjoined to *wash their hands* before meat; a cleanly custom, and no harm in it; and yet as such to be over-nice in it discovers too great a care about the body, which is *of the earth*; but they placed religion in it, and would not leave it indifferent, as it was in its own nature; people were at their liberty to do it or not to do it; but they interposed their authority, and commanded all to do it upon pain of excommunication; this they kept up as a *tradition of the elders*. The Papists pretend to a zeal for the authority and antiquity of the church and its canons, and talk much of councils and fathers, when really it is nothing but a zeal for their own wealth, interest, and dominion, that governs them; and so it was with the Pharisees.

We have here an account of the practice of the Pharisees and *all the Jews*, v. 3, 4.

1. They *washed their hands oft*; they washed them, *pygme*; the critics find a great deal of work about that word, some making it to denote the frequency of their washing (so we render it); others think it signifies the pains they took in washing their hands; they washed with great care, they washed their hands *to their wrists* (so some); they lifted up their hands when they were wet, that the water might *run to their elbows*.

2. They particularly washed before they *ate bread*; that is, before they sat down to a solemn meal; for that was the rule; they must be sure to wash before they ate the bread on which they begged a blessing. “Whosoever eats the bread over which they recite the benediction, *Blessed be he that produceth bread*, must wash his hands before and after,” or else he was thought to be defiled.

3. They took special care, when they came in *from the markets*, to wash their hands; from the *judgment-halls*, so some; it signifies any place of concourse where there were people of all sorts, and, it might be supposed, some heathen or Jews under a ceremonial pollution, by coming near to whom they thought themselves polluted; saying, *Stand by thyself, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, ^{<285>} Isaiah 65:5. They say, The rule of the rabbies was — That, if they washed their hands well in the morning, the first thing they did, it would serve for all day, provided they kept alone; but, if they went into company, they must not, at their return, either eat or pray till they had washed their hands; thus the elders gained a

reputation among the people for sanctity, and thus they exercised and kept up an authority over their consciences.

4. They added to this the washing of *cups*, and *pots*, and *brazen vessels*, which they suspected had been made use of by heathens, or persons polluted; nay, and the very *tables* on which they ate their meat. There were many cases in which, by the law of Moses, washings were appointed; but they *added* to them, and enforced the observation of their own impositions as much as of God's institutions.

II. What the practice of Christ's disciples was; they knew what the law was, and the common usage; but they understood themselves so well that they would not be bound up by it: they ate bread with *defiled*, that is, with *unwashed hands*, v. 2. Eating with *unwashed hands* they called eating with *defiled hands*; thus men keep up their superstitious vanities by putting every thing into an ill name that contradicts them. The disciples knew (it is probable) that the Pharisees had their eye upon them, and yet they would not humour them by a compliance with their traditions, but took their liberty as at other times, and ate bread with *unwashed hands*; and herein *their righteousness*, however it might seem to come short, did really *exceed, that of the scribes and Pharisees*, ⁴¹⁸Matthew 5:20.

III. The offence which the Pharisees took at this; They *found fault* (v. 2); they censured them as profane, and men of a loose conversation, or rather as men that would not submit to the power of the church, to decree rites and ceremonies, and were therefore rebellious, factious, and schismatical. They brought a complaint against them to their Master, expecting that he should check them, and order them to conform; for they that are fond of their own inventions and impositions, are commonly ready to appeal to Christ, as if he should countenance them, and as if his authority must interpose for the enforcing of them, and the rebuking of those that do not comply with them. They do not ask, Why do not thy disciples *do as we do*? (Though that was what they meant, coveting to make themselves the standard.) But, Why do not they *walk according to the tradition of the elders*? v. 5. To which it was easy to answer, that, by receiving the doctrine of Christ, they had *more understanding than all their teachers, yea more than the ancients*, ⁴¹⁹Psalm 119:99, 100.

