

The House of Healing

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 March 2022

Preacher: Rev Donald A MacDonald

- [0 : 00] Let us now read from the New Testament, from the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 1.
I'm reading at verse 16. Mark's Gospel, chapter 1, reading at verse 16 down to verse 31.
Now as he walked, that is Jesus, as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.
Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.
And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him.
When he had gone a little further thence, he saw James, the son of Sebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the ship, mending their nets.
- [1 : 14] And straightway he called them. And they left their father Sebedee in the ship with the hired servants and went after him. And they went into Capernaum.
And straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one that had authority and not as the scribes.
There was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, saying, Let us alone. Let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?
Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.
And when the unclean spirit had torn him and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this?
- [2 : 25] What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.
And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.
But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.
And immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. Amen, and may God bless to us that reading from his truth.
Let us further sing to his praise from Psalm 147. Psalm 147.
- [3 : 32] Praise ye the Lord, for it is good. Praise to our God to sing, for it is pleasant.
And to praise it is a comely thing. God doth build up Jerusalem, that he it is alone, that the dispersed of Israel doth gather into one.
Those that are broken in their heart and grieved in their minds he healeth, and their painful wounds he tenderly abinds.
Let us sing these verses. Psalm 147. Praise ye the Lord. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good.

It's good, I've gone through the stream. For it is blessed. For it is blessed.

[4 : 43] And I've gone through the stream. It is a comely thing.

grandiose, and the vincent, the virgin, the devoss, and the luchwave by the kingdom of Israel doth it is alone, that the discurs of Baghd Roman vader vader, and the chapter of the council issues that we make all her free and other options that we must have had to eat, this past the cherries of Israel.

Chancellor Merkel Thank you.

Let us now turn to the passage that we read, the Gospel according to Mark, chapter 1, and we may read at verse 29.

Mark, chapter 1, and at verse 29. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.

[6 : 46] But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.

And immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. I have, in the recent past, referred to how the Gospel of Mark begins.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And the word Gospel, as you may remember, means literally, good news.

Mark wishes to us to hear about good news. A particular brand or form of good news.

Good news that focuses our attention on Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is at the heart of the good news.

[7 : 55] In short, he is the good news. And in a broken world, there is always sad news. We are witnessing terrible events through the media.

As the Russian forces decimate areas of cities in Ukraine. People injured. People killed.

On both sides. Millions forced to flee their homes. And especially women and children. How we need good news.

In a broken world. Where the forces of evil inflict daily heartbreak. This Gospel is about good news.

Good news about Jesus Christ. And it could also be understood, I think, as good news.

[8 : 58] That Jesus Christ himself proclaims. In this chapter, Mark highlights for us how the Lord Jesus Christ has been preaching in the synagogue.

His preaching is authoritative. So that even his listeners recognize that there is a different note to the preaching of this person.

Who has burst on the stage of life in Judah. Mark records for us how Jesus deals with a demon-possessed man.

A man possessed by an unclean spirit. He records events that take place in the public domain and are widely reported.

And they cause no small stir among the population. Mark tells us, as a consequence of Jesus' preaching and conduct, immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

[10 : 09] But in the verses for consideration this afternoon, Mark takes us, the reader, into a private dwelling house. He takes us out of the public domain.

Into the private and less public. Where we find Jesus performing a miracle. What good news does this set before us?

And that's what I'd like to address for a short while. First of all, then, the miracle of healing. The facts. Secondly, the message that arises from this miracle.

And finally, the effect that it has on this nameless woman. The miracle of healing itself. The facts.

This miracle is recorded by three of the gospel writers. Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And it is always useful to compare the different gospel accounts when looking at a part of any gospel.

[11 : 21] Just so that we get the whole picture. Because each gospel writer may have a different emphasis. But it helps you to grasp a fuller picture of what is set before us in the gospels.

And although Mark was the writer of this gospel, much of his information comes from Peter. So you find personal touches throughout the gospel that you will not find among other gospel writers.

Well, Mark tells us several facts about this miracle. The first fact he tells us when this miracle took place in terms of what day of the week it was.

And where the miracle took place. Forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew.

Now, Mark, like every gospel writer, and I suppose like all writers, whether they're gospel writers or not, has his own unique style.

[12 : 35] And you find them frequently quoting this term, straightway, forthwith, or immediately.

