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***Healing***  
***Mark 1:29-39***

*<sup>29</sup> As soon as they<sup>[a]</sup> left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup> He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.*

*<sup>32</sup> That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed by demons. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup> And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.*

***A Preaching Tour in Galilee***

*<sup>35</sup> In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and his companions hunted for him. <sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup> He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.*

The Gospel of Mark was likely the ***first Gospel*** to be written, and was used as a ***source*** for parts of Matthew and Luke. And it is jam-packed with details.

***The words may be few, but they are full of meaning.***

Today's passage is a ***day in the life*** of Jesus.

We get to follow him around for a day, and see what he does—  
And in the process, we learn what's important to him,  
we see his priorities.

In her book, ***The Writing Life***, Annie Dillard reminds us of something true and shocking about life: "***How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.***"

Think about that for a minute.

Can people discern your passions and priorities

by looking at how you spend the hours of your day?

Is how you spend your day, the way you want to spend your life?

For Jesus, what he did each hour came from *WHO he was*.

God's Son.

The Messiah.

The Savior.

*A preacher, teacher, and healer.*

*The LIFE of Jesus is important.*

We all know how much we are healed and saved  
by the *death and resurrection* of Jesus.

But we are also saved by his life—by everything he did in his *ministry*.

He was a healer, a teacher, a preacher.

He was also a man of *prayer*.

That's one of the powerful things we see in this Gospel time and again.

*Jesus takes time to pray.*

*One-third of the Gospel of Mark is about healing and exorcism.*

In this passage, we see Jesus leave the synagogue after healing  
*Healing--with authority, as Laura spoke about last week.*

And then, he comes to the home of Simon Peter,  
where Simon's mother-in-law is sick in bed.

*Jesus immediately goes to her*, takes her by the hand and lifts her up.

He touches her to heal her, even though it would have made him unclean in the  
eyes of the religious authorities.

And after she gets up, she begins to *serve* them.

Then at the end of the Sabbath day, people start bringing him the sick and  
possessed, and Jesus cures them.

After that in the morning, early, *while it was still dark*,

*Jesus got up and went to a deserted place to pray.*

That phrase, *while it was still dark*, might sound familiar—

Because it's the phrase describing the women coming to the empty tomb  
on Easter morning,

In the dark.

And Jesus going to a *deserted place* is reminiscent of the deserted place  
where John the Baptist preached, and where Jesus was tempted.

Jesus' disciples did not expect him to steal away to pray,  
so they go looking for him.

In fact, Mark says that *Simon and his companions hunted for him*.  
*When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you."*

***And what does Jesus do?***

Does he go right back to healing people?

No. In fact, he says it's time to move on:

*"Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do."*

*And he went throughout all Galilee,  
proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.  
Jesus moves on to the next town, for more healing, and preaching.*

***So what does all of this mean for US?***

We know that Jesus was a healer.

And we see that in this passage.

***But what does it mean to be healed by Jesus?***

Pastor David Lose says it means being healed **FROM something**,  
And healed **FOR something**.

Healing often means being healed **FROM physical pain or ailment**.

Something happens in the body,

or in the case of someone possessed, it's a healing of the spirit or the mind.

But Jesus **DID NOT take away** everyone's pain or sickness.

In fact, Jesus healed only a small **portion** of those who were sick near him,

And he only worked in a **small corner of the world** while he was alive.

***So is there something MORE to healing?***

Can it be more than or different than removing physical pain or sickness?

I think so.

I think we see that in the scriptures.

Moses continued to have a speech impediment,  
even after telling God about it.

The apostle Paul still had his disability, even after asking God to heal it—3 times!

***So what if healing is deeper than a physical change?***

What if healing can be something *mental, or emotional*?  
 What if—healing could be a kind of well-being,  
 that happens *even in the midst of pain or sickness*?

*Have you ever seen THAT KIND of healing?*

Like A peace—for someone going through cancer.  
 Hope—for someone struggling with mental illness.  
 Joy—for someone dealing with dementia.

*Isn't it true that sometimes we experience healing,  
 Even while we are still sick?*

Pastor David Lose says that healing is also about what you are *healed FOR*.  
 What does that mean?

