

Epiphany 5 – February 8, 2015
Text: Mark 1:29-39
Theme: "He Took Her by the Hand"

Fever was no small thing in Jesus' day. There were no antibiotics so when you got a fever, your body had to fight the infection to the end and either you lived or you died but there was nothing anyone could do about it beyond a cool cloth and rubbing oil on your skin. Peter's mother-in-law had a fever. First off, Peter had a mother-in-law. Peter was married. Perhaps Jesus had been called out of the synagogue where he was teaching because the family was worried and Jesus was Peter's friend, so you can imagine Peter's wife telling the kids, "Go get your father and his friend Jesus and tell them to hurry." And Jesus walked in, took her by the hand and lifted her out of bed and she was healed. It was that simple.

So, having been healed, she got up and served. That is the response to healing. Get back to work. There was no lollygagging. There was no recovery needed because Jesus' healing is 100%. You go from deathbed to full recovery in a matter of seconds. That is one way I know that these faith healers on TV are fakes. Blind people are healed, but they still need glasses. Lame people are healed but they limp. Our God does not do things half way. Peter's mother-in-law got out of her deathbed and began serving them moments after her healing.

Isaiah reminds his people similarly.

**“Even youths shall faint and be weary,
and young men shall fall exhausted;
but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.”**

We are healed by the Lord and we serve. We mount up with wings like eagles and we run and we do not become weary and we walk and we do not become faint. Jesus empowers us to do all that he calls us to do. He did not send a Hallmark card to Peter’s mother-in-law. He physically touched her and healed her. He does not just offer us his well wishes either. We came into this room today and right from the start of the Divine Service we said Lord! Have Mercy! Christ Have Mercy, Lord Have Mercy!” We are sick like Peter’s mother-in-law. Some of us are physically ill. Some of us have financial problems. Some of us are battling secret sins that no one knows except us and God.

So we confess our sins, receive forgiveness and once we are back in a perfect relationship with God we ask for help. Lord have mercy. So he came down to us when we called on him and now in a few moments he is going to touch us. Just like he touched Peter’s

mother-in-law, he's going to reach out and touch us. His body and his blood are going to be put into our mouths and heal us and having received this medicine of immortality, we will rise and serve him.

That is what we do every week. Will all our trouble go away? No, we live in a broken world. Peter's mother-in-law still had all the troubles of life, but she was empowered to rise and serve the Lord. We too, having been touched by the actual physical body of Christ, will still deal with debt and sin and cancer and diabetes – but we will be empowered to rise and serve the Lord for a little while longer. That's all that really matters. If you are serving the Lord, you are doing everything that will really make a difference.

Just recently I heard about someone's relative who is not getting along with his kid. They are having an email war and the person I heard from was getting sucked into it. This parent was furious that he had paid for the best schools, the best homes in the best neighborhoods and catered to the kid's every desire and the kid was not, in his opinion, acting appropriately appreciative. I have often said to people that if you are looking for appreciation, go volunteer at the nursing home or the animal shelter; don't have children.

The thing is, this parent was not thinking correctly. The things we do as parents that matter are the things that serve God. Serving

the children is not our concern but rather serving God by caring for and rearing the children in the way God commands. Often that means NOT doing what the child wants. Always that means NOT being the child's buddy but being his parent. When we are serving God in whatever we are doing, he will touch us, heal us and give us strength.

We shall mount up with wings like eagles;

We shall run and not be weary;

We shall walk and not faint.

Whether you are parenting, driving a truck, playing an instrument or filing paperwork, the only struggle you have is seeking the best way to do whatever you are doing in service to God because that is why he touches you here today and what heals you to do again this week. When you are serving him you will fly with eagles unwearied.