

HE CURED MANY WHO WERE SICK

..... versus TV Twaddle (See above)

Years ago a certain priest had some parish members who were beguiled by a TV Evangelist. **The preacher denied that true Christians could be sick.** He said that if one were really devoted to Jesus he or she would have no sickness *at all*. Their 13 year old daughter had given her heart to Jesus but the child increasingly questioned if her conversion were sincere. The reason was that her knees hurt. Thanks to the impious nonsense from the Evangelist, she and her parents attributed her bodily pain to the lack of true belief in Christ. The preacher's words blinded them from remembering that disease is not caused by lack of devotion. They could not imagine that the girl might have arthritis or some dozens of various bodily problems. All they thought of was her "questionable" spiritual state.

It is difficult to calculate the damage done to souls by preachers who spout vicious misinformation. Unfortunately, callous leaders continue to mislead souls in that and other ways. There is a current heresy called *The Gospel of Prosperity*, a teaching that **authentic belief and behavior in a person will result in their material riches**. Popular TV preachers like as Joel Osteen and Benny Hinn support this doctrine, twisting Scripture's teaching on prayer to turn Jesus into an order clerk. Among the Scriptures misused are:

Mark 11:24 - Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (KJV)

John 14:14 -- If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. (KJV)

It is noted by critics that ministers who teach such silly Theology have often become overwhelmingly wealthy thanks to donations from their gullible followers.

Please prepare St. Mark 1: 40-45 for next Sunday.

The Fifth Sunday of Epiphany



Jesus the Healer

(source unknown)

Today's Gospel St. Mark 1:29-39 [Year B, Epiphany 5]

✠ AS SOON AS JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES LEFT THE SYNAGOGUE, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and **they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.** Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.'

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He answered, **‘Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.’** And he went throughout Galilee, **proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.** [© NRSV]

Interlocking Scriptures

Sometimes it’s not easy to see the relationship between the Scriptures chosen for any given Sunday. Today is different. The compilers have outdone themselves with an interlocking “embarrassment of riches”. Today we see:

- 1) that all creation depends upon God,
- and
- 2) that the Gospel must be spread.

The Old Testament lesson and the Psalm support the first of these concepts and the Epistle the second. The Gospel supports both. We hear in the Gospel, ***they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up,*** showing ***both*** the Apostles’ ***and*** Simon Peter’s ***and*** Simon’s mother-in-law’s dependence upon God. The Psalm illustrates the same theme, saying: **Great is our Lord and mighty in power; * there is no limit to his wisdom.** Or again, **The Lord lifts up the lowly, * but casts the wicked to the ground.**

Then there is the second theme, **the need to spread the Gospel.** Christ has not just come to be a miracle worker but to proclaim the message of our Salvation. He has to go throughout Galilee, saying **‘Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.’** And he went throughout Galilee, **proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.**

Jesus’ task is to spread the Gospel. So is ours.

The Fifth Sunday of Epiphany

The message of Salvation is best shared by each of us who have experienced the Grace of God. This includes Peter and Peter’s mother-in-law, and the psalm writer who says, ***He heals the brokenhearted * and binds up their wounds.*** It is also includes, of course, you and me.

Our most powerful way of winning souls is to begin by saying, “May I tell you what happened to me?”, and then relate where we were *before* as pagans or casual Christians contrasted with where we have become *now* because we let Jesus into our lives. We are really saying that our lives have been changed because ***the Lord has pleasure in those who fear [honor] him,*** We give testimony that ***Jesus went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.***

That is the same message of salvation that we proclaim Sunday by Sunday in our Worship, in our preaching, in our prayer.

That message will best be heard when each church member proclaims Christ’s message by his/her life and work and words. Are you proclaiming it?

Biblical Healing versus (see below)

There may be no material in Holy Scripture that promotes more controversy than the healing miracles. Severe **illness and mental illness were believed to be caused by demon possession. Jesus did not argue the point; he simply gave people the health they needed. He acknowledged illness and dealt with it.** His competition, if that is the correct term, were faith healers who lived off human misery. The Christ beat them at their own game. His healing actions imitate the charlatans’ actions: spitting, touching, rebuking and so on. Even some of the words he used mimic those of the frauds but his results speak for themselves. The fakes who “healed” got paid and sped out of town before the exhilaration of the incantations and mumbo-jumbo wore off. Jesus was not paid. He healed, he stayed and then healed others.