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Sermon Notes

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The Healing Ministry of Christ Begins in Earnest

Mark 1:29-39

We live in a world groaning in the pain and agony of physical disease. The worldwide ravages of disease are devastating... the way that diseases destroy the body, change the pallor of the skin, make people look gaunt or like living skeletons is simply devastating to see.

God hears the cry of the afflicted... who cry out from their beds of pain and suffering, begging God for relief. "How long, O Lord, how long must I lie in this bed and suffer?" Some of you, I know, are dealing with chronic pain, day after day, with little to no relief. Others are in the midst of a serious battle with disease, undergoing heavy treatments and procedures in the hope of healing by the skills and insights of the medical community. More than that, however, you are crying out to God directly for help. My desire is that this sermon will feed your faith!

But your suffering is just a fraction of the overall worldwide groaning of a world swimming in a sea of disease and pain and death.

When Adam sinned, he led the entire human race into the death penalty God had imposed. God had warned Adam, "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day you eat of it, you will surely die." From the moment Adam ate, he died spiritually; and he began to die physically, though it would not be for nine centuries. The Bible also

teaches that in Adam all of his descendants sinned and died as well

Disease is one of the main executioners of the human race; the mortality of the human body was exposed as part of Adam's death penalty... so even down to the cellular level, our bodies are dying. God in his judgment on our human race allowed or fashioned various diseases to torment and to kill people all over the world.

Medical science constantly records the nature, symptoms, and effects of a staggering number of different diseases. In 2016, a study published by the University of Michigan Medical School asserted that there are roughly 10,000 diseases afflicting human beings with only about 500 cures and treatments. Among the top ten diseases causing the most deaths worldwide are 1) coronary artery disease, responsible for almost 9 million deaths; 2) stroke, which killed 6.2 million in one year; 3) lower respiratory infections (the flu, pneumonia, bronchitis, tuberculosis)... 3.2 million; 4) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), 3.1 million; 5) respiratory cancers, 1.7 million; 6) Diabetes, 1.6 million.

Since COVID-19 ran amok worldwide, people have been daily aware of the devastating effects of diseases... as the consciousness of the whole world has in some degree been held in its iron grip since the first quarter of 2020.

And there is no ultimate remedy for all these diseases, suffering and death that can come from the brilliance of human intellect, from the laboratories of pharmaceutical companies, from the blinding insights of physicians and microbiologists and epidemiologists. Certainly, individual diseases can and have been eradicated, like smallpox. But old ones still hang over us all like the sword of Damocles, twisting, suspended by a thread, ready to fall at any moment.

But for a brief period in human history, in a very small location, there was one man who could cure literally any disease or sickness

he faced... whose healing ministry was so perfect as to be breathtaking... Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, who entered the world to give us life and give it to us abundantly and eternally. For a brief, perhaps three-year span, Jesus effectively banished disease and sickness from Palestine. Huge crowds thronged around him and the New Testament tells us "He healed them all."

Matthew 4:24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Matthew 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

Mark 6:56 And wherever he went-- into villages, towns or countryside-- they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

There had never been a healing ministry like Jesus' before him, nor has there been anything to that same degree since... though Jesus entrusted some of his healing power to his apostles, it was nowhere near the staggering scope and dimensions of his own. And the annals of church history do not record any such healing ministry since the end of the age of the apostles... though certainly individual healings have come in answer to prayer, and some prayer warriors may have seen such healings a few times, no one has had huge crowds thronging around them of sick people, all of whom walked home healed.

Jesus alone.

Jesus alone.

And it was in direct fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy:

Matthew 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Today, we are going to look at the beginning of Jesus' healing ministry, and draw out some lessons from it. These themes will be repeated many times in our study through the Gospel of Mark, so get ready to hear it many times. But it had to begin somewhere, and it started, I believe, in the home of Simon Peter, with one woman.

