



Feb. 7, 2021 Mk. 1: 29-39. Job 7:1-4

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

In this gospel we will find ourselves plunged into one dramatic scene after the next. No time to catch our breaths. Once people see how the power of God's love can flow freely through Jesus they press in ever closer and with more insistence. This alerts the negative powers that try to nip this in the bud, only to have Jesus stifle their efforts. It is the age old phenomena of evil recognizing good and wanting to take control. This sends Jesus off into prayer. Now he has his mission clearly in view. Be God's love in the world and reveal that this love is stronger even than death. Now is not the time to build a base, it is the time to proclaim.

Mk. 1:29-39 29 As soon as they left the **synagogue**, they went with **James** and **John** to the home of **Simon** and **Andrew**. 30 **Simon's mother-in-law** was in bed with a **fever**, and they told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her hand and **helped** her up. The **fever** left her and she began to **wait** on them. 32 That **evening** after **sunset** the people brought to Jesus all the **sick** and **demon-possessed**. 33 The **whole town** gathered at the door, 34 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. 35 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**. 36 Simon and his companions **went** to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they **exclaimed**: "**Everyone is looking** for you!" 38 Jesus replied, "Let us go **somewhere else**--to the nearby villages--so I can **preach** there also. That is **why I have come**." 39 So he **traveled** throughout Galilee, **preaching** in their **synagogues** and **driving out demons**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: After his night of prayer Jesus now knows what he is to do. How does time in prayer help you do the same?

PRAYER: Jesus, you went off to pray after experiencing the power of God flowing through you as people were cured of illness and obsessions. It is as if you needed to go to your Father to understand what that was all about, and what you were to do next. You came out of that time of prayer with a clear idea of what your role was to be. It was to proclaim the Father's unconditional love. First of all, free me from anything that gets in the way of being a witness to that love. Then give me the insight and courage to be that love for others. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

JAMES, JOHN, SIMON, ANDREW: We see the four disciples, who have just witnessed the first display of Jesus' power now going home to Simon's house.

What do you think these four men talked about as they walked home? If you would have been there, what do you think you would have made of the incident that you had just experienced?

MOTHER-IN-LAW: (see information below) In verse 21 we are told that Jesus taught on the Sabbaths. So this would seem to mean that the ministry had been going on for some time by now. Simon was present in the synagogue the day his mother-in-law was sick and then healed

If you would had been Simon, do you think the episode at the synagogue would have prompted you to take your mother-in-law's illness to Jesus as soon as you got home? If so, what effect would the healing have upon you?

FEVER: People saw illness as a form of evil spirit possession. There were no words of rebuke as in the calling out of the evil spirits in the synagogue.

Would you have wanted some sort of ritual like in the synagogue? What would you have made of the fact that just the touch of Jesus affected an immediate cure?

HELPED: In some translations the word used is lifted. This implies that the woman was unable to assist herself in getting up.

Which word, helped or lifted, is the most useful for you? Does each have a slightly different meaning? Try to imagine yourself being lifted by someone. Then imagine someone helping you up. How are the images different? What does each tell you about the woman's condition?

WAIT: Simon's mother-in-law immediately responded by waiting/ministering to Jesus. In effect she was one of the first recorded people to care for Jesus in this gospel.

Have you ever thought about the phenomenon of women ministering to Jesus?

EVENING / SUNSET: In Jesus' day the evening was counted as the beginning of a new day. Now the Sabbath was over, and people could freely move about again.

If you had someone sick at home, would you have been able to wait until evening to bring him or her to Jesus? If not, why not? If so, why?

SICK / DEMONS POSSESSED / EVIL SPIRIT: People believed that spirits were more powerful than humans but less powerful than God. These spirits readily interfered or intervened in human life, sometimes for good, sometimes for bad. They were seen to have power to control human behavior.

What in the text helps you appreciate the tremendous outpouring of grace in the people that day?

WHOLE TOWN: Mark tells us that the whole town spreads the news quickly. This suggests that the people were very ready for any good news that came along.

If you were the newly cured mother-in-law, what response might you have to having the whole city crowding around your door? If you were one of the four newly commissioned disciples, what would you make of this event?

HEALED: To be healed is to be free of anything that keeps you from living fully.

Would someone need to bring you to Simon's door if you were alive that day? Is there anything that keeps you from living fully, and therefore needs healing today?

DISEASES: A dis-ease is something that keeps you from being at ease.