It means that when Jesus healed people, he healed them *For something*.  
 He restored them to *community*.  
 He did more than take away pain, or blindness, or possession.  
 He *restored them to their place in community*.

And they were healed *FOR mission and ministry*.

If you look at every healing in the Gospels, you can see this.

The woman with the hemorrhaging—she was made clean.

The lepers who couldn't worship—they were restored to the temple.

The blind who had to beg beside a pool—they were given a new lease on life, and  
 could work, instead of begging.

Some people have said that the *healing of Simon's mother-in-law is TRAGIC*.

I mean, like many women in the Bible, we don't even know her name!

She is healed, and the first thing she does is *SERVE the men around her!*

But what if her healing is actually *amazing---for her, and all of us?*

What if she is *NOT a victim?*

What if her healing is a *template for us*, when God restores us?

In fact, some say her healing, when she gets up to serve,  
 actually makes her the *first Deacon in the Bible!*

What if she is one of the *first servants* in the early church?

What if she was healed *IN ORDER to serve?*

What if she was restored, so she *could help others?*

She was freed **FROM sickness, FOR service!**

Just like we are freed FROM so much, so that we can be FOR one another!

Does this mean that we will be **freed from EVERYTHING that hurts us?**

Not on this side of heaven.

We live in a **broken, fallen world**, with all kinds of pain and problems.

And we will continue to struggle---until Jesus returns again,  
and makes all things new,

Or we find ourselves in our heavenly home.

Meanwhile, **we study the life of Jesus,**

And we learn that Jesus came to show us the **power of healing.**

**All kinds of healing.**

Body, mind, spirit----not complete—but powerful.

And we believe that Jesus still heals people today, in all different ways.

And we learn something else really important from Jesus.

**We learn the power of prayer.**

If Jesus took time away from his ministry to pray, shouldn't **we do the same?**

If Jesus the Son of God prayed always, shouldn't we?

Healing is powerful in the Bible.

But one of the most powerful parts of healing is

**Being freed---FOR service.**

Just like Simon's mother-in-law.

**What if Jesus brings US healing,**

**so that WE can be AGENTS of healing in the world today?**

**Do you think of your life that way?**

That YOU are called to be an **agent of healing?**

We all have a **sphere of influence** in our lives---

we all have people that **look up** to us,

who **pay attention** to us—whether that be family, friends, neighbors, or colleagues.

Think about who watches you?

Who is learning from you?

*Now think about how God might use you to bring healing to some of them.....*

Think of how you can share Good News?

Or hope?

Or peace?

*The truth is, we cannot end world hunger.*

But we can support our food pantry, and feed a few people, today.

We can vote for policies to ensure nutrition for those who are struggling.

*We cannot heal all people, or end sickness.*

But we can support health ministries,

and we can ask leaders and politicians to make healthcare available to everyone.

What we can do *might seem small—like a drop in the bucket.*

But God can do a lot with all those drops in the bucket—

God can weave it all together,

and bring all kinds of good and hope and healing.

*We may not be able to make a BIG difference,*

*But we can make A difference.*

As Mother Teresa once said,

we can do no GREAT things, only *small things with GREAT love.*

If we follow Jesus, we need to *DO something—we MUST do something.*

We are all members of the body of Christ,

We all have a calling to live out.

We all have a purpose.

And as Teresa of Avila once said,

*WE are the hands and feet of Jesus now.*

Each and every one of us.

The healing and teaching and preaching and serving that Jesus did,

That's what *WE are called to do today.*

How is God calling *YOU to do that?*

What is God *asking of YOU* today?

Jake Owensby of MinistryMatters.com says that

*The Gospel is a power unleashed on this earth through feeble hands like yours and mine.*

*The Gospel is something we DO.*

*Well, actually, the Gospel is something that God does through us.*

Jake Owensby, ministrymatters.com, February 7, 2018.

Friends, hear the *Good News of the Gospel* for us today,

Jesus is still our healer.

He brings us all kinds of healing —

some of it physical, some emotional, some in body, some in spirit.

But all of it frees *FROM the chains* that bind us,

And it frees us *FOR mission and service*.

And we are called to be *AGENTS OF HEALING for Him*.

Sharing the Good News, and doing what we can do,

In our corner of the world.

We are *his hands and feet* today.

And for the opportunity to serve, all God's people can say together, Amen.