

Title: "Jesus the Healer"

Text: Mark 1:40 – 2:12

We are continuing to "Re-introduce Jesus" in our preaching and teaching this year.

- For the next few weeks I want to introduce various aspects of Jesus' mission and message that the New Testament writers don't want us to miss.
- That is, Jesus as a healer, a teacher, a story-teller, a discipler, as a convicter of sin, and a Lord and Master.

Today I'd like us to look at what it meant then and what it means now that Jesus was a healer.

- This aspect of Jesus' ministry was what made him instantly famous all over Galilee, and then all over Israel.
- He became quickly known as a "miracle worker."
- And it was this aspect of his ministry that from day 1 drew people from all over everywhere to come to him.

Turn with me today to Mark chapter 1, and let's look at how Mark describes Jesus' early healing ministry,

- with two instances of healing back to back.
- Mark 1:40-2:12

So here we are, very early in Jesus' ministry, and word has spread all over Galilee that he is "a healer."

And so all kinds of people start coming to him for healing, or bringing loved ones who are suffering to him for healing.

Here in Mark we see two different men, who come before Jesus in need of healing.

- Each had been taken down by a bodily affliction.
- And by "taken down," I mean that these bodily afflictions were not ailments they had had since birth.
- These were afflictions that had come upon them at some point in their adulthood, and which had totally wrecked their lives.

The first was a leper, who brought himself to Jesus, and begged on his knees to be made clean.

What was called leprosy in those days was any number of skin diseases.

- But no matter what the variety of disease, the result was that the person was quarantined.
- No one wanted their disease to spread to others, so they were declared to be “unclean,”
- and separated from their family and their community.
- Removed from society.
- They were not allowed to touch or be touched by anyone, for fear of spreading the disease.

-And there was no known cure for leprosy, so a person with such a skin disease had little hope.

-And the longer the disease continued, the longer the person was separated from family and friends and work and everything that had made their life a life worth living.

It had probably been a long time since this man had had anyone touch him, or hold him, or hug him, or shake his hand.

Now that was not the case with the paralytic.

- He, too, had not been born paralyzed.
- Paralysis is not really something one is born with.
- Paralysis comes as a result of some sort of bodily trauma, an injury to the spine, some awful accident or fall.

And whatever had happened to this man had caused paralysis in the lower limbs at least,

- because we can see that he was unable to walk
- and had to be carried on a mat by his friends.

But he did have friends!

- In fact, he seems to have had great friends.
- People who loved him, and grieved what had happened to him,
- and who would go to great lengths to help him in any way they could.

I mean, these guys not only carry him all the way to where Jesus was,

- but when they can't get into the house where Jesus is teaching,

-they climb up on the roof, and make a hole in it large enough to lower this guy right down through it to lay him at Jesus' feet.

I mean, that's some serious commitment to this guy's welfare!

-They want him healed! And they won't take no for an answer.

-It's pretty impressive....to everyone except the family whose house it was.

-They'd have to talk to them later about the roof repair!

But you see, both of these men, the leper and the paralytic,

-had had these afflictions come upon them at some point in their adulthood, and it had ruined their lives.

The afflictions had caused them grief and loss and suffering.

-And it had caused their friends and family a good bit of grief and loss and suffering, too.

And both men went or were brought to Jesus begging to be healed of their affliction.

-The leper leaves his quarantine and comes and throws himself at Jesus' feet,

-falling facedown on the ground and begs Jesus
"Lord, if you are willing, make me clean."

And the paralytic's friends cut a hole in a roof to get their friend before Jesus,

-again begging Jesus to restore their friend to health.

It's because they have heard that Jesus is a healer.

-And he was, this was a large part of his mission and ministry.

But what I want us to pay attention to today, is the way Jesus goes about healing these men,

-and what we rediscover here about the place of healing in Jesus mission and ministry, both then and now.

Let's start with the leper.

-You might not have noticed it when I read the passage,

-but in v. 41 it says that when the leper begged Jesus,
"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean,"

“Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man,
as he said, ‘I am willing. Be clean.’”

He reached out and touched the man!

-Do you know how long it had been since anyone had
reached out and willingly touched this man?

-That had not happened since the day he had been
declared a leper.

And Jesus, in touching this man, also made himself
ceremonially unclean in the eyes of the Jewish laws.

-But Jesus isn't concerned about that.

What he is concerned about is not only the health of this
man's body but also his mental, emotional, and spiritual
health.

-The health of his soul.

-And he ministers to both body and soul with the touch of his
hand,

-and the words, “I am willing. Be clean.”

And Jesus doesn't stop there. Look at what he says next.

-He tells the man to go show himself to the priest,

-and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for the
cleansing of lepers in the Book of Leviticus.

And Jesus isn't saying this because he likes making hoops for
people to jump through.