IV. Christ's vindication of them; in which,

1. He argues with the Pharisees concerning the authority by which this ceremony was imposed; and *they* were the fittest to be discoursed with concerning that, who were the great sticklers for it: but this he did not speak of publicly to the multitude (as appears by his *calling the people* to him, v. 14) lest he should have seemed to stir them up to faction and discontent at their governors; but addressed it as a reproof to the persons concerned: for the rule is, *Suum cuique* — *Let every one have his own.*

(1.) He reproveth them for their hypocrisy in pretending to honour God, when really they had no such design in their religious observances (v. 6, 7); *They honour me with their lips*, they pretend it is for the glory of God that they impose those things, to distinguish themselves from the heathen; but really *their heart is far from God*, and is governed by nothing but ambition and covetousness. They would be thought hereby to appropriate themselves as a holy people to the Lord their God, when really it is the furthest thing in their thought. They rested in the outside of all their religious exercises, and their hearts were not right with God in them, and this was worshipping God in vain; for neither was he pleased with such sham-devotions, nor were they profited by them.

(2.) He reproveth them for placing religion in the inventions and injunctions of their elders and rulers; *They taught for doctrines the traditions of men*. When they should have been pressing upon people the great principles of religion, they were enforcing the canons of their church, and judged of people's being Jews or no, according as they did, or did not, conform to them, without any consideration had, whether they lived in obedience to God's laws or no. It was true, there were *divers washings* imposed by the law of Moses (³⁹⁰ Hebrews 9:10), which were intended to signify that inward purification of the heart from worldly fleshly lusts, which God requires as absolutely necessary to our communion with him; but, instead of providing the substance, they presumptuously added to the ceremony, and were very nice in *washing pots and cups*; and observe, he adds, *Many other such like things ye do*, v. 8. Note, Superstition is an endless thing. If one human invention and institution be admitted, though seemingly ever so innocent, as this of washing hands, *behold, a troop comes*, a door is opened for *many other such things*.

(3.) He reproveth them for *laying aside the commandment of God*, and overlooking that, not urging that in their preaching, and in their discipline conniving at the violation of that, as if that were no longer of force, v. 8.

Note, It is the mischief of impositions, that too often they who are zealous for them, have little zeal for the essential duties of religion, but can contentedly see them laid aside. Nay, they *rejected the commandment of God*, v. 9. *He do fairly disannul and abolish the commandment of God;* and even *by your traditions make the word of God of no effect*, v. 13. God's statutes shall not only *lie forgotten*, as antiquated obsolete laws, but they shall, in effect, *stand repealed*, that their traditions may take place. They were entrusted to expound the law, and to enforce it; and, under pretence of using that power, they violated the law, and dissolved the bonds of it; destroying the text with the comment.

This he gives them a particular instance of, and a flagrant one — God commanded children to *honour their parents*, not only by the law of Moses, but, antecedent to that, by the law of nature; and whoso *revileth*, or *speaketh evil of*, father or mother, *let him die the death*, v. 10. Hence it is easy to infer, that it is the duty of children, if their parents be poor, to relieve them, according to their ability; and if those children are worthy to die, that curse their parents, much more those that starve them. But if a man will but conform himself in all points to the tradition of the elders, they will find him out an expedient by which he may be discharged from this obligation, v. 11. If his parents be in want and he has wherewithal to help them, but has no mind to do it, let him swear by the *Corban*, that is, by the *gold of the temple*, and the *gift upon the altar*, that his parents shall not be profited by him, that he will not relieve them; and, if they ask any thing of him, let him tell them this, and it is enough; as if by the obligation of this wicked vow he had discharged himself from the obligation of God's holy law; thus Dr. Hammond understands it: and it is said to be an ancient canon of the rabbin, That vows take place in things commanded by the law, as well as in things indifferent; so that, if a man make a vow which cannot be ratified without breaking a commandment, the vow must be ratified, and the commandment violated; so Dr. Whitby. Such doctrine as this the Papists teach, discharging children from all obligation to their parents by their monastic vows, and their entrance into religion, as they call it. He concludes, *Any many such like things do ye*. Where will men stop, when once they have made the word of God give way to their tradition? These eager imposers of such ceremonies, at first only *made light* of God's commandments *in comparison* with their traditions, but afterward *made void* God's commandments, if they stood *in competition* with them. All this, in effect, Isaiah prophesied of them; what he said of

the hypocrites of his own day, was applicable to the scribes and Pharisees, v. 6. Note, When we see, and complain of, the wickedness of the present times, yet we do not *enquire wisely of that matter*, if we say that all *the former days were better than these*, ~~200~~ Ecclesiastes 7:10. The worst of hypocrites and evil doers have had their predecessors.

