**Mark 1:29-39 (ESV)**

**29**  And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. **30** Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. **31** And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. **32** That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. **33** And the whole city was gathered together at the door. **34**  And he healed 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. **35**  And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. **36** And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, **37** and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” **38** And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” **39**  And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

**“Public Savior For Private Lives”**

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Amen. Health and healing have always been a topic for humanity. What is different over the ages is how this health and healing occurs. For instance, in the 20th century, the modern world looked at the body purely as a machine. You take things out. You put things in. Fix this and fix that. As we have studied in Home Fires, religion was irrelevant to health. It stood in the way of science. Yet, there is now in the 21st century a growing dissatisfaction to the cold, impersonal, and economically driven mentality of the past. A human being is more than a body. Dare we say beyond what science can see? Medical schools are now having courses for doctors and nurses in the benefits between spirituality and medicine.

Of course, Christians have known about this care for the “whole” person long before science rediscovered it now in the 21st century. God is the God who creates and redeems human beings in both body and soul. Louis Pasteur a Christian and founding father of microbiology saw what attacked the body. God lead him to invent pasteurization and he even paved the way for vaccines against threatening diseases. We can go back much farther to the healing needs for the body and soul. When the Roman Empire finally legalized Christianity, there was not a decrease in care, but an increase along with construction of hospitals. Yet, for all the historical realities, Scripture stands out as supreme. It proclaims the God of salvation who has become flesh and blood for us. When healing and Jesus go together, there is no greater relief for sinners.

Where we draw strong lines between what is public and private. The Son of God carried out His ministry without distinction. Jesus wants to come into our whole life. St. Mark makes it clear, “And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.” Homes are the most intimate place for people. Yet, the disciples had no fear to hide their life from Jesus. In so doing, He would bring private care right into their home. As the Son of God, He already knew the problem. There was no need to pry because the text states, “Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her.” This deep trust in Jesus for their physical need came from the spiritual gift He already gave of faith. They had just heard Him preach the Gospel and saw a demon cast out of the synagogue. The basic need to care for the sickness consuming this woman would come from the same Savior.

As dangerous as spiritual darkness is, we also face the physical burden of living in a fallen world. God knows what threatens our homes and hurts our lives. What Jesus brings by Word and Sacrament is a promise to go with us into our daily lives. Where the first disciples could invite the Lord to their home much stands in the way today. Maybe it is pride of self-preservation denying that God helps us in life through another person. Yet, we forget Jesus was a man. Maybe it is out of our hands with a law like HIPPA that protects patients only at the loss of not even your pastor knowing what happened to you. The fact remains only Jesus is God who knows all things. In trying to secure private lives, we might push out the work brought by the Gospel. Public service of Word and Sacrament frees us from fears of sin, death and the Devil. It creates and sustains a firm trust in Jesus. His public gifts of salvation mean He also privately cares for what we suffer in our homes.

Unlike anybody else, Jesus knew how to deal with the suffering of sickens upon Peter’s mother-in-law. We read, “And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.” No medicine to cause other problems, no waiting in the office, no questions and answers, only pure grace and goodness coming from God’s Son. The personal love He brings is like no other. Nobody else cares for sinners to the depths that Jesus does. This is the joy celebrated by the psalmist over God’s rescuing power. He proclaimed, “I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (Psalms 13:6). Jesus making the sickness leave is the same way He forgives sinners. They are no more. It allowed the woman to help serve in thanks to Him who served her. Jesus is not half a savior, but comes for the whole person. He is creator and redeemer taking care of all they brought to Him that evening. So many gathered they were out the door. In many ways, the home with Jesus in it turned out to be a hospital.

Sickness is not foreign to anyone. We share in a creation suffering from the disease of sin. It attacks the body just as much as it has corrupted the soul. An endless war is against what God has created to be good. Healing reaches farther than what most suspect. It ranges from physical sickness, to mental illness, and to the very depths of sin itself. Far from acceptance, life is about dealing with sickness. Jesus says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mark 2:17). If early Christians eagerly gave care and constructed hospitals, it is because they knew the church was a hospital personally cared for by Jesus Christ as Savior. Forgiveness, life, and salvation come from God’s Son who bears all sicknesses in His body on the cross. As one writer states,

“The Christian congregation is a healing community…In the fellowship of Christ, believers share the Word of God and sacraments with one another. But they also share their faith with each other in a context of healing and wholeness” (Order Restored 203).

In other words, the cure for souls is receiving what Jesus gives as medicine to save sinners. The care for bodies is love among the baptized healing what has fallen upon all in a sinful world.

As wonderful as it was to have so many restored to better health. Jesus knew the unhealthy aspect to miracles and it made Him leave. He had to pray alone and apart from all other distractions. The temptation was to turn His ministry into a means of self-glory and not to be the suffering servant. All the disciples saw were the numbers along with the people having so many needs. Yet, they would need more than miracles for life under sin, death, and the Devil. Healing is never an end in itself. Once we get over one sickness, soon comes another. However, Jesus wanted to give something more to sinners. It was to believe upon His Word. He said, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” Preaching of repentance and faith in the Gospel was even there when no miracle of healing was present at the cross. Where Jesus grew faint and lost His strength to save sinners, His word was the miracle of hope and life in the Savior.

There are many a miracles today for healing. They can come from numerous places and peoples. It all may very well fix what afflicts us. However, Luther shows the better promise saying, “For the Gospel neither fails nor lies, but miracles are very deceiving…For signs are to serve and follow the Word and are not to speak the deciding word” (Plass 955:3001). St. Paul intensifies this by saying above all else, “Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” Lutheran Hour Ministries talks about us being in a post-Christian culture. It is no longer about numbers, but asking the question “how is our health?” The wellbeing of a congregation, the wellbeing of any baptized person comes from Christ by Word and Sacrament. Without this as the source of forgiveness, life and salvation even large numbers can be unhealthy, even a person who has it all may have nothing. We need healing, but God has given us more by His Word to put to shame sin, death, and the Devil. When healing and Jesus go together, there is no greater relief for sinners. Amen. Now may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, Amen.