

# *Ascension Lutheran Church*

*Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of February 8, 2009*

## Jesus' Healing Gives Everything He Has (Mark 1:29-39)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Our text is from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark:

“That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.”

This is the text.

Dear friends in Christ, over the years, medicine has advanced by leaps and bounds. We now have cures and treatments for many, many diseases. With the advent of such things as vaccines, penicillin, and advances in treatments of diseases, our average life span as a population has also grown. For in 1900 the average life span was 49; today it is 77.

As medicine continues to advance we continue to search for cure-all products. The advancements in medicine are truly amazing and they are a gift from God. They are His hands of mercy working through the surgeons in hospitals and in the medicine and the treatments for all the ailments of the world.

Physical healing was part of Christ's ministry on earth as well. We see this in our text. It says, “He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons.” However, this was not the whole the reason for His coming to us in the flesh. Jesus came to give a much deeper and more permanent healing. If His mission was simply to give physical healing that would be like treating the symptoms of a disease while ignoring the cause.

Friends, the cause of all the disease in this world, even the colds and flues we get ultimately all come from the same root. They come to us because we live in a fallen world and the cause of the fallen nature of this world is sin. It goes back to the beginning. When Adam and Eve first fell into sin the whole creation fell with them. As it says in Romans 8, “The creation was subjected to frustration”. Sin brought with it a curse. The world as a whole became broken, sinful, and in decay.

But this was not our Lord's intention for His beloved creation. He made the world to reflect His glory, to show His divine qualities; to represent His beauty, His power, His love, His eternal nature. But man's sin spoiled that and brought the curse of death and disease. This is why the flowers wilt and our hair goes grey.

In our text we see the beam of hope. We see the One who heals the broken. We see Jesus Christ, God Himself who has come in the flesh. He is the Great Physician and the healing He gives is ultimate, complete, and forever.

When Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law He showed who He was. He took her by the hand and lifted her up and it says, "The fever left her, and she began to serve them." She was healed immediately and completely. The fever was severe, it might have resulted in death but it had no power in Jesus' awesome presence. All the ills and evil of this world were consumed in His holy love.

The Lord then used this mighty event to further display His healing power. It says, "That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons". It even says "The whole city was gathered together at the door." What an incredible sight that must have been! All these people were in search of the cure-all and they came to the right place. For in the Person of Christ is the renewal of creation itself. He is the One who has redeemed and restored this broken world.

Some of the people saw Jesus as someone with great power who could heal their ailing bodies, but no more than that. Yet their physical healing was simply a sign of the deeper healing we find in Him. While it's wonderful to have our bodies healed, that kind of healing ultimately is only temporary. Even the people that Jesus healed and brought back to life such as Lazarus eventually died. The ultimate purpose of Christ's coming was to heal us of our sins. He came to get at the root cause of our brokenness. He came to dig up the root of our sin and do away with it forever.

While He did many miracles and healed many diseases Jesus gave the ultimate healing in an even more unexpected way. He healed the world when He was broken on the cross, when He died for our sins. He gave us much more than physical healing, more than emotional happiness. He gave something far more profound; He gave eternal life itself. He opened the way to heaven and gave Himself; He gives you a relationship with Him.

He gives everything He has to you. He has pledged Himself to you as in a marriage and you have been pledged to Him through faith and Baptism. That is the wedding ring of your marriage to Christ. It is a close, intimate relationship where the Lord gives us the victory over sin and death that Christ earned for us. Luther put it this way, "The believing soul by means of the pledge of its faith is free in Christ, its bridegroom, free from all sins, secure against death and hell, and is endowed with the eternal righteousness, life and salvation of Christ its bridegroom."

Sadly, there are people who refuse Christ and the life and wholeness He offers. In effect, this leaves them without the cure for death, which is the ultimate affliction. It leaves them separated from life in Christ and headed for destruction in hell. Friends, as followers of Christ, our mission is to pray for these lost souls and help to lead as many people to Christ as we can during our time here. Our Lord will guide and lead us along the way. He will supply the opportunities and support us. He has pledged Himself to you and promised to be with you always.

Because He gives life and removes our death and sin we ought to gladly confess our sins, turn from them and follow Him each day. We don't want to live in sin do we? No, we have a new life in Christ and what a glorious life. His command to love Him and love

our neighbour as ourselves is extraordinarily beautiful. It flows out of His love for us. As John writes in His first epistle, "We love because He first loved us." Because He forgave us we can in turn forgive others. As we say in the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Friends, having Christ is more than being forgiven. It means that we are joined to Him; we are bonded to the Lord of life. And this connection means He gives His grace each day; it flows to us just as a branch receives life from the vine. It means that as we stay in His Word He makes us more and more like Him. He makes us like a runner who trains diligently for a race and exercises self control in all things, as the epistle reading says. His grace leads us in this way. And if we fall His grace leads us back to repentance and forgiveness we have in our Divine Healer.

The healing we have in Jesus makes us want to talk to Him, to call on Him often in prayer. We see the example of Jesus in the Gospel text. It says He rose very early in the morning, while it was still dark and prayed. We have communion with Him every day. We have the wonderful opportunity to speak to our Heavenly Father each day and receive healing and strength through His Word that He speaks to us each day in Scripture. And what a joy it is to commune with Him in the Lord's Supper. This is a special way that Christ comes to us and gives healing to our souls and strengthens our bond to Him.

Friends, let us continue to walk in this sure and secure bond we have in our Great Physician, our Lord and Saviour. Let us continue to live in Him, and to be built up and supported in Him, as we seek His will each day and give praise and thanks for all His wonderful gifts. In Jesus' Name. Amen.