

December 17-19, 2022 – Stewardship #3 “A Time for Everything”

Preacher: Pastor Scott Oelhafen

Sermon Theme: “Three Reasons Why Jesus Heals Us”

Sermon Text: Mark 1: 29-39

***<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. <sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. <sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” <sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. Mark 1: 29-39***

Dear Christian friends,

A Sunday School class was asked a couple questions, and these were their answers: **Why did God make your mom?** Answers: God made mom because she's the only one who knows where the scotch tape is. Mostly, to clean the house. **What kind of little girl was your mom?** I don't know because I wasn't there, but my guess is: pretty bossy. **What did your mom need to know about your dad before she married him?** Does he make at least \$800 per year? Does he say NO to drugs and YES to chores. **What does your mom do in her spare time?** Mothers don't DO spare time.

To sum it up, in the minds of kids and in reality, moms exist to serve their families ... period. And, that's the great thing about moms. Just ask them – they love it. Maybe not when their kids are screaming bloody murder or covered in strawberry jelly. It's hard-wired into their nature. What's the hardest thing can happen to a family? When mom gets sick, the entire house either shuts down or is thrown into chaos.

Our Bible reading for today in Mark, chapter 1 tells us Peter's mother-in-law was sick, really sick. Her fever was so bad, Scripture tells us, that she couldn't get out of bed. Earlier in the day, Jesus attended synagogue and performed a miracle by driving out a demon. Immediately afterwards, Scripture tells us that Jesus and his disciples walked to the house of Peter's mother-in-law. Now, it was common practice to have a special Sabbath meal. Some of you may be thinking: “Typical man. The mother-in-law is sick but still these guys come over for supper anyway.” When they arrive at the house, Mark tenderly records that Jesus went to her, took her by the hand, helped her up, and the fever she was suffering from vanished – just like that. The one who cast out a demon from a stranger, now cast out the fever from Peter's mother-in-law. I'll bet Peter never forgot that.

Here's the point. What did this lady do after she was healed? She didn't declare herself the Queen of Capernaum and demand to be waited upon. She didn't even leave the house. Scripture simply tells us: the fever left her and she began to wait on them. Jesus healed her and her first question was: "What can I make these nice boys for lunch?" She used the gift of health she'd been given to do what she could out of thanks to Jesus. She served. And we know why God gives us gifts of health, wealth, education, time, talents, and treasures, all so that we can serve him. We're simply stewards or managers of all our blessings. And God wants us to use them wisely for him.

Is anyone here thinking: "But, I've never been healed by Jesus"? And I suppose you are right only if you think the only definition of healing means you have cancer one week and the scan comes back clean the next. Jesus has been known to do those kinds of miracles before. Think about it. None of us here are sick in bed with a fever. So why is that? Many of us have never had cancer. Oh sure, we've probably experienced broken bones ... but they've all healed. We've had colds, flu, maybe even COVID ... but we're fine now. Who do you think healed you? It's not just doctors, Walgreens, or our own immune systems. It's what we tell our little ones when they get owies: "Pray to Jesus and he'll make it better." It's true, Jesus does heal us in ways we notice and in more ways we don't. On this Stewardship Saturday/Sunday service, let's think about God's gift of time to us more and thank him more ... every day. So how can we do that?

Serve. Joyfully Serve Jesus with the time we've been given. To do anything else, is to waste Jesus' healing. Let's say you were in the hospital or struggling with a medical problem and someone asks you: "Why do you want to get better?" What would you say? "I want to get better so I can watch more Netflix. I want to get better so I can go back to work and make more money. I want to get better to spend time with my family" None of these answers are in the Bible. As Christians, we have a better answer: "I want to get better so that I can serve Jesus." Yes, this, THIS, is God's plan for us.

But there's more to the story why Jesus heals us. He heals us because He cares about us. He cares about our physical condition. He loves us with an everlasting love. Now it's true, sometimes, God allows pain to hang around. Pain shows us we need him. Pain can turn us around if we've forgotten him. It tells us that we we're not home in heaven yet. It keeps us from being satisfied with this temporary world. Pain has a way of keeping us longing for the only one who will satisfy, the one person: Jesus. Do we realize how blessed we are? Not every one in this life knows the right Savior God. But, by God's grace, we do. Pain leads us to cry out to Jesus who has lived through our human pain and, who even asked "why" of the Father on the cross, and who showed the world beyond a shadow of a doubt that he cares for us. Both health and pain lead us to Christ.

And that's exactly what happened in our sermon reading: . <sup>32</sup> ***That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.*** <sup>33</sup> ***The whole town gathered at the door,*** Can you imagine Peter saying, "Jesus, you have visitors at the door." "Who is it?" "Ahh, the whole town!" Remember, it was the Sabbath and the legal distance for walking on the Sabbath was to the synagogue and then back home. That's it. Many had seen Jesus cast out the demons at the synagogue and they went home wondering, "Could he, would he...fix my mom or dad?"

Fix my kids or my friends?” Could he, would he ... help us?” “Let’s go! No, no, we can’t go yet. It’s the Sabbath. We have to wait until the sun sets and the new day has begins.”

Remember, it wasn’t 2022 AD. It was only 31 AD. There’s no email, no social media, no status updates. Still, all these devout believers went home saying the same thing, “As soon as the sun goes down, we’re going to see Jesus”. Pain does that.

It’s like us. Saturday night/Sunday morning comes. Loaded down with a week’s worth of worry, stress and guilt, we look forward to spending time with Jesus in worship. And in worship, Jesus serves us. Those in our sermon reading had very specific reasons for going to see Jesus. And again, Mark records it so beautifully. **Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons,** That’s just what Jesus does. He helps. He had a long day, but he cares for them physically.

And Jesus cares about our physical needs. And he heals us 99.9% of the time. Even if we have to deal with lingering troubles, pain that just doesn’t go away – he hasn’t forgotten us. Deep down we know there’ll come a time when Jesus won’t heal us: not because he can’t, but because he has something better for us than this life. He wants it so badly for us that he died on a cross to pay the price we owed God and rose from the grave to remind us that death is not the end for us, but only the door for us to experience heaven where no one ever needs to be healed again. That’s Jesus’ plan for us.

And that’s finally why he heals us. To point us to the truth that he cares most about our spiritual health. Our reading continues: <sup>35</sup> **Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.** Don’t miss this point! Jesus was up until who knows what hour of the evening healing and helping. If there were ever a time to sleep in, you’d think Jesus earned it. But instead, he wakes up at 0dark 30 so he can talk with his Father in prayer. And what did he pray about? Well, what was his all-consuming passion? You. Me. Us. He asked His Father to give him the strength to carry out the plan of salvation. What a comforting thought!

I hope you see what Jesus is doing here. Not only is he spending time with His Father making up for every time we forgot to pray, He’s setting an example for us. Jesus didn’t have time to pray. He made time to pray. It’s why he heals us. He shows us we need to depend on God for everything. Yes, he heals us so that we can serve ... but so we can be served by His Word.

And finally, when His disciples chase after Jesus to tell him every one is looking for him to heal some more, Jesus said: **“Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”** Why did Jesus come? Not to choose the path of super-star healer. Instead, he chose the way of the cross, not just to heal us physically but spiritually, to save us from our sins. This is Jesus plan for us. How can we not serve a Savior like that? As we make our plans, plan to be served by Jesus through His Word. Then, plan to serve Jesus with our lives. And THAT is why He heals us. The next time you get sick, remember to ask Jesus to make you better. But, remember why he heals us. It’s a game-changer. Amen.