And if you count, you'll find about seven times from verse 10 down to verse 31, you'll find them using that term, straightway, forthwith, or immediately.

It's almost as if Mark is in a hurry to get the information to us. Immediately we are told Jesus and his companions go to Peter's house.

We also know that this occurred on the Jewish Sabbath, and that the synagogue was located in Capernaum.

How do we know that? Well, verse 21 tells us. And they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the Sabbath day, he entered into the synagogue and taught.

[13 : 43] Luke tells us in his account, he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he was teaching there on the Sabbath. Now, although it was in Capernaum that he taught in the synagogue, on the Jewish Sabbath, does that mean that it was in Capernaum that this miracle was performed?

We know that it was in the house of Simon Peter, because Matthew tells us, when Jesus entered Peter's house, Luke tells us, and he left the synagogue and entered Simon's house.

In Mark's Gospel, we are told a little bit of additional information. We are told that the house is in joint ownership. This may not be something that was widely known, but it is not reported anywhere else but here.

And I believe that's down to Peter's input. We are told when they come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew.

So that little detail is set before us by Mark. And that then prompts the question, where do you find this house? John's Gospel could help us in our research.

[15 : 05] For John, in speaking of Philip, who became a disciple, tells us that Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

So, when you get that information, then you discover that there are two places in the Bible that have the same name, Bethsaida. And that maybe adds to confusion.

The one was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee and the other on the east or the northeast side of the Sea of Galilee. Bethsaida on the west side was located close to Capernaum and therefore in close proximity to the synagogue that was in Capernaum and so not too far away.

from this home in Bethsaida. Bethsaida means literally the house of fishing. And in the house of fishing, Jesus goes into the home of two fishermen, Simon and Andrew.

Was this the home that Simon and Andrew grew up in? Possibly, but I cannot be certain about that.

[16 : 29] But of this I am certain. It was a home where the Lord Jesus Christ was welcomed. And it was a home where the Lord Jesus Christ felt at home.

And that raises a question for you and me today. Is or would Christ be welcome in our homes?

You know, if he came to the door of your house today, would he receive a real welcome?

Not a pretend welcome, but a real welcome. Would you be delighted to receive him into your home?

Would Christ feel at home in your home? Is worship to Christ made in your home? Is he given praise and glory in your home?

[17 : 33] Well, these are questions for consideration and I think they're very relevant and very pertinent questions arising out of the context here. It's obvious that Jesus was very welcome in this home that belonged to Simon and Andrew.

So, Mark also tells us that there were another two fishermen in the company, Zebedee's sons, James and John.

So, here you have a gathering and you might say you have the great fishermen of the universe, the Lord Jesus Christ and four fishermen as his companions.

That's true literally. But these fishermen, these four fishermen, had submitted to a higher calling.

a calling that came from the compelling authoritative power of the Lord. Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.

[18 : 52] In his company, they were to be taught how to become fishers of men. Now, I'm sure everyone here knows that the life of the fisherman is not an easy one.

there is much to learn about the different faces of the sea, about the patterns followed by differing fish, about the marks where you may discover the fishing and so on, before one can call themselves a skilled fisherman.

And here are four skilled fishermen who had learned these skills. Their livelihood depended on it. But they were now to be taught the necessary skills to set the net of the gospel and catch men.

They were to learn the art of man fishing. Fishing in the natural world is not easy. But in my view it is child's play.

in comparison to the art of man fishing. And who better to teach these men the art of man fishing than Jesus himself, the one who had the best necessary skills for the job.

[20 : 19] So this miracle was performed on a Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, that's a Saturday, at a private venue in the home of Simon and Andrew in Bethsaida.

That's the first fact that arises out of this miracle. And the second fact is this, we are told there was illness in the home. Simon's wife's mother lay sick of fever.

Luke, who you remember was a doctor, tells us from his medical expertise, now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever.

And the language used by Luke suggests that she was a very sick woman. Not sure what was used, or if anything was used in those days, to seek to lower one's temperature and the effect of fever.

But this was her condition. The fact that this feverish, nimbless woman was Peter's mother-in-law, tells us that Peter was a married man.

[21 : 30] He couldn't have a mother-in-law without being married. And yet, when you read the Gospel narratives, you do not find anything being said about his family.

