

February 7, 2021

Mark 1:29-39

“Jesus Took Our Illnesses and Bore Our Diseases!”

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
2155 North Oakland Ave.
Decatur, Illinois 62526

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Our Gospel lesson for this morning is from Mark. We read (Mark 1:29-30): “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.”

In an article written on January 27, 2021 the *Biblical Archaeology Society* Staff writes:

Italian excavators working in Capernaum may have actually uncovered the remnants of the humble house of Peter that Jesus called home while in Capernaum ... Buried beneath the remains of an octagonal Byzantine martyrion church, excavators found the ruins of a rather mundane dwelling dating to the first century B.C. ... Although slightly larger than most, the house was simple, with coarse walls and a roof of earth and straw. Like most early Roman-period houses, it consisted of a few small rooms clustered around two open courtyards.

Imagine that! Most likely, the very house of Simon Peter and his family has been discovered, the very place that Jesus called home. The fact that the octagonal church was built over the Roman-period house makes it as certain as you can possibly get. That is really amazing! But it isn’t even close to the amazing thing that happened in that house. What happened in that house is more exciting than discovering the house itself. Jesus healed Simon Peter’s mother-in-law! Even more! Our lesson goes on to say: “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.”

There is something incredible about our gospel lesson that is easy to miss so you are going to have to pay close attention. We are told that the healing of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law took place after leaving the synagogue. After this, the sick and those oppressed by demons were brought to him that evening at sundown. The Sabbath ends at sundown. Peter’s mother-in-law is healed on the Sabbath and the others are healed after the Sabbath. Now, if you do not understand what the Sabbath points to then the incredible point that is being made here in our text will be missed. So, we need to say a few words about the Sabbath.

The Sabbath day is a Saturday. That is when the Jews worshiped God. Why? When God finished making the heavens and the earth, we are told in Genesis 2:1-3, “on the seventh day [Saturday] God finished his work ... and he rested ... So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy.” God could have made everything at once. Instead, he placed himself under the 7 days that he would place all humanity. We are told in Genesis 2:15 and 18 that “the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it” and that he made “a helper [a woman] for the man.” By placing them under a 6 day week and a day of rest, and telling them about the tree of life, of which they were to eventually eat of its fruit, he was teaching them about their own work and rest in God. The goal was for God to eventually meet them beyond the working and keeping of creation. They lost this when they ate from what was forbidden.

Instead of the promised rest and meeting with God beyond the creation, humanity is now restless and experiences deathly fevers, sicknesses and diseases, and the oppression of demons in many forms of which we do not entirely perceive. Nevertheless, God has promised rest from these things in the incarnation, life, sufferings and death of his one and only Son Jesus. Rest! for all who believe in him and the fountain of rest that springs from the forgiveness of sins. As it says in Hebrews 4:9-10, "So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his." Jesus is our Sabbath rest (Col. 2:16-17)! In his death and resurrection, which is the death of our sin and our spiritual and bodily resurrection, we look forward to seeing Jesus as he is and being like him, as a woman is like a man but quite different, yet for each other.

With that perspective in mind, when Jesus is healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law on the Sabbath and then the other people after the Sabbath in the evening we begin to realize that two things are happening here. Jesus has taken to himself our illnesses and has born our diseases and has freed us from the devils. The fact that he does this on the Sabbath and in the evening after the Sabbath is pointing us to the truth that this is a foretaste of what is for all of us at the end of time. As it says in Psalm 103, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Think of it for a moment. It is far better than the real thrill of possibly seeing the place where Jesus did these things. The testimony is a guarantee that these things we are hearing in the divine record of Scripture will one day be done for all of his people who believe in him. It will be done for us. Whatever sicknesses and pains you meet, though oppressed by ills that cannot be fully seen or understood, whatever restlessness dwells without or within since none of us are yet wholly free from sin, Christ is here by faith. He is our day of rest. And as we find ourselves in the day as well as at sundown, the forever day is about to break. In faith, our Savior is already dispelling our woes as we with great anticipation look to the day when all of our ills will be no more. He is here in Word and sacrament, and our prayer to Jesus is like the verse of an old hymn that you can only find in the red Lutheran Hymnal from 1941 (#557):

Thy touch has still its ancient power,
No word from Thee can fruitless fall;
Hear in this solemn hour
And in thy mercy heal us all.

And he will do what we ask, for we have the promise in our gospel lesson. What we see in the record of Mark is a guarantee of that which is to come. The Sabbath day is considered to be fulfilled so that we worship in the new day of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We worship on Sunday for it is the day after the seven and our movement into a forever day where we will be with the Lord. It is the eighth day of the week and the beginning of a new thing. It is no wonder then why the church that was built on top of Peter's house had eight sides. That number is the symbol of the new heaven and the new earth. It is the symbol of the end of every wilting and destroying fever, every illness, every disease, and the end of the devils and oppression. All because **Jesus Took Our Illnesses and Bore All Our Diseases!**

This is what we are told in Matthew 8:17. It is really staggering to consider that. It is as staggering as it is to make the observation that Jesus took unto himself the sins of the world and the hell of everyone who has ever been or ever will be. No matter how hard we try, we just can't wrap our minds around it. Still we are bid to consider that incredible truth. Whatever illness or disease you have had or will have, however the devils have oppressed you or will oppress you in the future, no matter how great and grievous your sins have been or will be, Jesus experienced it all including your death and hell on the cross in order that every bit of it my one day be taken away. This is the blessing of all those who believe that **Jesus Took Our Illnesses and Bore All Our Diseases!**

Jesus understands what we are going through because he has carried us and all that goes with us when he lived on the earth, and suffered and died on the cross. He understands it all and that is a great comfort! But if he understands it all, then why doesn't he just take it all away now? Well, it can't be that way. He must work with us in such a way that we must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom. Without such hardships we will not make it and our witness to others will cease.

No doubt many Christians before us have asked for all of it to end, but if it had ended when they asked, then we wouldn't be here now in the joy of existing with the great anticipation of being with our Good Creator forever. Let us then be glad to go through the sufferings that lead to glory. At least we know that while we must go through death we will not taste death and we will certainly never know the pain of eternal punishment. At least we know that there will come a day when all that haunts us now will no longer come to mind, as it says in Isaiah 65:17. For now, it will have to be enough for us to know and believe that **Jesus Took Our Illnesses and Bore All Our Diseases.** It will have to be enough to know and believe that his touch still has its ancient power and in his mercy he will one day heal us.

Amen.

Pastor Brock Abbott

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-sites/the-house-of-peter-the-home-of-jesus-in-capernaum/>

Based on "Issue 200: Ten Top Discoveries." Biblical Archaeology Review, Jul/Aug Sep/Oct 2009, 74-96.