

Grace mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Children can be fickle and easily distracted. It is a quality that never really changes in people. We can easily be caught up in other matters and lose sight of what is important and what needs to get done. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was on a mission to save mankind. From the beginning of time, God knew what he was going to do to save us, even though we have a hard time understanding this whole idea. God knew what he was to accomplish, he sent his Son, his only son Jesus Christ, to proclaim the coming of his kingdom, the goodness that is in him, a whole completeness that is finished with the death of his son. Jesus says in our lesson for this morning, "Let us go... so that I may preach, that is why I have come." Jesus does not get distracted like we do. He stays on course, he has a job to do.

We continue in the season of epiphany and we learn more about Jesus. We learn something hard to understand, that Jesus is both God and man. He is God in every sense of the word and he is man in every sense of the word. We see his humanity as he walks about his country, on his own feet as a simple man, teaching and caring for those around him. He sees the suffering countrymen and is moved to do something. We also see Jesus, the powerful one. He not only cares about his suffering countrymen. He does something about it. He heals those who are sick and casts away demons. Jesus shows he is man and he is God.

We have been in one chapter for a month. The first chapter of Mark is mainly one day of public ministry, and it is a Sabbath at that, a day of rest. And yet Jesus works for his sheep.

Last week, Jesus went to the Synagogue on the Sabbath, as was his custom. He teaches and follows his teaching with an exorcism. News about Jesus spreads.

And so, Jesus and his disciples leave the Synagogue and head for Peter's place. They go there for the same reasons you may go to grandma's place for a good Sunday dinner after church. They find Peter's mother-in-law is bed-ridden with a fever. Right away, Jesus is told about her and her affliction.

Jesus wastes no time. He takes her by the hand and stands her up. The fever is gone. And she begins to wait on them she serves them. I do not know how many of you may suffer from migraines, but they are a scourge in my family. My mom gets them her siblings get them, my brother gets them, and I'm finding my kids are starting to get them. They are painful and are debilitating. Despite the medications that are out there, the only sure fire way to be rid of them is to lay in bed with the curtains closed and to try and sleep them off. I can understand the in-law's condition in our lesson this morning. I can also understand how once she is rid of her fever, she starts waiting on them. The ailment is gone. The suffering is over. Work can begin. She is healed.

At the end of the day, the end of the Sabbath, many come to Jesus, sick and demon-possessed they come. They come to Peter's place and stand at the door. They are not turned away. Jesus heals them. He heals all manner of sickness and disease. He casts out the demons, and does not even allow them to speak, because, like the demon in the Synagogue, they know who he is, the Holy One of God. Jesus does not want nor need the testimony of demons. His children will learn about him by the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Here we see a broken creation. The sick and the demon possessed show how messed up creation is. It goes beyond the countless failures and mistakes that you and I have made. It goes beyond the pain and hurt we have caused. Creation is broken. Creation is broken down to the core. Nothing is perfect.

Jesus had healed many in the town of Capernaum. He rests, just like you and me after a hard day of work. Jesus gets some R&R. He is God, and he is man. He can sympathize with us and our weaknesses. And because of that, he makes a point to get up very early to spend some alone time with his Father. Our text, “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Jesus made time for prayer. He did not put it off. He found a good time, and even the God/man prayed to the Father. Even Jesus needed prayer, needed the quiet, needed set aside time to be with his Father. Let that be a lesson for you and me. Find a good time for devotion. And maybe first thing in the morning is best. Afterwards, once you get it done, its done, and what better way than to start off the day with prayer and devotion.

Peter and the disciples interrupt the teacher. They had set off to look for him and when they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you!” And the disciples actually went hunting for Jesus, they were looking eagerly for him, after all, everyone was looking for him. The disciples were greatly moved by what had happened. All of these people with sicknesses and diseases came to Jesus to find relief, and they did. These people were in a world of suffering and Jesus liberated them. Who could not have been affected by such a scene?

God responded to his broken creation. He sent Jesus. Jesus restores what is broken. He heals diseases in our lesson. He gives people a glimpse of what God wanted when the world was created. It was perfect, no sin, no death. And then Adam and Eve disobeyed God and all creation was then broken. The effects still continue. Jesus gave a glimpse of the ways things ought to be in bringing relief by healing. The disciples got caught up in the wonderful event they saw. They were distracted.

As wonderful and awesome as what Jesus did, it was not why he came. Jesus says in our lesson, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” Jesus did not just go to Capernaum to preach and teach, he came to us to preach. Earlier in Mark we read, “Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.”¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” That is Jesus message. He came to spread that message of relief.

Our sinful flesh says, “yeah.” Great. Good news. What is so wonderful about that? Jesus came and did miracles. Are not those things awesome? Well, yeah they are. But the greater miracle is that you and me are forgiven. We have God. Or rather, he has us.

We get caught up in the sin and suffering of our world. And it is really hard to not be. Our world is very broken. Terrible things happen and cannot help but catch our attention. God does something about it. God responds to our broken world. He sent Jesus. He died for you. He died for me.

God has triumphed over these terrible events in our lives. We do not know why he permits tragedy. But the tragedy and pain draw us to him. When we are at our

wits end, when it seems like we have had enough, when it seems like we cannot take it any more, we pray to God and ask for his strength. He gives it. Because we are not strong enough. We need God and he gives himself.

He tells you to come to him in his Word, come to him in the Holy Supper. Find comfort and strength and his spirit. He will lift you up and comfort. In Jesus Christ we find restoration. We are broken, very broken. In Jesus we are restored.

Now it does trouble us that God does not remove these things in our lives. Yet, he does give strength his strength to endure. Jesus heard what the disciples were saying and continued on with his mission, his journey to save mankind. That was what was important. That was what mattered. In his suffering Jesus made us right with God, and draws us to himself. He restores us. He makes us right. In the name of Jesus. Amen.