

Ephphatha

Pronounced: E-fa-tha

The first time I heard this word I was running on one of my favorite trails and listening to Brian Simmons read The Passion Translation of the New Testament. It might seem like an odd thing to listen to the Bible while running, but I am always so hungry to learn more about what God has for me, so it should be no surprise really. Also, at that time I was trying to read, or at least listen to, the Bible in a year and stay on track. This was me getting it done, a slow run, in the cold, listening to someone read the Bible to me. Then, it happened, I heard it...

“Ephphatha”

The word dropped into my spirit in that moment. If you’ve never had such an experience, I’m telling you, it stopped me in my tracks. I stood there, hitting the 10 sec play back to listen to the word again. What did it mean? How do I even spell it? What was Jesus doing again? He spat? Wait...what? Basically, my run and my run on thoughts had been interrupted by a single word I had never heard before. So, when I say the word dropped into my spirit, I mean that God needed me to hear it. He needed to me to feel it. When I heard the word, my spirit sat up and paid attention. I had to “rewind”. It’s a bit like when you’re sitting in your 10th grade biology class daydreaming, and the teacher calls your name and you have no idea what question you were asked. You are jolted back into reality and wish at that moment there was a “rewind” button, a play back. All you heard was your name, you sit straight up and pay attention.

“Ephphatha”

It wasn’t my name, but it felt like it was directly attached to me like my name. Only, I can’t ever recall hearing it before. I pulled out my phone and started searching, guessing how to spell it, and thanks to brilliant technology in the palm of my hand, there it was. It was on my screen, in black and white and there next to it was the meaning...

“Be Opened”

I hit play on my audiobook and listened again. In the book of Mark, at the end of chapter 7 (vs 31-37) there is a short little story on the topic of Jesus healing moment. As he was traveling, they brought a man to Him that could not see or speak. Jesus pulled Him aside, away from the crowd. He put His fingers in His ears, He spat, and touched the man’s tongue. As He was looking towards heaven, He sighed and said

“Ephphatha”.

I not only listened to this story over and over, I also later pulled out my Bible and read the story, then I opened up more texts to read commentary from many others. So much happened here. So much physical contact, so much sighing and groaning, spitting, and touching, and looking towards heaven, only to say one healing word.

I wanted to know why the Lord had made this such an experience for me when I heard this word. Why did I need to sit up and pay attention to what He was saying in that instance? Why do YOU need to sit up and pay attention? We go through the motions every day, we get caught in our own train of thought, we drive home from work or from picking up kids and are so distracted by life that sometimes we don’t know how we get from point A to point B. Literally.

Jesus looked to heaven, not for his own benefit. He already had the power to do the work He was about to do; he didn’t need to ask for more or receive authority to heal. He already had that power. He did not need

help to work the miracle. He didn't do it for His sake, but for ours. This motion of looking up, lifting His eyes, was to teach us that our blessings, the good gifts, the good stuff, the mercy and favor we receive, it comes from above. We receive them from heaven. It is God that gives the hearing ear, the seeing eye. It occurs in the spiritual sense, as well as the natural. We need only ask God for it, if it's for yourself or someone else, look up to heaven and know our Father God will not withhold from us if it's in His will and sometimes not. We can thank Him for what He has done, will do, and is doing.

Then, Jesus signed. He wasn't put off by having to heal. He wasn't dreading that He would have to do it. His heart was broken for the man, he was concerned of this man's life and sin. Christ pitied the case of the person in such a condition, spiritual and physical. He sensed the distress, and He had the ability to help.

Then.... "Ephphatha". Be Opened.

In that moment of hearing that word and receiving it's meaning, the Lord started laying out for me every pivotal instance in my life that I myself was "Ephphatha". I was opened to His calling on my life. In every instance that I was "Ephphatha" the Lord showed favor and gave blessings in my life. What it meant for me that I needed to continue to "be opened", to be open to the things God had for me and to be obedient in His calling and will for my life.

It means exactly the same for you. He sees you. He sees the pain, the worry, the heartache, the sickness, and every heavy thing you carry. You just need Ephphatha, to be opened. To be opened to what He has waiting for you, to trust Him.

When the Lord showed me the ways we have been blessed simply for being open to His calling it was like watching the highlight reel. Our obedience, even when it seemed small, has proven to be exactly the blessing we needed and in His perfect timing. Not a single one came without some sacrifice. Isn't that the way it should be, is supposed to be? Jesus in His obedience to the Father's will was dreading His own sacrifice so intently that his pores poured out blood like sweat. (Luke 22:44). Even He needed strengthening.

When you receive confirmation that you are in God's will, you are strengthened. Scripture calls us to be still and wait on the Lord so that we can endure the sacrifice we are asked to make in order for Him to give us something better. Many times, I would not have been able to make it through the hardest, darkest parts if it weren't for God's initials prompting and strengthening. Those instances of confirmations always come after worship, prayer, pleading, and seeking Him. In other words, when we abide in Him and He abides in us, we cannot fail. Isaiah 40:31 and Psalms 46:5

Ask. Seek. Knock.

Be Opened!

I am writing this book in complete obedience. Yes, it will cost something for me to share our story, for me to sing our life song here for you. I pray it serves to be eye opening for you, I pray you are able to tell your story, to speak it to others because this world needs the hope of Jesus.

Except from the upcoming book: Ephphatha by Aimee Larsen