



For Further Study



Read and meditate on the passage below:

32 While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. 33 And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”

34 But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.” (*Matthew 9:32-34*)

These verses come from the gospel according to Matthew. Notice how in this case, a man who cannot speak (or is mute) is said to be “demon-possessed.” In the ancient world, things that could not be explained were oftentimes attributed to spiritual forces. For example, we now know that “aphasia” is a disorder that affects how a person communicates and understands language, which impairs a person’s ability to talk, listen, read and write. This can be caused by many things: a stroke, traumatic brain injury, tumor, aneurysm, epilepsy, migraines, etc. Even today, these conditions oftentimes lead to isolation, frustration, depression and anger/violence. It is treated with a combination of medication and speech therapy.

Since none of this was known in Jesus’ day, a person’s inability to speak was attributed to some form of other-worldly influence. So, the question for the people of Jesus’ day was not just one of healing but of superior power. Can Jesus overpower the forces believed to cause this man to be mute? As the man is able to speak, the people question where Jesus’ authority or power comes from. Is it from Satan? Is it from God?

What “forces” hold you back from saying something that needs to be said? Will you let Jesus overpower those forces so you can be free to speak today?



REFLECTION:

Consider why you fail to speak up at times when you think you should.

PRACTICE:

Work on speaking up around people you trust and grow into speaking up more.