

Sermon for the Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalms 147:1-11

1 Corinthians 9:16-27

Mark 1:29-39

Grace, Peace, and Mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

Jesus' Power to Make You Whole

Several years ago I ran across the comic strip titled "Kudzu." Kudzu is a vine that grows out of control in the southern United States. The comic strip takes aim at politics, religion, and life in general. A frequent character who shows up is, The Rev. Will T. Dunn. In one feature cartoon had the Rev. Will T. Dunn standing by the Church door greeting the parishioners as they left church. One fellow compliments the pastor on his sermon and it had brought healing in his life. The Rev. Will T. Dunn asks the fellow what he had been healed from as a result of this service. The fellow replied, "Insomnia."

I do pray that this morning healing can be brought on all our lives, and if it is insomnia that is ailing you, please don't demonstrate in this place this morning. In fact Jesus is present to heal things much greater than insomnia. Jesus is present to heal the sinful human condition. Last week we heard gospel where Jesus healed a man with an unclean spirit. With Jesus' authority He drove the spirit from the man and the man was made whole once again. The congregation that morning showed their astonishment saying, "What is this, a new teaching. He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey." Jesus is present today to drive out the unclean sinful spirit of our lives to today in order to make us all whole and spiritually healed people so that we can go forth and serve in our daily lives sharing fruit of the Holy Spirit.

After worship that day, Simon invites Jesus over to His house for dinner. Apparently Simon's mother in law was unable to be at worship that morning. It was not from a night of suffering from insomnia and now she finally fell asleep and slept in and missed worship, it was because she had a fever, she had the flu. Jesus goes to the house. I wonder what Simon and Andrew told Jesus when they entered the house? Did they say, "Jesus, don't get too close to her, we don't want you to get sick either." Of course these new disciples of Jesus have not yet realized why Jesus had come into the world. Jesus would most certainly catch something worse than the flu or a fever. He would catch all of her sin and come down with a good case of crucifixion on a cross. All because Jesus got close to her. Remember too, Jesus got close to you too.

Having seen what Jesus did in the synagogue earlier casting out the unclean spirit by a word, these disciples figured that He could cast the fever out in the same way. Simon tells Jesus about his mother in law and the physician from heaven comes and makes a house call. Knock-Knock. Whose there. "The Kingdom of God is at Hand!" The Kingdom of God breaking in to bring salvation and wholeness to God's people through this one man, Jesus of Nazareth! It as if Jesus had come for this one woman, personally.

And Jesus will not do this from a socially distanced position. He will come to get close to her personally. "He came and took by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her." The action is so simple, yet so powerful. The fever left her. And then she began to serve them. The Greek word Mark uses literally says, "She 'Deaconess' them." When you hear the word deacon in church life, think of their role or ministry as one of service. So Simon's mother in law becomes the first deaconess, She

serves them. This is all in response for For God's love shown to her in Jesus and His divine authority. She prepares lunch.

“That evening at sundown They brought to Him all who were sick or possessed by demons. And the whole city gathered at the door.”

They would have come earlier, but it was the sabbath day. It would have violated the sabbath rules to bring the sick to Jesus as it was too far to walk. Even if they got them to a doctor, the doctor would not have been in because it was the sabbath and it would been to much work to tend to their needs because it would violated the sabbath.

When the sun had set the sabbath was over. I wonder that many who showed up at the door where Jesus was were brought their by those who had been at the synagogue that day. They had witnessed Jesus casting out an unclean spirit and they went home after worship and told their sick friend who could not be at church, “Come and see a man called Jesus.” He can heal you. That is what friends do for friends. They go and tell their friends what happened at church and the that Jesus was there and healed them from their sins, giving them hope, and strength to meet the challenges ahead. So now all these sick and unclean spirit possessed people are now gathered at he door. Can't you just picture Jesus walking up to each one personally, as if He came for each one personally. Touching them, speaking a word and curing them of ailments. The Kingdom of God had come to each one and they are healed and made whole.

I have wonder how responded by becoming deacons and deaconesses that day and began serving God for all the good He had done for them!

The same thing has happened here this morning. Though the whole town is not gathered at our door, but we are here because of a sin-fever that burdens each of us. We have come because Christ has touched each of us in Holy Baptism and blessed each one of you personally, and cleansed you and called each one of you by name, casting out the sin fever that affects you. It is as if Jesus has come down from heaven for you personally.

But you got sick again and had to come to the great Doctor, Jesus himself to be healed and made whole again. “Your sin are forgiven.” “Take and eat, Take and drink, this is the body and blood of Christ given and shed for you.” And you are cleansed.

These extraordinary things that Jesus does are just signs pointing us to something bigger and greater. There is a goal that still lies ahead for Jesus.

“And In the morning while it was still dark, He got up and went out to a deserted place, and there He prayed.” It had been a busy night. Still Jesus is up early to pray in a deserted place, away from everything and everybody. The desert had been the place where He encountered the devil. Where the devil showed Him all the kingdoms offering them to Jesus if He would bow down and worship him. Certainly Jesus had been popular from the night before and certainly his fame would spread. Fame and popularity can be pretty tempting. “Simon and those with Jesus searched for Jesus and found him say, Everyone is looking for you.” What they mean is, “You should not be here but back in town doing great things. This is a quite a movement taking shape. Just with those you touched yesterday and healed can take you all the way to the throne. And Jesus would say to the devil. “Be gone, you shall worship the Lord and only God. And Only Him shall you serve.”

You see the healing that came from heaven to give you can only be given by the cross of His

crucifixion and and resurrection. All cures, are just temporary patch jobs apart from Jesus death and resurrection. His great act of love shown for you on the cross cures something greater than insomnia or those other ailments we may encounter. It cures our sins and broken relationships with God and one another. It brings us back to God and makes us whole, it saves us and bring us hope for eternal life. It is in eternal life that sickness will not touch us.