I. The Beginning of Jesus' Healing Ministry

Mark 1:29-31 *As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.*

A. Jesus' First Miracle

1. The Apostle John tells us Jesus' first miracle was at the wedding at Cana in Galilee, when he changed the water into wine
2. That means before that time, during his childhood, or teen years, or even into his twenties, Jesus never did any miracle... only when it was time for him to be revealed to Israel at about the age of 30
3. His miracle-working career had to start somewhere... and it started with a banquet, and wine

John 2:11 *This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.*

4. But the healings, it seemed, waited for this occasion; they would make up the overwhelming bulk of his miracles

B. The Context: Leaving the Synagogue of Capernaum After Sabbath Worship

1. We studied this last week
2. Jesus had taught in the synagogue, speaking words with such authority that everyone who heard him was amazed

3. Then a demon-possessed man cried out, and Jesus drove that demon out with power and authority

Mark 1:25-26 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!"²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

4. The people's reaction was overwhelmed:

Mark 1:27-28 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching-- and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him."²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Now, the sabbath worship at the synagogue was over... generally it would end at around noon

C. Simon and Andrew's House

Mark 1:29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.

1. Simon, who we best know as Peter, lived with his brother Andrew and his family in a house there in Capernaum
2. They were successful fishermen, prosperous enough to own a house like this
3. Archaeologists believe they have found a house that may well have been Peter's house
4. One commentator described it

"The house... [has] doors and windows that open to an interior courtyard rather than outward to the street. The court, accessed by a gateway from the street, was the center of the lives of the dwellings around it, containing hearths, millstones for grain, hand-presses, and stairways to the roofs of dwellings. The dwellings were constructed of heavy walls of black basalt over which a flat roof of wood and thatch was placed." [Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 59]

5. After the amazing events in the synagogue in Capernaum, Peter, Andrew, James, John and others connected with the family would have been talking with great excitement as they made their way to Simon and Andrew's house
6. Presumably, Simon and Andrew had invited Jesus to join them for a Sabbath noontime meal
7. BUT a cloud hung over the family

D. Simon's Mother-in-Law and Her Fever

Mark 1:30 Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her.

1. This verse obviously proves that Peter was married... there is no way to have a mother-in-law without a wife
 - a. Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Peter took his wife along with him on some of his apostolic preaching missions
 - b. Peter being married is significant for the history of the church, for the Roman Catholic church teaches both that Peter was the first Pope, and that priests should be celibate... long history of vows of celibacy among priests
2. But at this time, the deep concern was for her health... she had a very high fever; Luke 4:38 says she was burning up with a great fever—this was a very serious disease, for there was not much that their rudimentary medical knowledge could do
3. Her life was threatened by this sickness...
4. "They told Jesus about her"... "What a friend we have in Jesus... Take it to the Lord in prayer!"

E. The Healing

Mark 1:31 So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

1. Jesus lived the life of a servant... we will see again and again how any need that is ever brought to him, he moves out to meet it

2. We will also see how often Jesus used physical touch... more on this in a moment
3. The fever left her immediately, and she was immediately strengthened... no need for convalescence, no need to recover her strength, no chicken soup and two days' rest; she felt strength and energy in her body and was ready to serve the guests that were there for the afternoon meal
4. What is a fever? What causes the body to raise its temperature? Medical science can explain those things... fever is the body's response to a bacterial or viral infection, and it mobilizes the body's immune system to kill the infectious agents—the bacteria or the virus. The body can handle the higher temperature better than the infectious agents can. The hypothalamus, which sits at the base of the brain regulates body temperature. It is triggered to raise body temperature when the immune system identifies a pathogen—the cause of some infection within the body. The immune system sends a signal to the hypothalamus by things called pyrogens in the blood stream. When the hypothalamus registers these pyrogens, it raises the body's temperature, and you get a fever.
5. So... what did Jesus do when he took her by the hand?? No medical explanation other than a miracle. Whatever infectious agent was causing trouble in the body may have been instantly destroyed by the will of God. The pyrogens instantly removed from the blood stream. The hypothalamus instantly reset to normal... the fever abated instantly, like the stilling of the storm... it quieted down quickly. Her forehead got cool. Her clothes were still wet from her fever sweat just like the water that was still in the boat after the stilling of the storm. BUT... she felt strength in her body, and stood up.
6. Medical science is developing more and more cures at the molecular level, using things called *biomarkers*... but no matter how advanced medical science gets, the Creator and Sustainer of all life will always know more... Christ is already there at the end of that long road of research. Instantly his power and knowledge get down to the molecular level and produce the cure

