

To begin today's lesson, discuss the following questions: Have you ever felt left out of a conversation? Or maybe there's been a time when someone was talking to you but you couldn't understand them?

In today's Bible story, we read about how one man couldn't hear a single thing due to being deaf. He couldn't hear the birds singing, people around him talking...absolutely nothing. Go ahead and read **Mark 7:31-37**.

Sometimes we feel like "insiders" – those who are included, and sometimes we feel like "outsiders" – those who are left out. After reading **Mark 7:31-37**, make a list of insiders and outsiders during the time of Jesus. After that, make another list of insiders and outsiders in today's world.

We see insiders and outsiders all across the Bible – those who seem to have the "in" with everyone and have power or control, but also those who are excluded and are looked down upon. It was common (in Jesus' time) for people to think that those who had disabilities had sinned so much that they deserve the ailment. While this might sound crazy, there are often times that we exclude people like this too and don't show them the love that they deserve. While we aren't perfect in showing people love, it's important to remember that Jesus has compassion on ALL people.

Discuss: Who in your life needs to be shown compassion and love? Who needs to feel "included", and how can you help make that happen?

Today's memory verse is from **Psalm 119:156**, "**Great is Your Mercy, O Lord.**" God certainly has mercy upon us and shows us love no matter what, and because of this, we are able to love other people in all situations!

Finally, spend some time in conversation with our God:

- Ask God to help you have compassion on those who are often seen as "outsiders"
- Thank God for bringing you in and making you an "insider" (His own child) in His family
- Lift up those in prayer who are on your heart this day.