

Healing the Hurting

Mark 1:29-34

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Have you noticed how many mother-in-law jokes are out there? Mothers-in-law have been the brunt of jokes since the beginning of time, well maybe not because Adam and Eve didn't have any in-laws. When I did a Google search on mother-in-law humor, over 43 million results came up! Some sites are devoted exclusively to this unique relationship.

I don't tell these kinds of jokes because I've been blessed with an extremely loving, humble and caring mother-in-law. Her sweet spirit has been stamped on Beth and all four of our daughters.

A couple mothers-in-law come to mind in the Bible. Ruth had such a close relationship with Naomi that she ended up embracing her faith and we'll see today that the disciple named Peter cared so much for his wife's mother that he brought Jesus to her.

Here's the big idea for today: *When you bring Jesus to your home, your home will become headquarters for ministry.*

We saw last week that astonishing things happen when Jesus shows up in a service. Our main point was this: *A response is expected when Jesus is encountered.* We ended with the challenge to make Jesus famous by how we live and by what comes out of our lips. How have you done with this?

In our study of the Gospel according to Mark, we've noted how Jesus establishes his authority as the Son of God. Mark 1:1 says, "***The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.***" Mark moves quickly from event to event in the first chapter to prove that Jesus is who He says He is.

- John the Baptist testifies that his job was to prepare the way for the Lord in verses 2-3 in fulfillment of the prophecies found in Isaiah and Malachi.
- At His baptism in verses 9-11, the heavens are torn open, the Holy Spirit descends visibly and the Father declares verbally, "***You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased.***"

- Jesus then conquers some terrible temptations from Satan, preaches real repentance and proclaims demanding discipleship in verses 12-20.
- He then goes to a synagogue service and shows His power over a demon by quieting him and casting him out in verses 21-28. We learned that Jesus doesn't want our amazement; He wants our allegiance.
- In our passage today we'll see the power of Christ displayed over physical diseases in verses 29-34.

All of this is overwhelming evidence that Jesus *is* the Son of God.

Bring Jesus Home

Let's take our big idea today in two parts. The first half goes like this: *When you bring Jesus to your home... We see this in verses 29-31: “**And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.**”*

1. The setting. Look at verse 29: “**And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.**” After the synagogue service everyone headed to Village Inn, only they didn't have one. It was common for this service to end at noon and then people would gather in homes for Sabbath lunch. The scene now moves from a public power encounter in the synagogue to a very private event in a home.

We know from John 1:44 that Simon and Andrew were originally from Bethsaida. It's likely that Peter had purchased this home in Capernaum because that's where they had moved their fishing business. Note that Peter still had a house and that he used his home for hospitality. He fully followed Christ and yet as a follower he was to care for his family and use His home for God's glory and to make Jesus famous.

Archaeological excavations have uncovered a home in Capernaum that is near the site where the synagogue stood. Beth and I have been to this house. Ancient writings have been discovered on the walls with the words “Lord” and “Christ” in Aramaic, Greek, Syriac and Latin. They've also found first century fish hooks and graffiti references to “Peter.” Tradition says that this house was only about 100 yards from the synagogue.

When Peter left everything to follow Christ that meant that he gave everything to Christ. Too often we categorize the spiritual and the secular. We put worship and prayer and Bible study into the spiritual pile and things like work and hobbies and relationships and family into the secular pile. Listen. When you repent and receive Christ, when you forsake all to follow Christ, it means that *everything* becomes spiritual – your family, your house, your possessions, your finances, your job, your hobbies, your relationships, your schoolwork, your activities, because everything matters to Jesus.

Peter’s priorities had changed when he met Jesus – the people in his life and all of his possessions now belonged to Jesus. He could still enjoy them, but he had transferred ownership of everything to Him. Have you made this same transfer?

2. The sickness. We’re told in verse 30 that Peter had a mother-in-law. That probably blows some of your minds because you’ve been taught that Peter was never married. That’s something the Catholic Church advocates and since they believe Peter was the first pope, they restrict popes and priests from marrying. 1 Corinthians 9:5 clearly states that Peter had a wife: ***“Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?”*** Cephas is the Aramaic name for Peter. We see this in John 1:42 when Jesus says, ***“You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).*** If you’d like to dive deeper into this, see Galatians 2:11 and 1 Corinthians 15:5.

It’s clear that Peter was married and that he cared for his mother-in-law: ***“Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever...”*** The idea in Greek is a bit stronger than that she was just lying down with a fever. The sense is that this fever had so affected her that she was thrown into a sickbed without any hope of ever getting better.