7. At any rate, she is cured, and stands up to serve.

F. A River of Healings Starts

Mark 1:32-34 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

1. The sabbath began at sunset the night before, and it ended at sundown that evening
2. This Jewish community was waiting breathlessly for the sun to go down so they could flood to Peter's home and get the healing they all so desperately wanted
3. This began the river of miracles that would characterize his ministry until his arrest and death on the cross
4. Jesus went out to the doorway... perhaps a gateway into which one could go to the central courtyard of Peter's house
5. Jesus began addressing them one at a time, if we understand his usual pattern
6. They brought demon-possessed people especially... showing that demon-possession was very common; and not every case was the same; some demon-possessed people were uncontrollable... others could be led to a place
7. Jesus drove out the demons—a powerful, forceful action, like a military blow in the spiritual dimension... the advance of the Kingdom of Light against the kingdom of darkness
8. Jesus also forbade the demons from speaking
9. As we saw last week, the demons do have theological knowledge and are able to speak accurately about Jesus. THE TEXT SAYS SO... ***“They knew who he was!”*** But Jesus forbade them from saying anything about him... his messengers would be his own people, not demons

II. Elements of Jesus' Healing Ministry

A. How the Healings Could Be Described

1. Successful: Jesus' never failed; every case was addressed successfully, he never lost a patient
2. Universal: there was no disease or sickness he could not heal; he was no specialist, but addressed every possible disease and sickness that was brought to him; especially organic, deep, chronic conditions were easily healed by Jesus
3. Effortless: there was no struggle, nothing Jesus found difficult
4. Instantaneous: there was no process, no convalescence period, no gradual strengthening needed
5. Personal: Jesus often preferred to touch people; he tended to seek out a relationship, one on one, to look someone in the eye; though Jesus could have healed a group all at once, there are no records of group healings, but many accounts of individual encounters
6. Free: Jesus charged nothing for his miracles;

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Note: Americans spend an average of \$12,500 per person annually on medical... about \$4.1 trillion!!

Nothing new! The woman with the bleeding problem:

Mark 5:26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.

7. Varied: Jesus used a lot of different approaches... it wasn't always the same; like healing the blind, sometimes by making mud, sometimes by touch, sometimes just by word

B. What the Healings Signified (Signs)

1. Signified spiritual healing

The real healing needed was the souls of people from the disease of sin; the physical healings were signs and pictures of the true spiritual healing he desired to do...

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2. Signified human weakness and inability

Jesus' patients could not heal themselves; their diseases and injuries were pictures of total human weakness... and of Jesus' power in the midst of human weakness – the basic lesson is YOU NEED A SAVIOR

3. Signified a coming world without disease

Revelation 21:4 There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away

Revelation 22:2-3 On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse.

None of the healings was a permanent end to all suffering and pain for that person. All of Jesus' patients eventually died... almost certainly all of them suffered other diseases or injuries along the way. But his comprehensive, powerful healing ministry PICTURED a world in which disease would be NO MORE

C. What the Healings Proved About Jesus

1. His compassion... the number one emotion ascribed to Jesus
2. His power... there was nothing he could not do
3. Ultimately... His identity as the Son of God

D. The Link Between Healing and Faith

1. Frequently, Jesus linked healing with faith

2. BUT... not always! Many healed people were unbelievers
3. Real issue: the miracles were the basis of saving faith

John 14:11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves

John 20:31 these [miraculous signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name

III. Prayer Fueled Jesus' Healing Ministry

Mark 1:35 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.

- A. This is one of the most striking glimpses into Jesus' private spiritual life
- B. Here we see Jesus' absolute reliance on prayer, on time with the Father, to guide him and give him power
- C. Jesus as Role Model
 1. Our prayer lives are generally weak... our patterns of daily devotions are weak
 2. We know we need time alone with God... that we need a regular quiet time with the Lord; but we are weak... we sleep too late, we mismanage our time so we have to scurry off to work and the Lord gets the short end of the stick time after time
 3. Jesus certainly came to be our atoning sacrifice... to shed his blood for our sins
 4. But he also came to be our EXAMPLE...

