

Scripture Reading: Mark 1:21

“39 And [Jesus] was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons. 40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me clean.' 41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.' 45 However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.”

Mark 2:1: “And again [Jesus] entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2 Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. 3 Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.' 6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 'Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' 8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, 'Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--He said to the paralytic, 11 I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' 12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'"

"Jesus the Great Physician"

This year, up until Easter I am doing a short series of sermons on the Gospel According to Mark. We are doing this to better know and love Jesus, which is especially important for the covenant children whom God has placed under our care.

- Mark begins, as do all the Gospel accounts by showing that Jesus has come as the Savior, the one who would save His people from their sins!**
- We saw how at His baptism He was declared by the Father to be His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.**

Next we considered how Jesus chose twelve men to be His disciples who would establish the doctrinal and functional foundation for His Church. A Church which the Holy Spirit would empower and use to fill the earth with the Kingdom of Jesus.

Last week we saw how Satan and his demons had invaded God's chosen people and the nation of Israel to try and stop Jesus from accomplishing His work.

- But in the end we saw how Judas was used by them to send Jesus to the cross at the hands of the Romans, which was the very reason for His coming!**

As we continue our readings from Mark, this week we will see Jesus as the great Physician who healed many of the sick during His earthly ministry.

- As we do so, we want to consider why Jesus healed those who were sick...
- We will consider how Jesus healed the sick...
- And finally we will consider what implications all of this has for us today.

Mark gives an early account of how Jesus healed the Mother of Peter's wife and this morning we come to the healing of the leper and the man who was paralyzed who was brought to Jesus by some loving and dedicated friends.

As we go on in Mark's account Jesus heals a withered hand, He save the daughter of Jarius from a terminal illness, as well as the woman who had an issue of blood for many years. We come in chapter 7 to a Gentile woman who asks for a few scrapes from the banquet set before the Jews so that her Gentile daughter could be healed and then Jesus heals a man who was deaf and dumb. In chapter 8 He heals a blind man, not instantly but progressively. And finally in chapter 9 we come to the healing of Blind Bartimeus just outside of Jericho before Jesus enters Jerusalem at His appointed time. There are also references like those in our morning text to large crowds coming to be healed and of course we find more specific examples in the other Gospel accounts.

- So our first question is why did Jesus heal the sick?

As we read the Gospel accounts we see Jesus as the Son of Man showing compassion on those who are suffering. We see this clearly in the 9th Chapter of Matthew's account where we read:

"35 Then Jesus went about all the cities & villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. 36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. 38 Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

- Not only do we see the compassionate heart of Jesus as He heals many, but His desire is that many will be called to do the same, which we will discuss in a moment.
- However, it is important to remember that Jesus did not come to simply heal all the sick in the world or even in Israel at that time.

Jesus has come to save His people from their sins and all the Gospel accounts make it clear that His power to heal, His power over the demons and even His power over the creation are all intended to confirm that He has been sent by the Father for this task.

We see this most clearly in the final confrontation that Jesus has with the religious leaders of that day given by John in the tenth chapter of his account:

"24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one." 31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. 32 Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" 33 The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God." 34 Jesus answered them,

"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? 35 If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? 37 If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

- Thus, in all of the various healings that are recorded we see the compassion and authority of Jesus!

As we come to the second question about how Jesus healed the sick we will consider some of His methods and the role of faith. You will have a tough time putting either of these in a neat little box! Often Jesus simply declared that someone was healed and the power of His Word was always confirmed. Sometimes, like the case of the women who had an issue of blood, the one desiring to be healed strives to touch Jesus & benefit from His healing power. At other times, Jesus would use various means, like putting His finger in the ear of the deaf man or the account of the blind man we find in chapter eight:

Mark 8:22: "Then [Jesus] came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. 23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. 24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." 25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly."

So it is always the power of Jesus that is involved, but we see a wide variety of means in these healings. Again, please keep this in mind when we come to the implications for today.

- We should also consider the role of faith in these healings...
- Again, we see a wide variety of situations.

The leper in our morning text sought out Jesus asking to be healed. Peter's mother-in-law and the man brought on his bed were healed because of requests or actions taken made by others. In Mark chapter three Jesus heals a man with a withered hand in the Synagogue as an object lesson for the religious leaders with hardened hearts. You have some cases, like the widow's son at Nain where it is simply the compassion of Jesus that causes Him to take action. So we have a wide variety of methods and many differences in who did or did not have faith...

- BUT we need to see that Jesus is always at the center, doing in the end what He desires to do!
- And of course we know that His desires during His earthly ministry were always a reflection of the Father's desires: He came to do His Father's will.

So we see Jesus healing many to demonstrate His compassion and to confirm His power to forgive sins.

We see Jesus speaking & using means in a variety of ways as He heals many.