The phrase ***“lay ill,”*** means that she was flat on her back. The word ***“fever”*** refers to ***“a fire in the bones.”*** Because of the kinds of diseases that were prevalent in that marshy area around the Sea of Galilee at the time, it’s possible that she had malaria or typhoid fever. In the Gospel According to Luke, we read that she had a mega, or ***“great fever.”*** This is not surprising that Luke would give us this diagnosis since he was a physician. It was common back then to categorize fevers as “small” or “great” so this tells us that she was in a life-threatening situation. It’s important to know that in the ancient world “fever” was a disease itself, not just a

symptom. Plus, they had no Advil or Tylenol or cheese curds to comfort the one who was sick.

Are you aware that as part of our discipleship we're called to care for our families? This is clearly stated in 1 Timothy 5:8: ***“But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”***

“...and immediately they told him about her.” I love how they told the Lord about the problem. In essence, they were interceding on her behalf. They didn't know what else to do or who else to go to. A crisis does that, doesn't it? Even pagans will pray if the problem is big enough.

3. The Savior. We see what Jesus does in verse 31: ***“And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her...”***

- **He came.** Don't you love that Christ comes close to us in our time of need? Luke tells us that he came and ***“stood over her.”*** He didn't stay at a distance but came near. Our greatest need when we're hurting is to experience His presence. I love Psalm 34:18: ***“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and is attentive to their cry.”***
- **He touched.** Jesus could have snapped his fingers or just said a word but instead He took her by the hand. Jesus did the same with the blind man in Mark 8:23: ***“He took the blind man by the hand.”*** There's power in touch, isn't there? It was a big deal for Jesus to touch her because according to the Talmud (a Jewish commentary on the Old Testament), touching anyone with a fever would have rendered one unclean. But with Jesus, the touch did not defile the healer, but healed the defiled! When Jesus touches someone, everything changes!
- **He lifted.** I love that Jesus lifted her up. He came down so He could lift her up. She couldn't get up on her own. Listen to 1 Samuel 2:8: ***“He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap.”***
- **Fever left.** We have every indication that the fever left immediately, which was amazing in itself. It was common in that culture to use elaborate incantations that would take a long time and then they still wouldn't work. Some so-called faith healers on TV hawk holy handkerchiefs or urge listeners to send in \$1,000 seed money for a miracle. Not so with Jesus. Christ came, He took her by the hand, and then He lifted her up and the fever left.

This is a big deal because Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would have a healing ministry in Isaiah 35:5-6: ***“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”*** Matthew 8:17 tells us that Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons, ***“to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: ‘He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.’”*** This shows how caring and compassionate Christ is. He feels every fever. He carries every cancer. He bears our brokenness and He takes our transgressions.

4. The serving. The end of verse 31 implies that she served them immediately: ***“and she began to serve them.”*** Have you ever recovered quickly after a fever? It generally takes some recuperation time, doesn’t it? Your bones ache, you feel weak and all you want to do is sleep. Especially for us men. Have you heard about the “Man Flu”? It’s an illness that causes the male to be helpless and sicker than any other family member. I’m told that in females it’s called a cold.

But for Peter’s mother-in-law she was completely helpless and sicker than any other family member. And yet, there was no recovery time. She didn’t get better gradually. She was healed and went right into helper mode.

Anytime you encounter Jesus the natural response is to serve Him! This word for ***“serve”*** is the word we get ***“deacon”*** from. It literally means to “wait on tables” and was also used of the angels ministering to Jesus at the end of His terrible temptation in the wilderness in Mark 1:13. I love serving with our deacon servants [put up pic]. Along with the trustees, these leaders serve because the Savior has saved them.

Peter’s mother-in-law made her life immediately available to Jesus and His ministry. We have been saved to serve, healed to help and touched so that we touch others. By the way, the female followers of Jesus seemed to understand the necessity of serving more quickly than the guys got it. Mark 15:41 says that a number of women ***“followed him and ministered to Him.”*** Luke 8:2-3 tells us that many women provided for Jesus and his disciples out of their financial means.

When you bring Jesus to your home, your home will become headquarters for ministry.

Make Your Home Headquarters for Ministry

Let's look now at the second half of our main idea from verses 32-34: ***“That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 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.”***

The reason they waited until sundown was because they were prohibited from carrying anyone on the Sabbath, because that would have been considered work. Sabbath started at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. Actually, they had to wait until the first three stars were clearly visible in the sky.