2. He instructs the people concerning the principles upon which this ceremony was grounded. It was requisite that this part of his discourse should be public, for it related to daily practice, and was designed to rectify a great mistake which the people were led into by their elders; he therefore *called the people unto him* (v. 14), and bid them *hear and understand*. Note, It is not enough for the common people to *hear*, but they must *understand* what they hear. When Christ would run down the tradition of the Pharisees about washing before meat, he strikes at the opinion which was the root of it. Note, Corrupt customs are best cured by rectifying corrupt notions.

Now that which he goes about to set them right in, is, what the pollution is, which we are in danger of being damaged by, v. 15.

(1.) Not by the *meat we eat*, though it be eaten with unwashed hands; that is but from without, and goes through a man. But,

(2.) It is by the breaking out of the corruption that is in our hearts; the mind and conscience are defiled, guilt is contracted, and we become odious in the sight of God by that which *comes out* of us; our wicked thoughts and affections, words and actions, these defile us, and these only. Our care must therefore be, to *wash our heart from wickedness*.

3. He gives his disciples, in private, an explication of the instructions he gave the people. They *asked* him, when they had him by himself, *concerning the parable* (v. 17); for to them, it seems, it was a parable. Now, in answer to their enquiry,

(1.) He reproves their dulness; “*Are ye so without understanding also? Are ye dull also*, as dull as the people that *cannot* understand, as dull as the Pharisees that *will not*? Are ye *so* dull?” He doth not expect they should understand every thing; “*But are ye so weak as not to understand this?*”

(2.) He explains this truth to them, that they might *perceive* it, and then they would *believe* it, for it carried its own evidence along with it. Some

truths prove themselves, if they be but rightly explained and apprehended. If we understand the spiritual nature of God and of his law, and what it is that is offensive to him, and disfits us for communion with him, we shall soon perceive,

[1.] That that which we eat and drink cannot defile us, so as to call for any religious washing; it *goes into the stomach*, and passes the several digestions and secretions that nature has appointed, and what there may be in it that is defiling is voided and gone; *meats for the belly, and the belly for meats*, but *God shall destroy both it and them*. But,

[2.] It is that which *comes out from* the heart, the corrupt heart, that defiles us. As by the ceremonial law, whatsoever (almost) comes out of a man, defiles him (^{<881>}Leviticus 15:2; ^{<823>}Deuteronomy 23:13), so what comes out from the *mind* of a man is that which defiles him before God, and calls for a religious washing (v. 21); *From within, out of the heart of men*, which they boast of the *goodness* of, and think is the best part of them, thence that which defiles proceeds, thence comes all the mischief. As a corrupt fountain sends forth corrupt streams, so doth a corrupt heart send forth corrupt reasonings, corrupt appetites and passions, and all those wicked words and actions which are produced by them. Divers particulars are specified, as in Matthew; we had one there, which is not here, and that is, *false witness-bearing*; but *seven* are mentioned here, to be added to those we had there. *First, Covetousnesses*, for it is plural; *pleonexiai* — *immoderate desires* of more of the wealth of the world, and the gratifications of sense, and still more, still crying, *Give, give*. Hence we read of a *heart exercised with covetous practices*, ^{<124>}2 Peter 2:14. *Secondly, Wickedness* — *poneriai*; malice, hatred, and ill-will, a desire to do mischief, and a delight in mischief done. *Thirdly, Deceit*; which is wickedness covered and disguised, that it may be the more securely and effectually committed. *Fourthly, Lasciviousness*; that filthiness and foolish talking which the apostle condemns; the eye full of adultery, and all wanton dalliances. *Fifthly, The evil eye*; the envious eye, and the covetous eye, grudging others the good we give them, or do for them (^{<116>}Proverbs 23:6), or grieving at the good they do or enjoy. *Sixthly, Pride* — *hyperephania*; exalting ourselves in our own conceit above others, and looking down with scorn and contempt upon others. *Seventhly, Foolishness* — *aphrosyne*; imprudence, inconsideration; some understand it especially of vainglorious boasting, which St. Paul calls *foolishness* (^{<111>}2 Corinthians 11:1, 19), because it is here joined with *pride*; I rather

take it for that rashness in speaking and acting, which is the cause of so much evil. *Ill-thinking* is put first, as that which is the spring of all our commissions, and *unthinking* put last, as that which is the spring of all our omissions. Of all these he concludes (v. 23),

