

Epiphany 5  
“The Healer of all humanity’s misery” (Mark 1:32-34)  
February 4, 2024  
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 5th Sunday after Epiphany is from our Gospel reading, Mark 1:32-34.

**“32 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.**

So far the text...

“Misery loves company.” So goes the saying. If a person is going through a tough time – a sickness, an accident, or sadness, a loss of a loved one or friend, a loss of a job, or something not as consequential like your favorite team’s loss, – the company of another who is going through something similar helps somewhat to commiserate together. The experience is shared at a level that only those who are going through it can understand.

For the fan whose team lost, the conversation goes something like this: “It was the refs fault...well, there’s always next year.” Commiserating doesn’t take away the cause of the misery, but talking it out releases some anxiety.

In our text, we see that all the sick people in Capernaum gathered together, not because they wanted the company of other miserable people, but because they wanted the company of the Healer who could take away their misery!

It was the evening of the Sabbath day. The Sabbath had passed. Jesus had taught in the synagogue during the day as was His custom. As we heard last week, He taught with an authority that the people weren’t used to. Jesus taught from the heart, the heart of God for He spoke only God’s words and not the platitudes and works

righteousness of men as the scribes did. “What new doctrine is this?” asked the people.

The new doctrine, was, of course, the Good News of salvation found in Him. As Jesus said in the hometown of Nazareth:

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year  
of the Lord.”...**

**“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”**

The Gospel! Good News for mankind’s spiritual misery! Healing for the broken soul, liberty for those who are oppressed by a demon...

And not only did Jesus preach with authority, He drove out an unclean spirit with authority! His fame spread quickly we heard last week. By nightfall, all the sick of the city were gathered at the house of Peter.

There was so much spiritual and physical misery. Yes, the Epiphany season is all about fishing, fishing for the souls of sinners by the revealing of who Jesus is...the Son of God. By Jesus’ teaching and miracles, the people were gathered outside Peter’s home where Jesus had also healed his mother-in-law – instantly! Such power – the power of the Almighty God with us!

It’s like when a fisherman goes out at night to fish, one of the techniques that a fisherman uses is to shine a bright light in the water. And the fish gather to the light. The people were gathered around the Light of the world, Jesus. For He had come to heal the people’s misery – physical misery, but most of all their spiritual misery – our physical misery, our spiritual misery.

We gather at the doorstep of Jesus’ house this morning, to receive healing for our sin wearied souls. Jesus’ bright light of His redeeming love shines. The new doctrine of the Gospel of forgiveness is proclaimed. And Jesus catches our souls in the net of His salvation! Jesus didn’t come to destroy, as the demon said in the synagogue. “Be quiet” Jesus told the demon and “come out”! And the demon had

to obey the authoritative command of the Son of God. This is what we heard last Sunday. And this is our message that we know from John 3:17:

**“17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”** Jesus died and rose again to end all misery once and for all!

“Misery loves company”. Jesus loves the company of the miserable. For this reason Jesus came into our world – to heal all of its misery caused by sin. Are you or I excluded from experiencing misery? Of course not. It happens some times that when I visit a hospital to pray with a member who is sick, I can walk down the hallway and pray with another member who is there at the same time. It seems like a whole wing of the hospital has become a Lutheran wing of sickness.

What does Paul say in 2 Corinthians chapter 1?

**“3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.”**

Yes, the sufferings of Christ abound in us. That is true. But, thanks be to God that His comfort abounds through Christ.

Through Christ! Yes, the whole city came to Peter’s doorstep. Not to see Peter, but to see the Healer - Jesus. So much misery! But it was not overwhelming for Jesus. He healed them all. Mark says that “He healed many” to emphasize the large number of people who were there. As we know from the parallel account in Luke chapter 4, Jesus healed all the people. So Luke says:

**“40 When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.”**

“Every one of them”. Jesus loves all people the same. He loves you and me the same. Sometimes Jesus heals us quickly of our misery and sometimes, like Paul, He doesn’t take the thorn in the flesh of misery away so that **“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”** Therefore

**most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” 2 Corinthians 12:9**

For there is both physical and spiritual weakness, misery and infirmity. And we give thanks often for those time of the body’s healing. After suffering fever, or pain or weakness, we thank God when our bodies feel strong again. We thank God that He has given wisdom to doctors and nurses to give us medicine that helps in time of need.

There are new break throughs all the time. I read that Elon Musk has developed and has implanted the first neurolink in a human brain this past week. "The device is designed to interpret a person's neural activity, so they can operate a computer or smartphone by simply intending to move – no wires or physical movement are required," The goal, it seems, is to help paraplegics or other physically impaired people find some restoration from their disability. And yet, there is no cure for death nor will there ever be from science. The oldest American is almost 116 years old. Edith Ceccarelli (born in Willits, California, on February 5, 1908), aged 115 years, 364 days. Yet, 122 years is the maximum that we’ve seen of our lifespan.

That’s a lot of years, and no doubt, a lot of misery included in those years. There was a popular group in the nineties called R.E.M. One of their hit songs was “Everybody hurts”. Yes, it was a hit song because everybody can identify with our common misery. The opening lyrics go like this:

*“When your day is long And the night, the night is yours alone  
When you're sure you've had enough Of this life, well hang on. Don't let yourself  
go 'Cause everybody cries Everybody hurts sometimes”*

Hang on, the song repeats *“If you think you've had too much  
Of this life, well hang on'Cause everybody hurts”*

But where does one find comfort to hang on? The song says:

*“Take comfort in your friends”*

Well, a friend can only do so much. But the Friend of all friends, Jesus, the Healer, who knows our misery, knows us intimately, alone has the power to relieve our misery. And so our prayer is always includes, “according to Your good will”.

But, even if it pleases Jesus to not heal the physical sickness immediately like He did for Peter's mother-in-law, He gives an even greater healing to our soul! For He comforts us with His presence through His Word and Sacraments that our souls are healed of all sin. By His grace we receive forgiveness for the misery that afflicts our sin torn souls.

And sometimes, it pleases God to relieve us of all misery by taking us from this vale of tears to be with Him in eternal glory. "Deliver us from evil". And Jesus does that for the Christian at the death of His saints. For God's people, Jesus promises us this in Revelation 21.

**“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”**

Gone. All misery is gone in heaven. And God's people enjoy the very company of God for the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them!

The next morning, Jesus has risen early to pray in a solitary place. Peter came to Him.

**“Everyone is looking for You.”** Yes, everyone needs Jesus whether they know this yet or not.

**38 But He said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.”**

**39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.**

Jesus went to the next town to the next people, because He wants everyone to know that He is the Healer of all misery -physical and spiritual – yours, mine and all people. And we bring this hope to all. Amen.

**“And this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**