

The Healer

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. My name is Matthew Capone, and I'm the pastor here at Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian Church, and it's my joy to bring God's Word to you today. A special welcome if you're new or visiting with us. We're glad that you're here, and we're glad that you're here not because we're trying to fill seats, but because we're following Jesus together as one community.

And as we follow Jesus together, we become convinced that there's no one so good they don't need God's grace, and no one so bad they can't have it, which is why we come back week after week to hear what God has to say in His Word, because we believe that God has something to say to everyone. We're continuing our series in the Gospel of Mark. You'll remember that the Gospels tell the story of Jesus and His life and His death and His resurrection, and you'll also remember that when we talk about Jesus, we are not talking about an idea or a theory or an abstraction or a mythological figure, but we're talking about a real man who came to this earth in real time and real space. He was born in Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem. He grew up in Nazareth, 64 to 65 miles north of Jerusalem. He had four brothers. He had at least two sisters. He worked jobs because he needed to make money to feed himself. When he didn't work jobs, other people supported him. Jesus was a real person. He walked in this world. Jesus was hungry, like you might get hungry. Jesus needed to drink water. All of those things are true as we come. To talk about Jesus in this morning, we are going to come to an important portion in the Gospel of Luke because we are going to see Jesus' first healing. And healings are important, but firsts are also important. There's something significant about this being the one that Mark chooses to tell us about first. And so as we come to this, I'm going to ask what is a harsh question. Jesus heals someone in this passage. Who cares? Why should it matter to us here in 2021?

Jesus is not here with us physically. We can't visit him right now to have him heal us. Man, it's really great that that happened to the people in this story. Jesus' earthly ministry is over. He is now seated at the right hand of God the Father in the heavenly places. Why then for us, how for us, is this anything more than a nice story? That's my harsh question for us this morning. And with that, we're going to jump right in. We're in the Gospel of Mark chapter 1. We're starting at verse 29. And I invite you to turn there with me. You can turn in your worship guide. You can turn in your Bible. You can turn on your phone. Remember, no matter where you turn, that this is God's Word. God tells us that His Word is more precious than gold, even the finest gold. And it is sweeter than honey, even honey that comes straight from the honeycomb. And so that's why we read now, starting at verse 29.

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.

Verse 32. I invite you to pray with me as we come to this portion of God's Word. Our Father in Heaven, we thank you. We ask that we would never take for granted that you do speak to us clearly in your Word, that you haven't left us to piece things together, but instead, like a good and wise Father, you instruct us and you help us. We ask that simply you would do that this morning, that you would instruct us and that you would help us, that you would show us our need for your grace, and you would show us how you meet us at that very same point of need. We thank you that you do this, not because we're good or great, but because Jesus is. And so we ask these things in his name. Amen.

[4:15] During my time as a pastor, my very short time, and also just in my own family, I've learned, perhaps the hard way, that any time you have a major medical issue, you'll find yourself with a full-time job. And that full-time job is the job of interacting with doctors and with insurance companies. And even if you don't have that battle, there's probably going to be all other sorts of battles, right? There's an agony. There's this agony of finding solutions to things when you have a health problem. Maybe you're hunting. You're trying to find the right diagnosis, right? Maybe you have found the right diagnosis, but it's chronic. It's permanent. You know this is something that you're going to have to face for the rest of your life. Maybe you find the right diagnosis. The problem is you can't find the right doctor. Maybe you find the right doctor, and the problem is he doesn't have an opening for another six months. And that's the only person, the best person, who can help you.

There is a powerlessness that comes at times. There's a despair that comes at times with being a person in this world who has a body. Okay, that's the reality of life in this world. There is an anger, a despair, a helplessness that comes with these things. Now, don't hear what I'm not saying. I'm a huge fan of modern medicine. I'm so glad God has given us doctors, right? I'm so glad he's given us dentists.

Praise God. And even in 2021, we have not escaped our humanity, right? We have not escaped the ravages of evil on our bodies. And so we know how challenging it is. Now, there's some things that are different for us about the people in this passage, right? If it's challenging for us, imagine how much more challenging it was for people in Jesus' time, right? We face difficulty. Think about how much more difficult it was for them, okay? They didn't have the same medical care that we do, so in some ways, it was very different. In other ways, it is pretty much the same deal, right? And what I mean by that is we too would still welcome someone who's able to heal with a touch. We in this room would still be excited about someone who's able to get rid of our medical problems just by touching us. Even all the advances we have seen in 2,000 years doesn't prevent us from that, right? We are still human. We still live with the problems of this world. And so we understand what's happening here in this passage.