1. That they *come from within*, from the corrupt nature, the carnal mind, the evil treasure in the heart; justly is it said, that the *inward part is very wickedness*, it must needs be so, when all this comes from within.
2. That they *defile the man*; they render a man unfit for communion with God, they bring a stain upon the conscience; and, if not mortified and rooted out, will shut men out of the new Jerusalem, into which no *unclean thing shall enter*.

MARK 7:24-30

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN

See here,

I. How *humbly* Christ was pleased to *conceal himself*. Never man was so cried up as he was in Galilee, and therefore, to teach us, though not to decline any opportunity of doing good, yet not to be fond of popular applause, he arose from thence, and *went into the borders* of Tyre and Sidon, where he was little known; and there he entered, not into a synagogue, or place of concourse, but *into a private house*, and he *would have no man to know it*; because it was foretold concerning him, *He shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the streets*. Not but that he was willing to preach and heal here as well as in other places, but for this he would be sought unto. Note, As there is a time to *appear*, so there is a time to *retire*. Or, he would not be known, because he was upon the borders of Tyre and Sidon, among Gentiles, to whom he would not be so forward to show himself as to the tribes of Israel, whose glory he was to be.

II. How *graciously* he was pleased to *manifest himself*, notwithstanding. Though he would not carry a harvest of miraculous cures into those parts, yet, it should seem, he came on purpose to drop a handful, to let fall this one which we have here an account of. *He could not be hid*; for, though a

candle may be put under a bushel, the sun cannot. Christ was too well known to be long *incognito* — *hid*, any where; the oil of gladness which he was anointed with, like ointment of the right hand, would betray itself, and fill the house with its odours. Those that had only heard his fame, could not converse with him, but they would soon say, “This must be Jesus.” Now observe,

1. The application made to him by a poor woman in distress and trouble. She was a Gentile, a Greek, *a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, an alien to the covenant of promise*; she was by extraction a Syrophenician, and not in any degree proselyted to the Jewish religion; she had a *daughter*, a *young daughter*, that was possessed *with the devil*. How many and grievous are the calamities that young children are subject to! Her address was,

(1.) Very humble, pressing, and importunate; *She heard of him, and came, and fell at his feet*. Note, Those that would obtain mercy from Christ, must throw themselves at his feet; must refer themselves to him, humble themselves before him, and give up themselves to be ruled by him. Christ never put any from him, that fell at his feet, which a poor trembling soul may do, that has not boldness and confidence to throw itself into his arms.

(2.) It was very particular; she tells him what she wanted. Christ gave poor supplicants leave to be thus free with him; she besought him that he would *cast forth the devil out of her daughter*, v. 26. Note, The greatest blessing we can ask of Christ for our children is, that he would break the power of Satan, that is, the power of sin, in their souls; and particularly, that he would cast forth the *unclean spirit*, that they may be temples of the Holy Ghost, and he may dwell in them.

2. The discouragement he gave to this address (v. 27); He said unto her, “*Let the children first be filled*; let the Jews have all the miracles wrought for them, that they have occasion for, who are in a particular manner God's chosen people; and let not that which was intended for them, be thrown to those who are not of God's family, and who have not that knowledge of him, and interest in him, which they have, and who are as *dogs in comparison of them*, vile and profane, and who are as *dogs to them*, snarling at them, spiteful toward them, and ready to worry them.” Note, Where Christ knows the faith of poor supplicants to be strong, he sometimes delights to try it, and put it to the stretch. But his saying, *Let the children first be filled*, intimates that there was mercy in reserve for the

Gentiles, and not far off; for the Jews began already to be surfeited with the gospel of Christ, and some of them had desired him to *depart out of their coasts*. The children begin to play with their meat, and their leavings, their loathings, would be a feast for the Gentiles. The apostles went by this rule, *Let the children first be filled*, let the Jews have the first offer; and if their full souls loathe this honeycomb, *Lo, we turn to the Gentiles!*