Is there anything causing you dis-ease now? How could Jesus' touch heal it? Has Jesus ever 'touched' you through someone and caused a healing for you?

DROVE /DRIVE OUT: Mark uses the word drove frequently. He has the Holy Spirit driving Jesus into the wilderness after his baptism. Each time he uses this word he indicates a strong force. The force needed to remove an evil spirit has to be greater than the strength of that spirit.

How would the wonder that was building in the people that evening as they watched, one by one, Jesus driving out the power of disease and torment from the multitude of people, affect you?

KNOW: To know someone's name was to have power over him or her. The evil spirits wanted to ward off Jesus' power by a good offense. When their power was overcome by Jesus' power this must have caused the crowd to gasp. Once again we are told that Jesus does not allow the force of evil to name him. He will not give them that power.

Is there any malign force that attempts to name you? Have you accepted the label, or have you rejected it?

MORNING / DARK: As the sun begins to rise, overcoming the darkness, Jesus is found praying.

What might the symbols of darkness giving way to light suggest in this part of the gospel?

LEFT/WENT: Mark tells us that Jesus leaves everyone and goes off alone to pray.
Where do you go off to in order to pray in quiet? What time of day is best for you to do this?

SOLITARY PLACE: Jesus chooses a solitary place to be alone with God.
Is being alone with God nourishing for you or challenging?

PRAYER: It seems that just before, or just after, as significant event, Jesus is found off alone in prayer.
If prayer is communication with God, how then do you understand this need of Jesus to pray? Have you ever thought much about the fact that Jesus prayed?

EXCLAIMED: To exclaim is to cry out loudly, often in protest of something.
What does Mark suggest when he uses this word to tell us about the disciples searching out Jesus in the morning?

EVERYONE: When the disciples find Jesus they tell him that everyone is looking for Jesus.
What do you suppose those people want? What would you want if you had been there?

LOOKING: When you are looking for someone or something the implication is that whatever is being sought is nowhere to be seen.
Do you think part of the reason Jesus is off in a solitary place is that he knows all too well what the people are looking for, and does not want to be drawn into their expectations? What in verses 38-39 help answer this question?

SOMEWHERE ELSE: Jesus wants to go somewhere else (neighboring towns and cities) to continue his mission.
What is that mission?

PREACH/ING: To preach is to proclaim something.
What is Jesus proclaiming? Why do you think he left a promising start in Capernaum, only to begin again somewhere else?

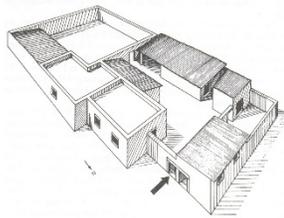
WHY I HAVE COME: Jesus seems very clear about his reason for coming out into his ministry.
Are you sure about why you have been created, and what you are to do with this awareness?

TRAVELED: Mark has Jesus always on the move. Now he is preaching throughout Galilee.
What do you think the disciples made of this urgency to keep moving? Do you think they might have wanted Jesus to settle down and begin building a power base to work out of? If you were tagging along with the disciples, what would you have wanted Jesus to do? Why?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mk. 1:29-34 // Mt. 8:14f; Lk. 4:38-41; Jn. 7:46; Mk. 3:10-12; **Mk. 1:35-9** // Lk. 4:42f; Mt. 12:16;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Job. 7: 1-4, 6-7; Ps. 147: 1-6; 1 Cor. 9: 16-9, 22-23; Mk. 1: 29-39; Revised Common Lectionary: Is. 40: 21-31; Ps. 147:1-11, 20; 1 Cor. 9:16-23; Mk. 1:29-29;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:



This is a drawing of what the home of Peter might have looked like in Capernaum. Excavators have unearthed a structure that is traditionally believed to be the house of Peter, which has had many subsequent additions, built over it. Pilgrims have scratched graffiti on the walls that some interpret to be the name of Peter. The building evolved from being a private home to a worship place over the first five centuries.

More drawings and explanation available in: Leslie J. Hoppe's book [The Synagogues and Churches of Ancient Palestine](#). The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN. 1994. Pages 81 ff.