1 Peter 2:21 [Christ] has left you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

D. Details

1. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark..."

- a. Morning is the best time for a quiet time
 - b. It is “an ounce of prevention that is better than a pound of cure”
 - c. The day hasn’t happened yet... we can affect the way we live by how we start the day
 - d. It is a sacrifice! But worth it
 - e. Also, very early in the morning means before the world can get up and get cranking and start demanding our attention
 - f. Mothers of little ones are free from their cried and incessant needs
 - g. Professional people are free from the smartphone’s incessant demands for your attention
 - h. The rattle and hum and noisy din of the day isn’t running yet
 - i. Your mind can be free and quiet and focused on God
2. “He got up”
- a. Jesus was human, just like us
 - b. The Sabbath day before that had been overwhelming and exhausting... needs all day long
 - c. Jesus was very tired at the end of that day; often in the gospels we see Jesus very physically tired... he slept in the boat during the storm
 - d. But in this case, he knew the best way to begin the day was to deny himself sleep and get up
3. “and went to a solitary place”
- a. No one has ever loved people as much as Jesus Christ
 - b. But there is a deep spiritual refreshment that comes only through prayer and intimacy with God, and people can be a distraction

- c. Certainly there is a pattern of praying that we do all day long: “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17)
 - d. But there is a deeper level of intimacy with God that can only come early in the morning, apart from all other people
 - e. Combined with it being early in the morning, Jesus wanted to be alone with God, away from all other people—they would have been a distraction
 - f. Also, like Elijah on Mt. Horeb, God often speaks to us in a “still small voice”... how can we hear in the hubbub of human interactions?
4. He prayed
- a. He spoke to his Father and heard his Father speak back
 - b. He laid before the Father his day and his Father prepared him for it

E. Love Relationship with the Father

Mark 1:11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

John 8:29 he one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.

F. Apart from the Father, Jesus Did Nothing

- 1. Marching orders for the day
- 2. Good works planned out ahead of time

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- 3. This explains how Jesus could be both powerfully effective and constantly interruptible
- 4. God the Father told his beloved Son everything that was to happen that day

John 5:19 "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

John 8:28 I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

John 12:49-50 I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.

G. Apart from the Spirit, Jesus Did Nothing

Acts 10:38 God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Luke 4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert...

Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit

The quiet time was a chance for Jesus to be again empowered by the Holy Spirit for his ministry that day

What about us?? If sinless Jesus needed a good quiet time every day with the Father, how much more do we? Are you daily meeting with the Lord in prayer and bible reading??

IV. The Priority of Preaching in Jesus' Healing Ministry

A. Peter and His Companions

Mark 1:36-37 Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

B. The Hidden Request

1. What they really wanted was for Jesus to resume his healing ministry there in Capernaum

2. They wanted him like a resident chaplain and town doctor to care for all the diseases and injuries that would come up
3. Like the feeding of the 5000... the next day, people wanted Jesus to feed them again, and again, and again... day after day
4. But Jesus did not primarily come into the world to alleviate all our physical miseries
5. At the root of all our diseases and sorrows is our SIN problem... our rebellion against God
6. Jesus came for that

C. The True Need: Preaching the Word

Mark 1:38-39 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else-- to the nearby villages-- so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

All of the healings were temporary... the transforming power of the Word of God brings eternal life

And Jesus could not and would not stay just in one locality... the word was meant for the ends of the earth

Isaiah 49:6 It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

V. Applications for Us from Jesus' Healing Ministry

- A. The Foundation of Prayer: How is your devotional life? How is your prayer life?
- B. Three Core Elements of Jesus' Ministry: Healings, Prayer, Preaching
- C. The Priority of the Ministry of the Word
- D. The Identity of Jesus... His Deity

John 20:31 these [miraculous signs] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name

E. Jesus Can Still Heal... We Should Ask Him for It!

F. BUT the Final Enemy is Death... realize ***“In this world you will have trouble”***

G. Be Filled with Hope Concerning the Heavenly World to Come... free from all sickness and death!