In verse 29, it tells us we are on the same day that Jesus cast out this demon. It tells us he left the synagogue immediately. He enters the house of Simon and Andrew. You'll remember from last week, he's in Capernaum. That's his base of operations. Simon and Andrew have a house there, and we can guess or assume this house is probably Jesus' base of operations within his base of operations. This is most likely where Jesus is staying and is operating out of. And so he's coming back from the synagogue.

Probably Jesus is coming back for lunch, right? What do you want to do after church, especially after you've preached? Jesus probably wants to eat. He's probably hungry. He just cast out a demon. I mean, can you imagine how many calories you burn when you cast out a demon? It's probably a lot. I've never done it. I've never counted it. But my guess is the number is up there. So Jesus is coming back.

[7 : 36] In fact, it's lunchtime. What does he find? Well, verse 30, Simon's mother-in-law is sick with a fever. Now for us with modern medicine, we might think this isn't such a big deal, but we happen to have a lot of ancient literature that tells us about what it was like to have a fever in the ancient world and what people thought about it. And we know two things. First, for many people, the perception was that a fever was pretty close to being given a death sentence.

Not always, but often enough that it was very feared. In fact, people would use fevers as something they would try to curse someone with to get back at them. So we know that, first of all, fever is very serious. He comes back to the house. There's most likely an emergency here. We also know not just that it's very serious, but that body posture matters. So in verses 30 and 31, we see that this woman is laying ill with a fever. Jesus has to lift her.

The understanding would be that if someone were lying down with a fever, it was at an advanced stage. Things were bad. Their odds of coming back to life, of recovering, are very low. So Jesus comes back here from performing a great wonder. He comes back from casting out a demon. Here, there is someone who is potentially about to die. So the question is this, what is Jesus going to do? We have seen his power in casting out this demon. Does he also have the power to heal? How extensive is his authority?

Remember, last week was all about authority. The question was, who is this? Even the demons obey him. And this is a very short passage here, so the question is answered very quickly. Verse 30, they tell Jesus what the problem is. Jesus enters the room. Verse 31, he comes. He takes her by the hand.

We're wondering what's going to happen as he lifts her. There's the climax of the story here, and then quickly the resolution. She is able to stand up. The fever leaves her, and she begins to serve them.

[9 : 33] Very simple, right? Jesus faces this problem. The question is, does he have the power? The answer is yes, he does. Remember, our two questions for the Gospel of Mark are, who is Jesus, and how do we respond to him?

In this, we begin again to see who Jesus is. He is the king, remember, who has come to restore his kingdom in every way. And so, of course, he's going to be performing miracles. He's going to be healing people because sickness is one of the ways that sin has twisted and distorted this world. So, Jesus' ministry, his ministry of healing the sick and casting out demons, they are separate but related. Demons and sickness are not the same thing. This woman is not possessed. But Jesus is demonstrating his power to restore his world in every way. He is showing his power over every kind of evil.

Now, we get to make many things of Jesus' miracles. Yes, of course, they're authenticating his message. Yes, they're showing his power, and they're doing much more than that. Jesus is showing us what the world was meant to be and what it will be one day. Imagine, for example, I heard this story recently of someone who was a renter. They rented out their house, right? They were so excited because this was going to be a way to generate income. The renters left. They showed back up to the house. What did they spend all that income on? All the repairs, all the things that had been damaged by the people in the house, right? What did they do? Of course, they repaired it. It's their house. Of course, Jesus heals people who are sick. Of course, he casts out demons. It's his world. He has come back. He has returned to fix and heal his kingdom because he's a great king. That is who Jesus is. The king has come to restore his kingdom. He is so powerful that he has the holistic power, the overarching power to end the rule of sin and death in this world. And so that's another answer for us about who Jesus is. He is coming to restore everything. But you'll remember, I asked this question, who cares, right? This happened 2,000 years ago. How do we respond? Jesus is not among us healing right now. As far as I know, Jesus is not going to show up at the end of this worship service for you to line up and be touched and healed.

And so what does this have to do with us? Well, first of all, Jesus is giving us a picture. There are many places in the Bible where we see the future break into the present. This happens in terms of judgment. So when Sodom and Gomorrah is judged in the book of Genesis, God is giving us a small picture of what full and final judgment will look like one day. So it's future judgment being brought into the present. The same is true with Jesus' healing, but in a different way. It's future grace, future healing, future restoration being pulled from the future, brought into the present.

into the present. Jesus here is giving us a picture of what the world will one day be. And so yes, Jesus is not here right now. He is probably not going to touch you after this service and remove whatever physical ailment is afflicting you, but he will one day. He has given us a picture, a small moment, and we know that we will see it in full. And so this healing for us, Jesus' ministry, on this earth is an appetizer. Jesus gives us small pictures. He gives us small tastes of what it will look like when he returns and he is the king over the entire world, when he fully rules and reigns.

