

Theme: **Why the Miracle? – To Enable Service!**

Text: Mark 1: 29 – 39

Date: February 4, 2018

Season: 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you grow in your knowledge of God, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

During the Epiphany season, we strive to grow in our understanding of all that God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ. Last week we went back into the 1st chapter of Mark to learn about Jesus' actions at the beginning of His ministry and we asked the question, "Why the Miracles?" We looked at how Jesus calls His first disciple and how on that Sabbath He goes to the synagogue in the town of Capernaum and begins teaching the people with authority. Now the people are amazed at the teachings of Jesus and were beginning to grow in their understanding of God's love for them when a man with an evil spirit interrupts Jesus' teaching trying to convince the people watching and listening to Jesus that Jesus is here to destroy them. Jesus silences the man with the evil spirit and the people were even more amazed at what Jesus could do. The Evangelist Mark tells us, '**And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."**' [28] **And at once His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.'** (Mk 1:27-28)

Last week as we asked the question, "Why the Miracles?" We also asked, "Why didn't Jesus just destroy the man with the evil spirit instead of healing him with a miracle of casting the evil spirit out of him? We were reminded from the Gospel of John that, "**God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.**" (John 3:17) The people in the synagogue of Capernaum had heard God's Word taught to them by Jesus and were amazed and share their new found understanding of God's love for them with others so that they too could come to a better understand of God's love for them. With the work of the Holy Spirit in them they could come to faith in Jesus Christ as their lord and savior, which is the greatest healing miracle of all. The whole reason for the miracle was to get the Good News of God's great love for us out to

all the people and by that miracle Jesus also stopped the lies of the devil and proclaimed God's love and power in our lives.

Today we want to continue our study of the first chapter of Mark and the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The evangelist Mark goes on to tell us what else happened on that Sabbath day as he reports, "**And immediately Jesus 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.**" (Mk 1:29 – 31)

Why did Jesus do this miracle? Oh, it could quite possibly be that after seeing Jesus heal the man with the evil spirit that Simon Peter quickly took Jesus to his home, where he knew his mother in law was horribly ill with a fever. Yet the miracle is not just that Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother-in-law of her fever, but that she began to serve them. She was completely healed and now she served not because she was a woman and certainly not because it was her house, for it was Simon Peter's and Andrew's house. The disciples had heard Jesus' teaching of God's Word and they had seen the authority that He had over the evil of this world, so why did Jesus do this healing of Simon Peter's mother in-law, since the word about Jesus was already being spread to the whole region of Galilee?

Could it be that Jesus did this miracle to show His disciples and us what we all should expect to happen in our lives as the Holy Spirit heals us? Think about the last time that you had a high fever for a day or more. Did you feel like getting up and working as soon as the fever left you? I don't know how your body works, but when I have a fever, even a low-grade fever and it leaves me I still don't have any energy to do anything but sit around and recover. So where did the energy to serve them come from? It is the response to God's love and His healing power in our lives. Her actions were more than servant hood or role playing; they were an act of love, the response of thankfulness for the love of God given to her. That's what happens in our lives when we let the love of God heal our lives; we have a new energy to serve others, not because they have done something for us but because God's love is working in our lives.

The Evangelist Mark goes on to tell us, "**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.” (Mk 1: 32-34)

Why did Jesus do all these miracles for the town’s people? Because the town’s people were responding to the love of God given to them as they witnessed Jesus’ authority over God’s Word and the deeds that He could do. They had come to know the difference that Jesus could make in their lives and they when and shared that Good News with others who were sick and demon-possessed. Jesus healed them all, but did not let the demons speak because He wanted the truth to be proclaimed and not the lies of the devil.

How do you respond to the love of God that is given to you as you come and receive all of God’s blessings each Sunday in worship? How do you respond to the washing away of all our sins in our Baptism? How do you respond to the absolution that all your sins are forgiven as you come before the Lord with a repentant heart and mind? How do you respond as all the demons are cast out of your body as you hear the Word of God and grow in your understanding of God’s love for you? How do you respond to receiving the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for the assurance of your forgiveness and the strengthens your faith in our savior? As we let the Holy Spirit go to work in our lives we to are moved to serve others on the job, no matter what we do; we to are moved to be in service to other at home, in school and in our neighborhood; we look for ways of being of service to our fellow believer in our congregation and around the world. We can’t help it, because the love of God just comes bubbling out of us in all that we have been called to do. The Apostle Paul in our Epistle lesson for today says it this way, **“I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”** (1 Cor.9:23) We do it because Jesus, God’s own Son, has revealed Himself to us and we have been healed from the deadly sins that we have committed and are given a new life in Him. This is the healing that we need to pass on, this is the miracle that we are driven to share with others so that they too can share in the blessings of this new life now and for all eternity.

The Evangelist Mark goes on to tell us, **“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 Jesus 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." (Mk 1:25-39)

Why didn't Jesus just stay there and continue to do these incredible miracles for the people of Capernaum? Because Jesus was sent into this world not to just save a few from illnesses that are temporal, but to save all the world from the greatest illness of all, our eternal damnation. Jesus came into this world to help us with the illness of sin and to conquer it for us by His Life, death and resurrection. This is God's greatest miracle of all and we have become a witness to the Epiphany of our Lord and Savior. God has revealed Himself to us through the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. He has healed us, called us and made us His own so that we can share His love given to us with other by our words and our service to them. We are His friends and as His friends and disciples we serve others as our response to His great love for us. This is God's love working in our lives and our response is to proclaim His love for all and that needs to be proclaimed to all now. Amen.