I imagine it like a countdown clock before the start of a big event like the Cubs/Cards series. Everyone was eagerly awaiting the setting of the sun so they could bring battered people to Jesus. This makes me think of Malachi 4:2. When the sun sets ***“The sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings.”***

The people who came had all sorts of problems. Some were suffering from sickness and others were sabotaged by evil spirits. Some were diseased and others were demon possessed. Broken legs and broken hearts gathered outside the home. Some couldn't walk so they were carried. Verse 32 says they were ***“brought,”*** which means, *“to carry as a burden.”*

The people who came had ***“various diseases,”*** which means manifold, or a wide variety. Remember this: *Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.* The older I get the more convinced I am that everyone is suffering – emotionally, mentally, physically or spiritually...or all the above.

According to verse 28 the fame of Jesus' name spread throughout the region when Jesus cast out a demon and now that He has brought physical healing to Peter's mother-in-law, crowds line up to see Him. In verse 33 we read that the ***“whole city”*** was gathered at the door of the house. The tense of the verb suggests that the crowds continued to come. People knew that Jesus was not only at Peter's home but that He could help those who were hurting.

Can you imagine this scene as people pounded on Peter's door? I wonder what it would look like if people gathered on our front lawns because we brought Jesus home with us from the service today? Here's the deal: *When Christ shows up, the crowds will be curious.*

Verse 34 says that He **“healed many.”** What this means is that He doesn’t heal everyone in this life. In this world there will be woes and challenges and disease and cancer and fevers. And while we should pray for healing, we must realize that sometimes His will is to not heal.

Jesus silenced the demons because He didn’t want their testimony: **“And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him.”** It’s interesting that the demons wanted to declare who Jesus was but were not permitted to do so. Jesus wants us to speak about Him, but many of us walk around muzzled.

Before we assume that all these people were putting their faith in Jesus, it must be pointed out that many just wanted a miracle. They wanted relief from pain and affliction but weren’t ready to repent and receive salvation. While Jesus healed many who were sick and cast out demons, He came for a different purpose, as we will see next weekend. He extended mercy but He was also on mission. He was merciful and missional.

I love the progression here that corresponds with our 4Gs. We’re to *gather* with God’s people to worship and then bring Jesus home with us so that we *grow* in our faith. We then *give* to others by serving and finally we *go* with the gospel to our neighbors and to the nations.

Action Steps

Let’s allow this passage to percolate in our lives. Here are some action steps.

- 1. Don’t allow your in-laws to become out-laws.** Is there anything you need to do to reconcile this relationship?
- 2. Live out your faith wherever you are.** Are you helping your children learn about Jesus? Are you taking Jesus to your workplace? Have you invited Him into your hobbies, your sports, and other activities? Do you take him to your campus with you?
- 3. Ask the Healer to bring healing to you and others.** Sometimes Jesus heals miraculously. Other times he does it through doctors and medicine and surgeries. And sometimes we won’t receive healing until we’re in heaven. Let’s not be like

Asa, who neglected to ask for healing in 2 Chronicles 16:12: ***“Yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but sought help from physicians.”***

4. Find somewhere to serve. The question should never be *whether* you will serve. The real question is *where* and *when* will you serve? We have not been lifted up only to lie back down. You can help us achieve our mission by serving in the Nursery, Children’s Ministry, Student Ministry, Celebrate Recovery, going on the mission trip to Puerto Rico, Pregnancy Resources or World Relief or someplace else in the community. The possibilities are endless because the needs are unending. If you’re saved, settle this truth: *you’re a servant.*

5. Repurpose your home as headquarters for ministry. Practice hospitality. Reach out to your neighbors. What one event can you plan within the next three months to use your home as a place for people to learn about God’s grace? What about a fall bonfire or a Cookie Exchange in December?

6. Ask the Savior to save you. We all have a sickness called sin and Satan is out to destroy us. Our fever is fatal and there’s no way we can help ourselves. We’ve fallen and we can’t get up. Ask Jesus to come and He’ll come. And He’ll touch you and then lift you up. Repent and receive Him into your life and then follow Him wholeheartedly. He died in your place, taking your punishment, His blood paying the price for all your sins. And then He rose from the dead on the third day, showing His power over sin, sickness and Satan!

Closing Song: **“Healer”**

*You’re my healer
You’re all I need*

New Members

- Molly Rima (Saturday at 5:00)
- Robert Ingwerse (Saturday at 5:00)
- Angela Byrge (10:45 service)
- Jeff Brands (10:45 service)