-He tells the man to do this because those are the steps this
man needs to take to be accepted back into Jewish society.

-Those are the steps he needs to take to legitimately be
able to go back to his family, to his village, to his
community.

Those are the steps that will ultimately restore his life,

-his mental, emotional, and relational life.

You see, Jesus cares not only about the healing of this man's
body, but the restoration of his soul and spirit as well.

And the same is true of the paralytic.

-Take a look at what Jesus says to him as he heals his
paralysis.

-He doesn't say, "My friend, you are healed."
-What he says to this man is, "My friend, your sins are forgiven."

Isn't that odd? Why does he say that?

-And that is exactly the question the people crowded into that house start asking themselves.

"Why does Jesus tell this paralyzed man that his sins are forgiven?"

-I mean, who can forgive sins but God, and that's not even what this man came to Jesus asking for.

-His friends brought him here to get his paralyzed legs healed, not to get his sins forgiven."

So Jesus causes quite a stir by approaching this man's healing this way.

And that may be why Jesus did it! Just to provoke the Pharisees a little,

-and cause them to wonder whether Jesus had the authority to also forgive people's sins.

But what I want all of us to pay attention to today, -is that Jesus cares not only about this man's body, but also about his soul.

And in fact, Jesus came into this world precisely to forgive the sins of the world,

-and to reverse all of the effects of the Fall into sin.

So everywhere Jesus went, he was not simply healing people's bodies because it was their presenting need,

-he was always and everywhere working to overcome the effects of sin in this world,

-and moving towards the cross where he would ultimately take those sins upon himself and die as an atoning sacrifice to overcome and forgive those sins.

So in this particular case of the paralytic, Jesus simply voices that deeper healing of the man's soul

-as the means by which he heals the man's body.

-He says, "Your sins are forgiven."

-But he tells the Pharisees who take issue with those words,
"I could just as easily have said, 'Get up and walk.'
And in fact, to show you that I have the authority to forgive sins, let me invite this man to get up and walk."

And so Jesus asks the paralyzed man to rise and walk, and he does.

-And he gets to walk with his friends back home, restored in body, but also restored in soul.

But let me clarify something.

-Jesus' point in this passage is not that some sin in the man's life caused his paralysis.

-It is not that when we fall into some sin or other, God punishes us with some accident that causes paralysis.

-Or God punishes us by causing leprosy.

No, the point all through Jesus' ministry is that we live in a fallen world,

-and the effects of sin are displayed everywhere:

-in sicknesses, and disease, and wars, and conflict.

-in lying, and cheating, and stealing,

-in greed, and lust, and pride, and all manner of corruption.

But Jesus came into this world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might have life through him.

-He came to reverse the effects of the fall.

-He came to set the captives free, and bring recovery of sight to the blind, and release the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

And everywhere Jesus goes, he is setting people free on multiple levels.

-He is healing bodies, but He is also healing people's souls.

-He is touching their presenting needs, but he is also beginning a process of healing in their lives that will begin to transform them deep down inside.

He wants to reverse all of the effects of the fall in us, body, soul, and spirit,

- so that we might become whole, complete, mature:
 - not just physically, but also mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and relationally.

We see that in the way Jesus goes about healing these two men in Mark 1 and 2,
-and it's an important indicator to us of the process of healing that Jesus also wants to work out in us.

On Sunday mornings at our Pastoral Prayer time, we most often are voicing the physical needs for healing of people who are dear to us

- those who have cancer, those who are facing an operation, those who have been in an accident and are in the hospital.

And there is nothing wrong with that, those are exactly the kinds of needs that people brought to Jesus every day of his earthly ministry, too.

But today, we just want to highlight the fact that Jesus is just as concerned with our deeper needs for emotional healing,

- for mending broken relationship,
- for transforming generational sins
- for taking down idolatrous attachments
- for releasing us from addictions
- for addressing our sin and our selfishness.

These deeper areas of our lives are often where the work of healing is not accomplished in a miraculous moment.

- More often the healing process is one in which Jesus works together with us in relationship over the course of time.
- Because he wants our cooperation.
 - He wants us to recognize the deeper issue for what it is,
 - and to name it correctly,
 - and then to ask for healing, or forgiveness, or for release, or for whatever the appropriate remedy is.

And that deeper healing of soul and spirit is what this whole process of discipleship is really all about.

- For everywhere Jesus goes, he's not only healing people,
- he's also inviting them to come into the Kingdom,
- to follow him, to attach themselves to him,
- to walk with him.

Jesus was indeed a healer, but he wasn't just a miracle worker.

And we can and should come to him with all of our bodily woes and sufferings, and ask for healing.

- But know that this is not all Jesus wants to do in our lives.
- He wants to make us whole.

And it's a life of discipleship he is calling us to: then and now.

- "Don't be afraid," Jesus says, "Come walk with me,
- and I will make you whole."

Let's pray.