3. The turn she gave to this word of Christ, which made against her, and her improvement of it, to make for her, v. 28. She said, “*Yes, Lord*, I own it is true that the *children's bread* ought not to be cast to the dogs; but they were never denied the *crumbs* of that bread, nay it belongs to them, and they are allowed a place *under the table*, that they may be ready to receive them. I ask not for a *loaf*, no, nor for a *morsel*, only for a *crumb*; do not refuse me that.” This she speaks, not as undervaluing the mercy, or making light of it in itself, but magnifying the abundance or miraculous cures with which she heard the Jews were feasted, in comparison with which a single cure was but as a crumb. Gentiles do not come in crowds, as the Jews do; *I come alone*. Perhaps she had heard of Christ's feeding five thousand lately at once, after which, even when they had gathered up the fragments, there could not but be some crumbs left for the dogs.

4. The grant Christ thereupon made of her request. Is she thus humble, thus earnest? For *this saying, Go thy way*, thou shalt have what thou camest for, *the devil is gone out of thy daughter*, v. 29. This encourages us to *pray* and not to *faint*, to continue instant in prayer, not doubting but to prevail at last; the vision at the end shall *speak, and not lie*. Christ's saying that *it was done*, did it effectually, as at other times his saying, *Let it be done*; for (v. 30) she *came to her house*, depending upon the word of Christ, that her daughter was healed, and so she *found it*, the *devil was gone out*. Note, Christ can conquer Satan at a distance; and it was not only when the demoniacs *saw him*, that they yielded to his power (as [¶]Mark 3:11), but when they saw him not, for the Spirit of the Lord is not *bound*, nor *bounded*. She found her daughter not in any toss or agitation, but very quietly *laid on the bed*, and reposing herself; waiting for her mother's return, to rejoice with her, that she was so *finely well*.

◀▶ MARK 7:31-37

THE CURE OF A DEAF AND DUMB PERSON

Our Lord Jesus seldom staid long in a place, for he knew where his work lay, and attended the changes of it. When he had cured the woman of Canaan's daughter, he had done what he had to do in that place, and therefore presently left those parts, and returned *to the sea of Galilee*, whereabout his usual residence was; yet he did not come directly thither, but fetched a compass *through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*, which lay mostly on the other side Jordan; such long walks did our Lord Jesus take, when he *went about doing good*.

Now here we have the story of a cure that Christ wrought, which is not recorded by any other of the evangelists; it is of one that was *deaf* and *dumb*.

I. His case was sad, v. 32. There were those that brought to him one that was *deaf*; some think, born deaf, and then he must be dumb of course; others think that by some distemper or disaster he was become deaf, or, at least, thick of hearing; and he had an *impediment in his speech*. He was *mogilalos*; some think that he was quite dumb; others, that he could not speak but with great difficulty to himself, and so as scarcely to be understood by those that heard him. He was *tongue-tied*, so that he was perfectly unfit for conversation, and deprived both of the pleasure and of the profit of it; he had not the satisfaction either of hearing other people talk, or of telling his own mind. Let us take occasion from hence to give thanks to God for preserving to us the sense of hearing, especially that we may be capable of hearing the word of God; and the faculty of speech, especially that we may be capable of speaking God's praises; and let us look with compassion upon those that are deaf or dumb, and treat them with great tenderness. They that brought this poor man to Christ, besought him that he would *put his hand upon him*, as the prophets did upon those whom they *blessed* in the name of the Lord. It is not said, They besought him to *cure him*, but to *put his hand upon him*, to take cognizance of his case, and put forth his power to do to him as he pleased.

II. His cure was solemn, and some of the circumstances of it were singular.

1. Christ *took him aside from the multitude*, v. 33. Ordinarily, he wrought his miracles publicly before all the people, to show that they would bear the strictest scrutiny and inspection; but this he did privately, to show that he did not seek his own glory, and to teach us to avoid every thing that savours of ostentation. Let us learn of Christ to be humble, and to do good where no eye sees, but his that is *all eye*.

2. He used more significant actions, in the doing of this cure, than usual.

(1.) He *put his fingers into his ears*, as if he would syringe them, and fetch out that which stopped them up.

