

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

The Demonic in the Crowd Fifth Week in Ordinary Time Friday, February 9, 2018
8:15 AM 1 Kgs 11:29-32; 12:19; **Mk 7:31-37** (Sometimes healing only takes place away from the crowd.

There are many stories of **Jesus healing**, and this one in particular is notable because he **takes the deaf mute away from the crowd**. There are many ways in which the crowd is a negative factor in people's lives, in Jesus' life. The crowds came to him wanting healing, but then they didn't want to listen. When he was going to feed them, then they were happy; but then when they weren't getting something they wanted, they turned against him. **So this crowd is slippery. There is a way in which we have to avoid the crowd.**

This particular man's problem was he was a **deaf mute**: he could not hear, he could not speak. Ordinarily this condition is **assigned, to some sort of demonic presence. But it may well be, as it often was, that the demonic is really in the crowd.** We can see this in our own history, how **individuals may not be that bad, but as a crowd they are demonic.** Look at the history of **the rise of Hitler in the 30's**. Individual Germans were basically decent people, law-abiding for sure, but as a crowd they became demonic and supported a massive demonic enterprise. The same happened **in Russia under the Bolsheviks**, actually decent people, hard-working and oppressed, but under the influence of Lenin and later Stalin they became demonic and promoted a demonic kind of empire. And in our own country we have seen people, I don't know how decent they are originally, but **we've seen crowds full of racial hatred**, and the crowd is actually part of the whole source of that hatred. So we have to be aware of the crowd and recognize that **sometimes healing only takes place away from the crowd.**