- So the important question for us to consider, is just what does all of this mean for us today?
- Can or will similar miracles take place today? *[they could because the Holy Spirit is still in control.]*
- Should we have healing services? *[only if the Spirit tells us too]*

I believe that we find the proper answer & balance in the long discourse that Jesus gave to His disciples on the evening of the Last Supper shortly before He was betrayed by Judas. I will commend to your homework the lengthy discourse that John records, because the entire context is important, but for this morning I want us to focus on just one of the most amazing things that Jesus told His disciples as He prepared to be the sacrifice for sin.

John 14:11 “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. 12 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

- **Jesus tells us that we, as those who are in Christ, will do greater works than He did!**
- **Just what does this mean?**

As we often discussed in our journey through the Book of Acts, Jesus means that as His people are faithful and follow His commands in the power of the Spirit you will see a broader and more powerful demonstration of these very things:

- **The works we see Jesus doing in the Gospel accounts!**
- **As we consider the specific question of healing we must again remember that it is very difficult for fish to realize just what being wet really means.**
- **I would contend that we are in the midst of so much of the fulfillment of that promise from Jesus when it comes to healing the sick that it is hard for us to see the evidence that surrounds us each and every day!**

Jesus restored sight, healed limbs and cured very persistent diseases. He did not heal every sick person even in Israel, but His miracles were dramatic. Today, if a limb is broken, a child is born with a serious heart problem or even when someone contracts cancer we largely expect our doctors and hospitals to restore them to health!

- **Again, we take so much of this for granted and fail to note that this progress was a direct result of the advance of the Gospel in mostly western nations!**

It was the early Christians who had the compassion to help those stricken by the plagues while Roman citizens and even pagan doctors fled to safety.

It was Christians who founded the great universities and hospitals where all of the knowledge and techniques of modern medicine were developed.

- **Modern medicine is TRULY amazing!**

Your pastor experienced this first-hand about a year and a half ago as I was preparing the sermon from Acts dealing with young Eutychus who fell into a deep sleep, falling three stories to his death while the Apostle Paul was preaching long into the night.

- **That sermon came at a time when one of my son-in-laws had taken a very serious fall at work, sustaining a life-threatening head injury**

For about 72 hours, we watched and prayed over him in the intensive care unit not knowing if he would live or die. Jay did survive and it was because of a whole variety of actions that were taken to care for him after the accident: There was an ambulance crew who carefully transported him to the hospital where skilled surgeons actually removed a portion of his skull temporarily to relieve the pressure of the swelling and for days he was surrounded by doctors and nurses using breathing tubes, IV's, warming blankets, drugs and lots of loving care to give his body time to heal.

I think this is why it is important that we remember the various ways in which Jesus healed the sick...

Yes, I would even argue these accounts are given in the Scriptures as a foretaste of the modern miracles that we see in medicine today.

We celebrated Jay's return home a few weeks later and we greatly rejoiced, just as those Saints at Troas did when young Eutychus was brought back to them alive by the Apostle Paul.

Eutychus was not given a glorified body at that time and went on at some point to face death as we all do. So in reality, Jay was given the same type of healing that young Eutychus received from Paul who also worked under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

- **When we understand this we see how the Gospel has brought forth greater works.**

We must remember that our modern medicine is a direct result of the blessings that our culture has received from God as people were faithful to the Gospel and obeyed all that Jesus taught.

- **So, we have now seen how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies and confirmed His authority here on earth by healing the sick and His other works.**
- **We saw that Jesus used many practical means to accomplish such healings, but that they always centered around His power and authority, with Jesus often simply speaking and healing the sick.**
- **And we saw how the impact of His Kingdom filling the earth has brought greater and greater healing throughout the world.**

All of this should remind us again that we are called to disciple the nations by proclaiming that Jesus has come to save His people from their sins. Remembering that people need both spiritual and physical healing, bringing people to Jesus as those faithful friends did with the paralyzed man who they let down through the roof to see Jesus.

And finally, remembering that Jesus must always be at the center of all that we do and say... The religious leaders of that day knew the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah and now Jesus worked among them doing the very deeds He was supposed to do and yet they rejected who He was: They insisted that they were the true servants of God and so Jesus gives them a very sober warning at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 7:21 "'Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' 24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

- **Truly the Gospel accounts reveal Jesus as the Great Physician and He continues to heal bodies and souls today.**

We live in a land that enjoys many of the great blessings that have come to us as the result of the work that Jesus has done and yet He is now rejected by all of our major institutions and even many Churches...

- **Exchanging a foundation of rock for one of shifting sand.**

May we always be those who are truly thankful for the many blessings that we have and ALWAYS remember the source and power of those blessings:

The Lord Jesus Christ!

This is why we should all spend much time reading and meditating on the Gospel accounts so we can know Him and Love Him more and more...

- **This will make us the wise people who hear AND obey the commands of Jesus!**

Communion Meditation: Isaiah 53

**“3 He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

**4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by
God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.**

**6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And Jehovah has laid
on Him the iniquity of us all.”**