

## About the Readings on Sept. 8, 2024

\*\*\*Click on the links for the Bible Verse(s)

### Sunday, September 4–10 Lectionary 23

In today's gospel reading, Jesus heals the outsider who comes to him in the house, and the deaf man is made able to receive the word. These two pictures of Sunday worship include us in the gospel, who will hear from James that in response we are now to love all our neighbors as we love ourselves.



### [Isaiah 35:4-7a](#)

The Isaiah passage is chosen to ground the stories of Jesus' healing of the deaf man in the ancient Hebrew promise that God will come and unstop the ears of the deaf. Thus the poet's metaphor of God unstopping the deaf has become a narrative about the ministry of Jesus. We too are blind, deaf, lame, and mute before God.

### [The Psalm for the Day](#)

Having heard the poem describing the arrival of God who brings transformation to people and to the earth itself, we join in [Psalm 146](#). We, like the Syrophenician woman and the deaf man, look to the God of Jacob for help. We are those who hunger, we are the blind who cry out for healing. Verse 9 says that "the Lord cares for the stranger," and James reminds us that now we are to do the same.

### [James 2:1-10 \[11-13\] 14-17](#)

James, tell it like it is! We seem little better than James's community at treating rich and poor equally. For James, genuine faith will alter stereotypical societal values. The passage calls contemporary believers to enact their salvation by their care for the poor.

### [Mark 7:24-37](#)

Most Christian worshipers are, like the Syrophenician woman, not Jewish, yet with her we can enter the house of the church, have our demons overcome by Christ, and eat the crumbs from the table. With the mother, we pray for everyone in need of healing. That Jesus speaks the word of God becomes the basis for the story of the deaf man now able to hear. Also our ears and hearts are opened by the presence of Christ in our midst during worship. Although it is often suggested that Jesus is merely testing the woman's faith, some contemporary exegetes interpret the gospel exchange between the woman and Jesus to mean that her need called even Jesus into a fuller understanding of God's grace.