

February 8, 2015
Sermon for the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
St Peter Lutheran Church
Bowie, TX
Larry Knobloch, Pastor
Mark 1:29–39

J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus

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.

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen

I remember this Text and every time I have read it, I've wondered at one part of it.

Not the miracle of healing. I take that through faith wrought by the Holy Spirit. The driving out of demons? Nope, we talked about Jesus' authority last week over demons among other things such as the forgiveness of our sins.

But rather, of Simon's mother-in-law jumping up and serving them. It has always struck me as a little odd. Here was this lady, sick with fever.

When was the last time that you had a fever? Remember how weak it made you? When you got better, did you just wake up one morning, jump out of bed and start doing things? No. You got a little better, did a little more each day, began to build your strength up and finally, you made your way back to normal.

But not with Jesus. He reached down, grasped her hand and made her well, restored her strength and she was up and moving, serving Jesus and the others as a woman ought to do...

Oh, but wait, there is the rub. A feminist would jump on this and say that Jesus healed her so that she could wait on Him. So that she could get up and do her job. Why didn't Jesus make his own sandwich? Why didn't Peter?

I have to admit, I have been guilty in the past of softening this particular verse. I have been guilty of softening the Gospel because I thought it would look bad to someone else.

I never doubted Jesus' motives, His compassion behind the healing, I just worried about how I thought it looked that Peter's mother-in-law jumped up and began to serve them.

But as I began to think on this Text this week, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to my failings and it became so clear. Peter's mother-in-law could not help but serve Jesus. It was not a chore, but a privilege. A joy to serve her Savior!

He had healed her from her fever, yes, but so much more, He was her Messiah, her Savior!

So often, we take, take and take. God continues to love us, forgive us and provide for us. But when He awakens our hearts by His Holy Spirit our gratitude overflows in works of love and service in Jesus name.

The other day I had the opportunity to talk with a man who was working very hard to get back on his feet. He was not asking for much just some help to get to Denton for a job that was waiting for him and a little food for the night.

Now this might sound a little harsh, but so many people come by that are dishonest, I simply cannot just give everything out to everyone, that is why we participate in the Bowie Mission as they have more resources to see if the person really is in need. So I offer limited, but reasonable help and see how they react.

I have had some come in and demand specific things and question my compassion and even my faith because I do not give them exactly what they ask for.

This particular gentlemen, I offered some of the food that we had in the Fellowship Hall, which he only took a portion of because he only needed some for that night.

I told him what I could do to help, which was some gas money, meant that he would have to ask someone else for a little help also. I also told him that I would be praying for him to find what he needed.

He came back by about 30 minutes later, just beaming, he said that the Lord was already working and he had a ride who could get him there in time for his job. I met him and his ride the following morning at Allsups and said that I could go as high as \$30 in gas if that would be enough. His driver said that \$20 would be plenty. He almost seemed surprised at that. Why only take \$20 when you could have \$30.

This man witnessed two Christians serving, just as Peter's mother-in-law was serving. Not out of duty or coercion, but out of gratitude and love of their Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Does it make sense to the secular world? No. Let the government take care of him. Why should I be out any time or money? That's why I pay taxes.

Think about it...how many like paying taxes? We pay out of compulsion, we render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, but that does not mean we like to, we have to!

We give to church, we give to charity, we give to help someone else out our of response to what has already been given to us by God. Out 10% or whatever else we decide to give is never required for our salvation, our salvation comes by grace, but we respond to that grace by helping others.

Just as Peter's mother-in-law did. She went to work serving as soon as she could,. Not because she had to, but because she wanted to. She wanted to respond to the gifts of God...not only her healing, but I probably for her salvation too!

What will the man I helped last week do with the gifts that have been given him? I really don't know. I am the eternal optimist when the Holy Spirit is involved, I pray for him, as he asked me to do, I pray that this new job is a beginning to a new life for him, but ultimately, he may have learned nothing.

If the job falls through and he has further hard times he might give up on God.

If he is successful and things get much better, he might forget about how he got there and count his luck rather than his blessings in Christ.

Either way, does that change how we do things? Does that change our service to God?

We are His hands and feet in a sinful, unthankful world. If we only served and helped those that deserve it, we would be doing quite well, because no money would be spent and no food or any other gifts would be given out.

For that matter, would any of us be here today?

How many of you can raise your hand and say that you deserve the grace of God in Jesus Christ?

If you are thinking of raising your hand, just put it right back down. None of us here today deserve the forgiveness of God.

Not even little Emily who is with us today. That cute little face that enables her to wrap her father, and grandfather around her little finger, masked her sinful nature that she was born with.

But pastor, really? Yes. Really.

That is why her parents brought her to the waters of Holy Baptism.

That is why she needed the water joined with God's Word, for the forgiveness of sins. She received forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Praise be to God that this gift was bestowed on Emily...that this gift has been given to us too.

Emily is a child of God!

Emily is forgiven!

You are too!

With such great news, with such a great gift, how can it be kept to yourselves?

It can't.

"I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out." Luke 19:40 (ESV)

No matter where you started from, no matter what you may have done in the past, as you repent, ask for forgiveness in Jesus name, you can start again.

Move forward from today in the forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus.

And if you are forgiven, can you really be silent?

Don't let the stones out do you. Be the hands and feet of God.

Proclaim His name, forgive one another serve one another.

Not because you have to, but because you can in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria – To God alone be the glory

Sermon Outline

Serve On Another, Because You Can

Mark 1:29-39

1. Why do we serve Jesus?
2. Our gratitude overflows in service.
3. How can we respond to God's gifts?