

- Ephphatha: (ef-fa-tha) a Greek word meaning “be opened”. A word Jesus uses in our Gospel reading today.
- Life can get busy. We have work, school, shopping, etc. Each day there are things we want to do and things we need to do.
- In today’s Gospel reading we see Jesus was busy. He was travelling to a region called the Decapolis (which means “ten cities”), a very busy place with lots of people. And Jesus had something specific to do there: tell as many people as he could about God’s great love for them. And Jesus wanted to encourage them to repent for their sins and love each other.
- But on this day something interrupted Jesus’ “to do” list. Some people brought a man to Jesus. A man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they asked that Jesus cure him.
- Despite His own plans, despite His busy schedule, Jesus took the time to “be opened” to the needs of that man.
- In fact each time a person came to Jesus with a need for healing, Jesus took the time to bring that healing. He is still doing that today.
- Think about this: The God who created the universe; The God on whom every living thing depends on for its existence – is never too busy for you. God is interested, close by and open to our needs and hopes and worries.

- In the Gospel reading today we see Jesus took the needy man off to the side, away from the crowd. Don't miss this important point. Jesus could have just waived His hand, healed the man and went on His way. Instead Jesus spent time alone with the man, Jesus spoke with him, touched and healed him. Jesus let that man know he was important and loved.
- There was a cost to Jesus – His time. But this was time well spent. Because while Jesus was busy preaching about God's love, at that moment, He was showing God's love. Showing God is open, close and caring.
- And Jesus calls us to do the same. To never be too busy to be opened to the needs of others. To never be too busy to bring God's love and healing to those in need.
- At your baptism and at every Christian baptism, there is a prayer called the Ephphatha that is prayed over the newly baptized person. The priest or deacon touched your ears and mouth while saying these words: *“The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father”*.
- With those beautiful words we were given a charge: Be open as Jesus was open.
- Today's scripture readings challenge us to ask ourselves some important questions:
- “Just how open am I?”

- Do I take the time to go off away from the crowd and spend time with the Lord in prayer? Do I let Him touch my ears to hear His Word? Do I listen for His guidance? Or do I remain spiritually deaf?
- Do I proclaim my faith? Am I living it out? Have I made that call or visit to that person in need? Do I speak words of encouragement, love and healing?
- Things to think about.