Each of us has a mission in life. Jesus prays to his Father for his followers, saying: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). We seldom realize fully that we are sent to fulfill God-given tasks. We act as if we have to choose how, where, and with whom to live. We act as if we were simply plopped down in creation and have to decide how to entertain ourselves until we die. But we were sent into the world by God, just as Jesus was. Once we start living our lives with that conviction, we will soon know what we were sent to do. Henri Nouwen

The critical challenge of discernment-knowing whether our calls are true or false, knowing how and when to respond to them, knowing whether a call really belongs to us or not-requires that we also tread a path between two essential questions: 'What is right for me?' and 'Where am I willing to be led?' Discernment also requires that we ask these two questions continually and devotedly, in hopes that by doing so Providence will, in due course, be alerted to our desires and answers will find us.- Gregg Levoy, Callings

Contemporary medical anthropologists offer some helpful insights. They distinguish between disease as a biomedical malfunction that afflicts an organism, and illness as a devalued human condition in which social networks are ruptured and life's meaning is lost. Curing is aimed at disease; it is a rare occurrence. Healing is aimed at illness; it occurs infallibly all the time for all people. Everyone

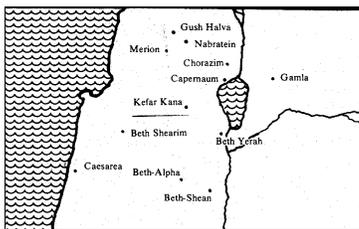
works out a new meaning in life no matter what the predicament....Peter's mother-in-law, the wife of his father's brother, should be living in her husband's house. If he has died, she should be living with one of the sons, or if they have died she would return to her family. That she is in Peter's house suggests that she may have no living family members to take care of her. **In the Middle Eastern world, this is a fate worse than any sickness, indeed, worse than death.** As often happens in Jesus' ministry, the challenge is more than the woman's fever.

Pilch, John J. [The Cultural World of Jesus-Cycle B](#). The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN. 1996. Pages 31-32.

.... in the Gospel accounts that always ends with Jesus retiring for solitary prayer. It comes after the healing of many sick and diseased, after a circuit through Galilee and the healing of a leper, after the healing of a man with a withered hand that took place on a Sabbath, after the feeding of the five thousand at Bethsaida. It comes always, that is, after a period of restless activity, so restless that Jesus seems no longer to keep even the Sabbath rest. He plunges himself into time, into restless activity, but then he plunges himself into eternity, into continuous prayer. "And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place," and "When evening came," he was there alone," and "all night he continued in prayer to God." What he is doing, it seems, with movement and rest, is undoing arrest, undoing that arrested life that is hell on earth. Pg. 49-50. Dunne, John. [The Homing Spirit](#). NY. Crossroad Pub. 1987.

Mispar is the calling dimension of our soul prints By "calling," I mean the human experience of being summoned to a specific mission or destiny....The person called is summoned as a one, a singular being with a discrete, defined destiny to fulfill. The soul's numbering says that you are singled out, unique, one and only, and that therefore you are called to a mission, a "point" of meaning, that you alone are charged to fulfill. ...However, on a deeper level, only by responding to your unique call do you open up the channels in your soul print that create connection, loving, and community. Pgs. 144-5. Gafni, Marc. [Soul Prints](#). NY. Fireside Books. 2001.

"Friends are angels who lift us to our feet when our wings have trouble remembering how to fly."



Capernaum was wealthy enough to have an impressive synagogue built in it. It measured 24.5 X 18:5 meters and had a large courtyard with a portico that provided shaded space for gatherings. It was oriented so that people praying there would be facing Jerusalem. Its polished white limestone must have impressed all. The map opposite locates some of the major synagogues in the area. Hoppe, Leslie.:[What are they saying about Biblical Archaeology?](#) Paulist Press. NY.1984. Pgs 58 ff.

Healing proceeds from the depths to the heights. Carl Jung

Meditation on Healing

The risen, living Christ/ Calls me by name ;/ Comes to the loneliness within me; / Comforts that which is wounded in me; / Seeks for that which is lost within me; / Releases me from that which has dominion over me; / Cleanses me of that which does not belong to me; / Renews that which feels drained within me; / Names that which is formless within me; / Empowers that which is newborn within me; / Consecrates and guides that which is strong within me;/ Restores me to this world which needs me; / Reaches out in endless love to others through me.
- F. Wuellner

Every action of our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity. E Chapin

SELECTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2008-9. Pgs. 47-51. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Grana, Janice Ed. [Images](#). St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN 1976. **PLANTING VINEYARDS**: Donna Swanson Page 67.

PRAYER IS FOR REAL PEOPLE: Grace Adolphsen Brame: Page 35