You could almost be forgiven for thinking that he was a bachelor. But there is, however, one other brief mention of a wife. And you will find it in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in chapter 9.

Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

Cephas, another name for Peter. That's the only information that you can find about the wife of this disciple.

Peter was under married. We're not told. That's all the family information that we are given. We're not told how long this woman had been ill, but just the fact of her illness.

[22 : 46] If Peter knew of her illness, would he have invited Christ to the house? We don't know. So that's the second fact. And the third fact is this, that Mark tells us about their reaction to the illness.

And what Mark tells us is this, when they come into the home, and on, or immediately, they tell him about her.

And on, they tell him of her. Now, Mark doesn't disclose who told Jesus. Was it Peter and his wife?

One would certainly expect them to be very concerned. Was it Peter and Andrew, being the joint owners, or were all those in the home with one voice telling Jesus about this woman's condition?

Luke, his take on the situation is more forceful than Mark. He says they appeal to Jesus on her behalf.

[24 : 07] Matthew doesn't disclose that at all. He omits it entirely from his account. He merely reports how Jesus went directly to the bedside of the sick woman.

And it seems to me, given Peter's influence, that Mark's is the more accurate account, but that Luke's account is an interpretation of Mark's account.

In other words, that Luke understands, as he writes his gospel account, that the actual telling as reported by Mark, to be an appeal to Jesus. And there is no doubt in my mind that the telling of the illness implied an appeal to Jesus.

Because you remember another occasion in the Bible where two sisters had a very sick brother, and they sent a message to Jesus, Lord, he whom you love is ill.

They too brought their burden to the attention of the Lord. They didn't dictate what he should do or how he should deal with the matter. They laid their burden before the Lord and on the Lord.

[25 : 18] And is that not what we are counseled to do in the Bible? Cast your burden on the Lord. Why? He will care for you. He'll never let the righteous fall, but bring him safely through.

And so often we are so prone to dictate our parents to the Lord. Lord, do it this way or do it that way, rather than leave it all in the more than capable hands of Almighty God.

And it may be at this early stage of being with the Lord, they were just new disciples, that they do not yet feel that they can come too close.

But in telling the Lord about her illness, are they not indicating that they believed that he had the power to heal, and also that he had the willingness to heal.

They had already witnessed a demonstration of his power in the synagogue, and they had listened to his authoritative teaching. When Luke says they appealed to him, it may not have been a direct appeal as such, but the appeal was in the telling.

[26 : 29] And so Mark tells us how Jesus responded to this information. he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Matthew tells us he touched her hand.

Dr. Luke tells us he stood over her and rebuked the fever. And when you place all the information side by side, you have a picture of a seriously ill woman who is restored to health through the ministry of Jesus.

Jesus, no drugs, no means used, just the ministry of Jesus, she is lifted up and the fever left her.

And immediately without any delay, her strength is invigorated so that once again she is able to resume her domestic duties in the home. A woman who moments ago was weakened by fever and illness, without strength, laid on the bed, is quickly, instantaneously delivered from the debilitated ineffect of a illness.

No requirement for a period of coalescing, but immediately able to serve others. Well, that's the miracle of healing itself, the facts.

[27 : 44] But then you have the message that arises from this miracle. I said at the outset that this gospel is about good news, the good news about Jesus Christ.

And so the first item of good news to arise from this miracle is how approachable the Lord Jesus Christ is.

Is that not something that we all need to hear? The approachableness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because sometimes we think that every door to Christ is closed.

Christ. It was immediately after preaching in the synagogue where an unclean spirit was cast out that this miracle was done. And in coming to this home, the Lord Jesus Christ was in all probability exhausted from his efforts of teaching and preaching and healing.

He required rest and renewal of strength. He was a true man. He had preached with power. His energies would have been greatly expended in proclaiming the message.

[29 : 00] He would be drained. He had confronted the powers of darkness. He had cowed them into submission by the going forth of his power. And remember the impression created by his preaching.

And they were all amazed that they questioned among themselves, saying, what is this, a new teaching with authority? Despite the level of ignorance regarding his identity, they were able to recognize that there was a huge difference between his teaching and that of the scribes.

Here is the one who is the eternal word and he proclaims himself. And so they recognized the difference in his preaching.