[13 : 33] We talked about that many times in the book of Daniel, right? That Jesus is coming back to restore his kingdom. So when we see him healing, we're not meant to think that Jesus is just performing a party trick, right? We are meant at some level to see Jesus' authority. We're meant at an even greater level to see Jesus as the one who restores and heals, who is coming, who cares so much about his creation and his world that he will defeat and end all parts of sin once and for all.

The sin that comes with demon possession and the sin that comes with sickness. And so how do we respond to Jesus? We trust in him. We hope in him. We look to him as the one who is coming back to make all things right. We know that we have hope in this world, no matter what happens to us. And so we can agree with Revelation chapter 22, verse 20. It says, he who testifies to these things says, surely I am coming soon. That's Jesus who's coming soon. And the response is this, amen, come Lord Jesus. Part of what we do when we read the gospels and we see Jesus healing as we long for his return. We know that he's giving us a picture of what he will do one day. We also know that hope is not here for us in this life. There's a sadness, there's a futility, there's a hopelessness to sickness and aging if this life is all there is, right? Culture that's around us tells us that happiness and pleasure and self-fulfillment are the greatest goods. And yet that's not good news if your body isn't perfect.

It's not good news if you have \$100,000 in debt. It's not good news if you're facing the death of a loved one. It's rare to have all kinds of happiness and pleasure and self-fulfillment.

And so we want hope that's in something greater. This small healing points us forward to a greater and more powerful healing. And it's not just physical, right? It's not just spiritual. Some people might say, oh, this healing, it's just a picture for us of what Jesus does for us when he saves us. Well, yes, that's true. There is a spiritual component to us, to this. And this world's a physical world. Jesus has come back to restore it in every way. And so we have spiritual hope and we have physical hope. Jesus is showing us what the world was meant to be and what it will be one day.

Okay, it's a picture. It's an appetizer. It's a trailer that you watch when you go to the movie theaters of coming attractions. Jesus is giving us a small taste of the future.

[16 : 38] By the way, it's easy to miss, but I want you to look with me in verse 31. It tells us that Jesus came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.

This word lifted her could also be translated as raised her. And it's the exact same Greek word that's used throughout Mark to talk about resurrection from the dead. Resurrection of those who have actually died that Jesus raises and Jesus' own resurrection. In other words, Mark is winking at us. Yes, Jesus is raising this person who is close to death. And there's something more going on here. There's a greater rising that's going to happen. There's a greater power at work here. This is the power that can and will raise someone from the dead. This is something that points forward to Jesus himself rising from the dead. And so there's something physical going on here.

There's also something much more than that. There's something spiritual going on here. Mark is poking with us. He's winking at us for what's going to come in the gospel of Mark. And so it's appropriate that this is the first healing, a healing in which Jesus, who will later be raised, himself raises someone, someone who is close to death.

So Jesus is the king. Jesus comes to heal everything and everyone who trusts in him and looks to him, his entire world. He gives us a small taste now. We hope and look for that in the future.

We trust in him. We hope in him. We follow him. But that's not the end of our story. Mark winks at us in another way. We know that this is the same day that Jesus was teaching. And we're told verse 32, at sundown, the entire city comes to Jesus. Now, why are they waiting? We would imagine that a word has spread throughout this entire town. Apparently, this healing of the demon was a big deal earlier in the morning. People have been talking and all of Capernaum knows that this is going on.

[18 : 46] They also clearly know where Jesus lives, which confirms what we talked about last week, which is that Jesus has been at work in this city for a while. If the one who can heal is present, why are you waiting till sundown? Well, the reason is they know what they've been taught by their religious leaders.

It's not appropriate to heal on the Sabbath. So they're waiting till that day is over. But Jesus has already healed someone on the Sabbath. He didn't wait until sundown. And so Mark, again, he's foreshadowing for us something that we'll talk about in just a few weeks. But there's this scene now of everyone coming to Jesus. It tells us the entire city that they want healing. Those who are sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. So people are pressing in and lining up.

I would like to imagine that this scene looked a little bit like the Chick-fil-A drive-through, you know, at 12 p.m. or 5 p.m.