(2.) He spit upon his own finger, and then *touched his tongue*, as if he would moisten his mouth, and so loosen that with which his tongue was tied; these were no causes that could in the least contribute to his cure, but only signs of the exerting of that power which Christ had in himself to cure him, for the encouraging of his faith, and theirs that brought him. The application was all from himself, it was his own *fingers* that he put into his ears, and his own *spittle* that he put upon his tongue; for he alone heals.

3. He *looked up to heaven*, to give his Father the praise of what he did; for he sought his praise, and did his will, and, as Mediator, acted in dependence on him, and with an eye to him. Thus he signified that it was by a divine power, a power he had as the Lord from heaven, and brought with him thence, that he did this; for the *hearing ear* and the *seeing eye* the *Lord has made*, and can remake even *both of them*. He also hereby directed his patient who could *see*, though he could not *hear*, to look up to heaven for relief. Moses with his stammering tongue is directed to look that way (¹³⁰¹Exodus 4:11); *Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing or the blind? Have not I the Lord?*

4. He sighed; not as if he found any difficulty in working this miracle, or obtaining power to do it from his father; but thus he expressed his pity for the miseries of human life, and his sympathy with the afflicted in their afflictions, as one that was himself *touched with the feeling of their infirmities*. And as to this man, he *sighed*, not because he was loth to do him this kindness, or did it with reluctancy; but because of the many temptations which he would be exposed to, and the sins he would be in danger of, the tongue-sins, after the restoring of his speech to him, which before he was free from. He had better be *tongue-tied* still, unless he have grace to *keep his mouth as with a bridle*, ¹³⁰²Psalms 39:1.

5. He said, *Ephphatha*; that is, *Be opened*. This was nothing that looked like *spell* or *charm*, such as they used, who had *familiar spirits*, who *peeped and muttered*, ^{<2189>} Isaiah 8:19. Christ speaks as one having authority, and power went along with the word. *Be opened*, served both parts of the cure; “Let the *ears* be *opened*, let the *lips* be *opened*, let him hear and speak freely, and let the restraint be taken off;” and the effect was answerable (v. 35); *Straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed*, and all was well: and happy he who, as soon as he had his hearing and speech, had the blessed Jesus so near him to converse with.

Now this cure was,

(1.) A proof of Christ's being the Messiah; for it was foretold that by his power the *ears of the deaf should be unstopped*, and the *tongue of the dumb* should be made to *sing*, ^{<2315>} Isaiah 35:5, 6.

(2.) It was a specimen of the operations of his gospel upon the minds of men. The great command of the gospel, and grace of Christ to poor sinners, is *Ephphatha* — *Be opened*. Grotius applies it thus, that the internal impediments of the mind are removed by the Spirit of Christ, as those bodily impediments were by the word of his power. He *opens the heart*, as he did Lydia's, and thereby opens the ear to receive the word of God, and opens the mouth in prayer and praises.

6. He ordered it to be kept very private, but it was made very public

(1.) It was his humility, that he *charged them they should tell no man*, v. 36. Most men will proclaim their own goodness, or, at least, desire that others should proclaim it; but Christ, though he was himself in no danger of being puffed up with it, knowing that we are, would thus set us an example of self-denial, as in other things, so especially in praise and applause. We should take pleasure in doing good, but not in its being known.

(2.) It was their zeal, that, though he charged them to say nothing of it, yet they published it, before Christ would have had it published. But they meant honestly, and therefore it is to be reckoned rather an act of indiscretion than an act of disobedience, v. 36. But they that told it, and they that heard it, were *beyond measure astonished*, *hyperperissos* — *more than above measure*; they were exceedingly affected with it, and this

was said by every body, it was the common verdict, *He hath done all things well* (v. 37); whereas there were those that hated and persecuted him as an *evil-doer*, they are ready to witness for him, not only that he has done no evil, but that he has done a great deal of good, and has done it well, modestly and humbly, and very devoutly, and all gratis, *without money and without price*, which added much to the lustre of his good works. He *maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak*; and that is *well*, it is well for them, it is well for their relations, to whom they had been a burthen; and therefore *they* are inexcusable who speak ill of him.