Their attitude reminds me of a certain Mordo Mackenzie, who was a Gaelic teacher. He lived in Laxey and Lox, but he originally belonged across the water there to Assent in Stor.

He had gone to communion, a communion service in Uig. And on Saturday morning, the expected preacher was to have been a Willem Macrae.

[30 : 20] Mordo wasn't enamored of the fact that this Willem Macrae was preaching. In fact, Mordo thought that this Willem Macrae ought not to have been at the Communions at all.

But unknown to Mordo, and most of those gathered for the service, Dr. MacDonald of Ferrentosh was on one of his journeys to St.

Kilda. And because of the unfavorable weather conditions, he had been unable to get to St. Kilda and had come ashore at Tarbert.

On hearing about the communion services in Uig, he had travelled across the Moor to Uig, in time to be asked to conduct this Saturday service.

And this Mordo was oblivious to this, and he was sitting with his back to the tent. Services then were held in the open air. He didn't see the replacement preacher.

[31 : 29] And as the first psalm was given out, his thought was, he cannot spoil that on me anyway, because he thought it was Macrae. And then came the prayer.

And as this preacher prayed, Mordo said to himself, pity to him, who would say that Mr. William has no grace.

That was obviously what he thought. As the prayer continued, he became more interested. If I have grace myself, Mr. William has it too. Until as the prayer developed further, I would give my oath for it, that Mr. William has grace.

Now, I think I would have many comments to make about Mordo Mackenzie. It's a critical attitude, but this is not the place for it.

But there is no doubt about this preacher in the synagogue. He is full of grace and truth. He cannot be anything else given who he is.

[32 : 43] And now, despite how exhausted the Lord might be, and in need of recharging, he was willing to go the extra mile in attending to the needs of this very sick woman.

He doesn't deter them from coming to him with their burden. And you know there is encouragement for every one of us here too. Is your sin a burden for you today?

Tell him. Do you feel that you are walking in darkness? Tell him. Because he himself is the light. Are you beset by the temptations of Satan?

Tell him. For he will give you strength to oppose Satan. Are you being tried? What more shall we say? Can I not sum it up in a few words?

Go and tell Jesus everything. You have much to disclose. There is nobody here who doesn't have much to disclose. Tell him everything. Tell him of the world's woundings, of the saints' mightings.

[33 : 43] Tell him of your tremblings and of the heart's anguish. Tell him of your low moments, your mental despondencies, your gloomy fears, your lack of understanding. Tell him of your bodily infirmities.

Tell him of your weight in health, of your failing vigor, of your progressive disease, if you are suffering from illness, the pain, your sluggishness, the nervousness, the weariness, the sleepless pillow of which no one knows but to tell him of your dread of death, how you recoil from dying until dark and grayless appears the body's last resting place.

Tell him you fear that you do not know him, that you do not love him, that you do not believe him. Tell him there is not a being in the universe, none in heaven or on earth, whom you desire as much as himself.

Tell him of all the temptations, the difficulties, the hidden trials, the sorrows in your path. Oh, tell him all. There is nothing that you may not tell him in confidence of love and in the simplicity of faith.

Tell Jesus no temporal need, no spiritual sorrow, casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you. Oh, people, trust in him always.

[35 : 00] To him alone, pour out your heart. Lose yourself in the love of Jesus. Hide in the wounds of Jesus.

Wash in the blood of Jesus. Oh, is that not all good news? And the second element of good news is this, how truly merciful and compassionate Christ is.

You know, she is unknown, this woman. Not told her name. Don't know anything about it, apart from the fact that she is the mother-in-law of one of the most notable disciples.

You know, if you were to conduct a test, name one of the disciples, you could almost be certain that Peter would be one mentioned.

But the Holy Spirit is silent on any other information about this woman except what we find here regarding her serious illness.

[36 : 06] Christ meeting with her in the very depth of her need because he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And in great condescension he still stoops to meet with the deep needs of sinners to the present hour. You know, by nature we are shackled by the chains of our iniquities.

We are bound with the strong cords of sin. We could never break free and we would remain eternally bound by them had not the second person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, stooped down to meet with us in human nature.

He is the one who stoops down low to look on heaven and earth below. He raises outcasts outcasts from the dust from the ash sheep lifts the poor.

Is this not also good news? That we need to hear how willing the Lord is to meet needy sinners. This man receives sinners and eats with them.

