

Fifth Sunday After Epiphany, February 4, 2018, Year B

St. Andrew's Anglican Church – Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ - Rector

Scripture: Mark 1:29-39

“Your Faith Has Healed You”

“The whole town gathered at the door, 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.” (Mark 1:33-34)

We are given example after example of Jesus, God's Word Incarnate – healing the illness and brokenness of those who come to Him. In this Gospel passage we see Jesus healing Peter's mother in law, in Capernaum. Jesus is showing us His compassion for the needs of others – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. How often do we only think of healing as physical – asking God to heal some sickness, pain, and or disease that we have or is affecting someone we love. He can heal our pains and tortures – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I have got to tell you today – that it is only in Jesus Christ that we can be made whole and experience true inner healing!

We have spent the last three Sundays learning about what took place in Capernaum, the fishing village where many people came to Jesus for healing. The Gospels tell us that these people were lining up in droves to be healed. Jesus spent quite a bit of His time ministering to lepers, (people with all sorts of skin diseases) and others who were considered by members of the community to be sinful, unclean, and outcasts of society. Lepers, by the Law, had to announce themselves to those around them by shouting “Unclean” when anyone was nearby. Imagine the emotional scars – and the physical scarring and loss of limbs. If you were unclean you lived in total abandonment, rejection, hatred, anger, mockery, and abuse. Jesus reached out to these who were unclean – and Jesus touched and confirmed their faith and their importance in the eyes of God – restoring them to a right place in society by instructing them to go to the priest so that their restoration could be certified. Jesus went to places that others wouldn't go, He touched people that others wouldn't touch. In Luke chapter 17 – Jesus healed ten lepers – but sadly only one returns to Jesus to give glory to God. Jesus asks everyone present where the other nine are – but then He turns to the now healed Samaritan and says: *“Stand up and go; your faith has made you well.”* (Luke 17:19)

There was another time when Jesus was on the way to bring Jairus' daughter back to life. Jairus was a leader of the Temple- and he came to Jesus saying that his daughter was dying. He was stopped by the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. This poor woman had endured suffering with hemorrhaging, and spending all her money on doctors, living in the despair and the emotional trauma of being declared 'unclean' as well as the isolation, anger, rejection and shame that went along with it. She knew that if she could only touch the hem of Jesus' garment that her life would change. When she did touch His garment her bleeding instantly stopped. Mark's Gospel says *“Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”* (Mark 5:33-34) Jesus stopped what He was doing, He was on a mission - heading for Jairus' daughter, to speak with this woman, listening to her story. Jesus listened – giving her His

undivided attention. He had already given her His power and healing, but He didn't rush off – and instead He heard the depth of her faith and then He told her that it was her faith that healed her!

Jesus commanded her to “*go in peace*” “*shalom*” restoring her to society and told her to “*be healed from your suffering.*” He restored her health, restoration of mind, and restoration of spirit – and it can only come from God Himself – in the person of Jesus Christ.

We see evidence throughout the Scriptures of Jesus' healing people purely because of His compassion. We see examples right here today – in His church of the many healings and deliverances from cancer and other ailments – we see people growing where they were told that they wouldn't grow – but yet miracle after miracle – we see a witness of a miracle who has been able to write on a board exactly what she was supposed to write. Elizabeth – you are my hero and you are God's blessing incarnate. If you don't believe that Jesus does miracles – take a look at the third pew. Amazing! Jesus' compassion, His love, – and a great deal of faith in people who love people has brought a great deal of healing to others. In today's Holy Gospel – immediately after they left the synagogue where Jesus drove the demons out of the man - they went to the home of Simon Peter and his brother Andrew. Listen to verse 30: “*Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her.*” Let me interject that they told Jesus about her because they knew and had witnessed the wonders that Jesus was working with the people who were sick – in body, mind and spirit. They had the faith that Jesus would heal her – not with the intention to have her work for them – but simply to get rid of this illness that plagued her. She was so well after Jesus spoke to her that she felt well enough to get up and in gratitude – to serve them!

It would appear that Jesus hardly had any time to Himself. The Gospel says: “*That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.*” (Mark 1:32-34) Listen to these words from the Gospel of Matthew – an eyewitness to Jesus' ministry: “*Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him.*” (Matthew 4:23-25)

There is truly a war going on – a spiritual war! It is a war that Satan will not win! God the Father sent Jesus to the cross – so that we might be restored; restored to a right relationship with Him, a relationship that was intended for all of us, from the very beginning. Listen to what the Apostle Paul has to say about this in his Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8: “*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Romans 8:38-39) We

need to know without a doubt that our own restoration is only found in Jesus: *“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.”* (Romans 8:1-2) If you are carrying around baggage of shame and guilt for things that you did years ago and have already repented of – get rid of it! Don’t carry around that baggage of something you did when you were 16 years of age when you picked up something that wasn’t yours – and every day the devil reminds you of it. Let it go! He has no right to do that to you – you have already been forgiven. Get rid of it! Leave it at the foot of the cross.

I want to suggest to you today that just as Jesus went to the cross to free us from sin and death – offering eternal life and forgiveness of sins repented, He also took our illness and disease with Him – offering healing to those who will faithfully receive it. The words of Peter’s first letter ring true: *“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”* (1Peter 2:24) The Prophet Isaiah proclaims the same: *“But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”* (Isaiah 53:5)

Through the innocent suffering of Jesus on His cross, the righteous anger of God has been satisfied and through His redeeming power, love and mercy – we are able to be made right with God. We receive the fruit of Jesus’ ultimate sacrifice through repenting – through turning away from our sinful behavior – placing our trust and confidence in one place - Our Lord Jesus Christ – and allowing God to transform us – changing our sinful nature forevermore. We need to go before the cross and lay our sins, our burdens, that baggage that we are carrying around, our weaknesses at the feet of Jesus in order to be truly healed, receiving complete and total forgiveness.

I just love the words of Psalm 103: *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits; who pardons all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases.”* (Psalm 103:1-3) God has promised – and only God delivers! The words from 2 Corinthians are so fitting: *“For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes!”* (2 Corinthians 1:20) He wants to say YES to us – and not NO!

The only solution to what ails the world today can be found in Jesus Christ – He told us on the night before He died that He is THE WAY – not one of many ways -He is *“the Way and the Truth and the Life”* (John 14:6) and it is through the power of His Holy Word that we can be healed. The Word of God has incredible power; Jesus healed the sick and cast out evil just by speaking His Word. In the beginning, the universe was created simply by speaking it into being. We need to recognize and trust that power – having a great faith like Abraham – not based on anything that we have seen – but knowing that God will do everything that He has promised! The prophet Isaiah proclaimed: *“Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of*

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the earth?” (Isaiah 40:21) He continues: “those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” (Isaiah 40:31) God desires for us to be healed!

In the Epistle of James, chapter 5 beginning at verse 13 – considered by many to be the brother of Jesus *“Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”*

I want to encourage everyone to not search for healing anywhere except in the One who created and saved us – for by His sacrifice on the cross and redemption we are not only freed from sin and death – but from sickness as well. Trust in Him and what He has already done for you. As Jesus told many – and tells each one of us here today, personally *“Your faith has healed you!”*