I don't know that for sure. Maybe it wasn't that organized. But what we do know is everyone was pressing in. There's probably more people than Jesus might want or desire at that moment, or maybe that others would want their coming. Jesus is there probably for a long time, touching and healing.

It tells us, verse 34, he healed many who are sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. This is quite the scene here. There's an excitement and an energy and a zeal of all these people coming, knowing that the one who can heal them is there. And so again, who is Jesus?

[20 : 22] We see here Jesus' care and his compassion and his selflessness. Jesus has already preached. He's already cast out a demon. He's already then healed someone. And most likely, the human part of Jesus would be grateful for a break, right? These people line up at his door late at night.

And Jesus is just there. He stands there and stays, and he heals them, and he touches them. Jesus certainly could have said no, and at times he does, right? Remember, Jesus withdraws from the crowds.

But here, Jesus just stands and stays, and he serves them selflessly. He's healing whoever comes to him. He's casting out whatever demon has possessed them.

And so Jesus is not just the king who's come to restore his kingdom. He's also the king who is filled with love and compassion for his people. And I'll also add, for those who are not his people.

It doesn't tell us here that all these people ended up following Jesus. It doesn't talk about Jesus teaching them later. It doesn't talk about these crowds leaving Capernaum and becoming Jesus' disciples. And that gives us a hint at the question here, if Jesus is the one filled with compassion again, how do we respond to him?

[21 : 48] One of the things the Gospels do for us is they provide us with models, models of positive responses and models of negative responses to Jesus. You're going to see this throughout Mark. You're also going to see it in other Gospels. Here, we have a positive and a negative example.

We need to know that we don't want to respond like the crowds. Yes, they come to Jesus for healing, and that's right and good, and they need more from him.

There are many people who are only interested in Jesus for what he can offer them. There are many people who come to church, and they're here because it's a good place to find fellowship and community.

Maybe it's a good place to network for various types of businesses. Maybe it's a wonderful place to find a group of friends. Maybe you can find a spouse. None of those are necessarily bad things.

And that's not why we're here, right? We are here to worship the risen King, King Jesus. And so we want to be people who come to Jesus, not just for what he can offer for us.

[22 : 53] We want to be people who come to Jesus and follow him and love him and serve him. And so the crowds here, in a sense, now maybe some of them follow Jesus, right?

I'm not saying none of them did, but it's unlikely that all of them did. And so there's a warning here for us. We want Jesus not just for what he can do here and now in the moment, but also for what Mark winks at us for, that he is the one who raises people from the dead.

Thankfully, though, Mark also gives us a positive example. We skipped over Simon's mother-in-law. We went to the healing in Jesus and then we've left her. I'm going to go back to her in verse 31. The fever left her and she began to serve them.

She sees Jesus' power and his healing to her. Her immediate response is one of obedience and service. She is not accepting Jesus' healing as something just good and nice, and she's going to go on her way and in her life.

No, she responds. Jesus is the one who comes and heals her. She's the one who turns in response to serve Jesus. Brothers and sisters, the same is true for us.

[24 : 04] We respond to God's grace and glory and his power. We look at what he's showing us that's going to come. We long for the world where healing is full and complete, and we want to be just like Simon's mother-in-law.

We want to see that and turn with it and serve Jesus. We want to be people who understand God's grace and his power, and so we follow him no matter where he goes.

We listen to him no matter what he teaches. We take his grace and we respond and follow and obey. Jesus is filled with compassion and care, and so we follow like Simon's mother-in-law in serving him and listening to him.

We're people who don't just come and show up for the free things and the goodies, but we're people who show up for the relationship and the journey. We're people who show up not just for what we can get from Jesus, but also from Jesus himself.

If you've lived for any time in this world and you've had any measure of power or influence, you know the difference between people who want what they can get from you and those people who want you.

[25 : 20] Of course, which one do you prefer, right? Not the people who are simply looking for what they can gain from you, but people who want you for yourself.

Same is true of our Lord Jesus. He's coming. He's calling followers to himself, people who want him and not just what they can get from him. Now, I asked you at the beginning, why do we care?

Why does this matter to us at all? I could ask you another question. Why does Simon's mother-in-law care? Yeah, she was healed. That's great. Healing is great, but you know what?

It's not everything. Simon's mother-in-law is now dead. In 2021, she's not alive anymore. None of those people who Jesus healed are still alive.

Some of them probably got sick again. Who knows? Simon's mother-in-law might have gotten a fever again. Jesus' physical healing on this world isn't enough.