[37 : 24] That's what even his enemies said about him. The good news here is that this same Jesus who met with this sick woman in the depth of her need is able to meet with anyone here today who is still in the flesh sold under sin and to deliver you from his power.

How truly merciful and compassionate Christ is and how open to being approached. And the third thing of the good news is this the authoritative power possessed by Jesus.

Mark tells us he took her by the hand and lifted her up. Luke tells us he stood over her and rebuked the fever. Luke gives you what you imagine to be a true picture of a doctor standing over a sick bed.

he rebuked the fever. You remember when the disciples were in the storm on the sea of Galilee and they awoke and when he awoke he rebuked the wind and the raging waves and they ceased and there was a calm.

And do you remember the reaction of these terrified disciples who were experienced seamen? They marveled saying to one another who then is this that he commands even winds and water and they obey him.

[39 : 03] How often has that question been asked who then is this? And the answer that the Bible gives us this is this Christ who speaks with authority to heal from fever and illness.

Is that not also good news? the authoritative power he possesses as a person of the glorious trinity.

So the message that arises from this miracle Christ is approachable. He is considerate. He is merciful. He is compassionate.

He is in possession of power to deliver. The miracle itself, the facts, and finally the effect that it has on this nameless woman.

And what Mark tells us is this. She ministered unto them or as it could be translated she began to serve them. And what I read into that is this.

[40 : 28] that she prepared a meal for these men. And I think that possibly she never prepared or cooked a meal with such thanksgiving or with such praise in her heart.

Here was a woman who had been raised from feverish illness, paralyzed by her fever. And now she's back on her feet.

She's on top of the world. And I like to think of this meal as being joyous with a certain sense of awe in the hearts and minds of those who participated in the meal on that Sabbath evening as it drew to a close for the sun was setting.

It was a humble household. There were no servants in it. We are not told that she was instructed to do this. But as soon as the effect of this fever disappeared, she uses her newfound strength to minister to Jesus and his companions.

And to my mind, it is a beautiful illustration of the person who receives mercy and grace and as a consequence begins to serve the Lord.

[42 : 05] There is a spontaneity about her service. And if you are here today and you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, then you too will be desirous of serving the Lord without any constraint from the outside.

The constraint is from the inside. She began to serve them. And there is a certain truth in the fact that it's difficult to separate the service from the church to the service to Christ.

Because they are both together. When you're serving Christ, you're serving the church. When you're serving the church, you're serving Christ. They're linked together.

Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, says Jesus my brothers, you did it to me. As you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.

So you see, when you are serving others in the church of Christ, you are serving the Lord. As you did it to the least, you did it to me. And that service flows out from our heart that has been smitten by the sovereign power and mercies of Almighty God.

[43 : 35] And you remember what the apostle Paul urged the church to do. I appeal you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of the mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Oh well, is there this service in your life today? And does it arise out of thanksgiving in your life?

The thanksgiving that fills your soul because Christ has touched your life and delivered you and raised you up from where you were.

Willing service, loving service, where there is full acknowledgement of your indebtedness to the Lord. Oh, would it not be wonderful if we too were motivated by that same spirit today and every day.

[44 : 59] As the hymn writer puts it, were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

The effect of healing in this woman's life was joyous, willing service in the cause of Christ.

Now, preparing a meal, serving a meal, may seem small, may seem small, but you see, it's the way in which she does it, and it's the motive from which she does it.

I'm asking you to do the big things, but the things that appear so small and so insignificant, but if they redound to the glory of Almighty God, they are not small things in the end, they are big things.

You may think of going to visit a sick brother or sister in Christ, a small thing. Ah, it's not a small thing, friend, if you are doing it from a right motive, if you are doing it as one who is taken up with the glory and the power of your Lord, God, and you are going in that spirit as one motivated by the one who has touched your heart and your life, it's not a small thing.

[46 : 43] The miracle of healing itself, the facts, the message that arises from this miracle and the effect of it upon this nameless woman.

May God bless to us our meditation on his truth. Let us pray. O eternal God, we thank thee again today for thine own truth and we bless thy name that it is your truth and that it speaks to all of us.

O grant that we hear the speaker behind the truth addressing our souls today that we may be found living in submission to him by faith in his name and the glory shall be thine in Jesus name we ask it amen.

Amen.