

**Grace, mercy, and peace are yours in abundance through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

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

<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, **"Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."** <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. **This is God's Word for God's people.**

**Dear Friends,**

A long time ago there was a man of God who stood before a powerful world leader. This man of God performed miracles in an effort to convince the Pharaoh of Egypt to let God's people go free. Each miracle, or plague as we know them, had a purpose – to show Pharaoh God's power and to distinguish between God's chosen people (the Children of Israel) and the people of Egypt. The words of Moses did not have much of an impact but the actions of God, through Moses, spoke volumes.

As we consider the miracles of Jesus in this portion of scripture we can see that, **"Actions Speak Louder than Words," "They Show Us Jesus' Power Over Disease," "They Prove Jesus Authority Over the Devil,"** and **"They Point to the Message of Salvation."**

**I.** It was the Sabbath Day and Jesus was at the synagogue with four of his disciples: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. At the synagogue Jesus had cast a demon out of a man and the people were amazed. It did not take long for the news of this to spread throughout the region. Now the time for worship is over and Jesus and these four disciples are headed for Peter's house to join in a noonday meal.

When they get to Peter's house they find his mother-in-law is sick in bed with a fever. They told Jesus about it and, **"he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them."** The disciples discovered that Jesus loving care was not only for the masses but it was also for them. Peter's mother-in-law was immediately and completely healed. She wasn't weak; she didn't need time to regain her strength; the relief came instantly and it was complete. Her reaction was one of thanksgiving. She immediately began to use her gift of health to serve.

The healing didn't stop there. **“<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases.”** The word had gotten out. Can you imagine the anticipation as the whole town is gathering their sick and waiting for sunset – when the Sabbath Day was over. It was in the evening when they came – at the end of the day – but Jesus did not turn them away. He brought them the healing they sought. What a wonderful display of the compassion of our Lord as he brought physical relief to these people.

The healing continues even today. Many times this healing comes through the care of doctors and nurses and through the use of medications and technology. God's hand is present as he guides the doctors and as he guides researchers throughout history to develop the means to heal and cure. And even today, there are times when God uses a miracle to heal someone – when a tumor disappears or something happens which no one can explain – this may be the result of a miraculous healing – a display of our God's power and grace.

**II.** Another important thing happened in those early days of Jesus ministry. He cast out demons. We might find that hard to relate to because we don't see this very often today but it shows us Jesus' authority over the devil. Often people think that the devil and God are on the same level – that they are equals, but that is far from the truth.

The demons knew who Jesus was but Mark tells us, **“He would not let the demons speak.”** He wanted those who were healed and those who witnessed the healings to draw their own conclusions from the healing and the words he spoke as he healed, that he was more than just a healer – he was also the Savior from sin.

While demon possession is not so common today, the devil and his demons are still present and trying to lead us away from Jesus in any way they can and at times they are successful. But as we think about Jesus casting the demons out and forbidding them to speak it reminds us that Jesus still holds power and authority over the devil. He drove that point home as he defeated Satan on the cross. Many people see the cross as a sign of weakness, but that is where Jesus paid for our sins and he brings us the benefits of the cross through faith. When God announces that your sins are forgiven, he wipes the slate clean and yet Satan still tries to load us down with the guilt of our sins. Satan still tries to get us to deny the power of our Savior or doubt his ability to do enough to be our Savior. These words of Mark remind us that there is no need to doubt. Jesus has the power to defeat Satan and as we look to our Lord and Savior he helps us to resist those attacks by Satan through the power of the Word.

At this point in history, the people loved Jesus. They had many ideas of what he could do for them. He could be their physician – the one to take care of all their physical ailments. Demon possession was common and so they would have been happy to have him be their professional exorcist – ready to cast demons out of anyone who was demon possessed. After Jesus fed the 5000 later in his ministry, the people wanted Jesus to be their bread-king. Someone to provide them with food. But that's not why Jesus came into this world. After a long night of healing and a short night of sleep the story continues.

**III. “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.”** We might think it strange that God’s Son would pray but we have to remember that Jesus was also human. He did not pray for forgiveness and God’s mercy like we do, but he did pray for strength and he talked to his heavenly Father about the work to be done.

When the disciples came looking for Jesus he told them, **“Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.”**<sup>39</sup> **So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”** Jesus healed many people, and he was glad to do it, but his main purpose was to bring spiritual healing to the people and to us. He came to proclaim the gospel message.

We know his preaching included some of the Old Testament prophecies about him because Luke in his gospel records how Jesus once quoted Isaiah, **“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor,”** (Isaiah 61:1-12) and then announced that he was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

That prophecy of Isaiah really echoes what Jesus told his disciples – he has come to proclaim salvation. He continues to come to us today for the same purpose – to proclaim his salvation. He continues to do that through his Word. John reminds us in his gospel, **“But these [words] 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.”** (John 20:31).

The gospel message is the key to spiritual healing and to life. That is why Jesus was so eager to continue into the region of Galilee and preach that message. That is what the people needed the most and it is what we need the most.

This is the cold and flu season and every day we have to contend with the germs that are all around us. You might have gotten your annual flu vaccination for some protection, but those vaccinations don’t last forever and so you have to get boosters to continue to be protected. So it is with sin and temptation. It is all around us, just like those germs and we need protection. It is the saving message of the gospel that brings us that protection. And just like those vaccinations we need “booster shots” of God’s Word to continue to keep us spiritually healthy.

Don’t give up that privilege of hearing the message every week. Come for your weekly “boost” from God’s Word so that Jesus can bring you spiritual healing through his Word, so that he can help you repel Satan and his followers, and so that he can continue to assure you that your salvation is complete. May we always see God’s great love for us through all he has done for us. Amen.