[26 : 28] And so, brothers and sisters, we don't want just the temporary healing. We want the permanent healing. We don't want just what it points to.

We want the thing itself. We need something greater. We need Jesus himself. Imagine again with me, imagine that what I said earlier was false.

Imagine that Jesus physically shows up after I give the benediction in this worship service and he's healing people. And you can come up and whatever ailment you have, he's going to make it go away. Guess what?

That's not enough. You are still going to die. We need something greater than Jesus' physical healing.

Thankfully, the wink that Mark gives us is not just flirting. He is going to back it up. Jesus does not just raise this woman who is near to death.

[27 : 31] Later, he's going to raise another woman who is dead. And then, as the gospel continues, Jesus himself is going to die and be raised from the dead.

That is the healing that we need more than any other. Yes, physical healing is good, and it's a small thing. Yes, physical healing is good, and we need something much greater and more powerful.

We need Jesus himself to be the king who puts an end once and for all to all evil and sin and sickness in this world, and he will.

Our hope and our confidence is not what happens in this episode. Even if Jesus were here right now and he did these things, it would not be enough for us.

We need a savior who is much greater and more powerful even than one who can heal. We need one who is going to do what Jesus has done by going to the cross on our behalf, by dying, by being dead, by taking our punishment that we deserve, and then rising again from the dead after he has lived the perfect life that we should have lived.

[28 : 40] That is the healing that we need. That is the king that we are looking to and looking for. Why do we care?

Well, even if Jesus were here to heal, it would not be enough. Jesus is offering something to us and done something for us that not everyone, even in this passage, embraced.

In other words, you are in a better position than many people who are healed by Jesus if you are following after him with trust and faith and obedience.

You have something greater and better than being touched and healed of your physical ailments. A greater and more powerful healer is here. And so we hope in him, we trust in him, we follow him, and we obey him because the king has arrived.

Many people who have experienced the challenges that I talked about at the beginning, not being able to find the diagnosis they need, not being able to find the doctor they need. Some of them will travel for miles.

[29 : 48] Some of them will do what's called medical tourism. They'll travel to another country to find the service that they want. And so they sacrifice many things to gain. There's also doctors who will travel.

There's places who don't have what they need. There's nurses who will travel. Why do they do it? Yes, out of their compassion and because there's something to gain. There is greater money and reward for that.

Brothers and sisters, our Lord Jesus, our great physician, is the opposite. He does medical tourism, but he does it not to gain but to lose.

He comes not from one country to another, but he leaves his perfect communion with his father to come down to this earth to suffer and lose so that we would gain and be healed.

He is the great physician greater than any other. And so who is Jesus? Jesus is the one who comes to end the reign of sin in this world, to end the reign of death.

[30 : 52] He is the one who offers us full and final healing. He gives us a small picture and taste and foretaste and appetizer of what will come in this world in full one day.

How do we respond to him? We hope in him more than anything else. We listen to him more than anyone else and we see him as the one who will give us full and final life.

Brothers and sisters, will you trust him? Will you follow him? Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we praise you and thank you that you offer something better than physical healing.

and we thank you that you offer us pictures that remind us of your great hope. We thank you that you did a medical tourism that no one else would have done.

You traveled not to gain, but you traveled to lose for us. We ask that you would drive this deep into our hearts that we would look to you and hope in you and trust in you more and more.

[31 : 58] And we thank you that we never have to earn these things, but instead we ask them in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Amen. I invite you to stand for our closing hymn.

hymn of Jesus Christ. Hymn is ranking if you don't have a chance our pilgrims is khutna in the Pu Spray when we gust Though with life's great God has blessed us, care for us from earliest years.

Unto thee our thanks be rendered, because the Lord comes of fears. For our world of need and anguish, we would live to thee our prayer.

Faith, most the words of thy bounty, may we with our brother share. In the name of Christ our Savior, who redeems and sets us free.

If we bring a heart and treasure, that our life may worth your feet. In the midst of time we journey, from thy head comes each new day.

[33 : 39] We would use it in thy service, only wisely while we pray. So to thee, Lord and Creator, praise and honor we accord.

Light the earth and light the heavens. Eternal word. We end our time together with a benediction.

And a benediction is simply a good word from God. It is a word that is true in a world filled with words that are not true. It's tradition for the minister to hold up his hand, to send out God's blessing on God's people, and for God's people to hold out their hands to receive God's blessing.

And so hear now God's good word over you from Hebrews chapter 13. Now may the God of the Lord be with us.