

Sermon for Trinity, Manilla, June 29, 2024, Sixth Sunday after Trinity + Pastor Daniel Vogel, Manning, Iowa

+++Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Amen

The title of our message for today is: **"HEALING US UNTO ETERNAL LIFE"** based on our lesson from our Gospel, **Mark 5: "Do not fear, only believe."**

Dear Friends in Christ: Jesus did miracles, so many miracles during His 3 year ministry! The New Testament lists 36 miracles that Jesus did but His disciples refer to many more however without specific details. And there were crowds from surrounding towns who came to Jesus and were healed, probably hundreds. Of all the miracles that Jesus did in His ministry the majority of them were miracles of healing. 36 people are listed as being healed and 3 were raised from the dead!

Also Jesus did miracles of nature, miracles of demonic attacks, but especially here in our text today he does miracles of healing the body which pointed to the healing not just of the body but the soul forever. Why so much healing, why so much focus of our health and bodies? What does that say about our health, our bodies, our creation, our humanity?

We take for granted our health, we expect to be healthy. What do we do when we are sick, chronically sick? In a world where our culture works very hard to manufacture every imaginable medicine, supplement and self healing therapy, in a culture that even works to manufacture new bodies, new organs, even new genders, new everything, health is a big issue. We want to live, and we want to live forever! What does that say about our faith in our Creator God and how He has designed us to live and to live forever? What are we so afraid of, is it death? Is it our desire to live forever here on earth, in this world of sin and evil?

Health is a picture of who we are and health is also about our spiritual life. Our health and our bodies come from God the Creator. He has given us this life, but it's a life on loan for only so many years. Without God's hand we could not live for a minute. Every breath we take, every muscle we use, every heartbeat is a gift from God.

But just as we often don't care for our bodies in a healthy way, we don't care for our spirit and soul as God invites us to do. When that happens we run the risk of physically harming our bodies and spiritually losing our soul. The sin that lives in us is the most terrible disease we have. Here in this story we see a powerful example.

Peter, James and John were allowed to accompany Jesus into the house of Jairus whose daughter was dying. In that special room with the dying girl those 3 disciples saw and witnessed Jesus raise that dead little girl to life again. But even after seeing that and after witnessing many other amazing miracles, the power of sin, the power of sin kept them from faithfully trusting in Jesus and they abandoned and denied Him on the evening of His arrest to be crucified. Wow, if that can happen to them, what about us? Lord, keep us daily in the Christian faith until we can see heaven's glory.

Jesus, the Great Physician reveals this beautiful story of Jairus and his daughter: ***"Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet and implored him earnestly, saying. My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her so that she may be made well and live. And he went with him..... While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said. "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?" But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler..."Do not fear, only believe".....Taking her by the hand he said to her, Talitha cumi....Little girl, I say to you, arise."And immediately the girl got up and began walking...."***

Notice in this passage Jesus is healing a woman and a little girl, in a past culture where women were not seen as important as men?

JESUS IS THE GOSPEL, THE LIFE GIVER AND THE BRINGER OF JOY AND PEACE FOR ALL! In this chapter He comes with power to heal the sick; healing a demon possessed man and healing a woman with chronic bleeding. Jesus gets down with us to our most horrible and sickly moments of life and death! This is an unbelievable chapter of God's love in Christ for our human bodies and souls. The two go together as God teaches us that He is our Heavenly Father, Creator of heaven and earth!

He comes with an unbelievable power, not just healing power but power over death, raising from the dead a little girl: ***"Talitha cumi", little girl I say to you arise***". With the power of His voice, with the power of His Word, He brought life back into this child.

All of these miracles were a preview to the greatest miracle, the miracle of the Cross. At Jesus' last He breathed the word: ***Tetelestai: "It is Finished"***. This one Greek word has 3 meanings: 1. ***Tetelestai***: It meant that Jesus' work of salvation has been accomplished through the will of God; 2. ***Tetelestai***: It is a forensic/legal term. It means: 'paid in full'. He has paid the penalty for our sins and we are freed from punishment. ***As 1 Peter 2:24 says: "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed."*** 3. ***Tetelestai: "It is Finished"***. Jesus' word meant that God's Victory has been won over sin, over death, and over the power of the Devil. ***As John 3:16 says: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."***

God's love is forever. As Lamentations 3:22 says, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end! That is why Jesus healed so many.

Healing, what a gift, what a challenge, we learn so much about ourselves when we are sick. We are a culture of pills, of medical experts, and so much more. We certainly are blessed with wonderful health care these days. Yet, we will suffer in this world of sin, but as St. Paul writes in Romans 5:5ff we can rejoice even in suffering: ***"Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."***

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW? Let us give thanks for our bodies, for our lives, even in old age. Remember this week and read again the words of Lamentations 3:22-33. This is God's answer; God's lament to the ancient people of Israel who because of their unfaithfulness were killed, captured and hauled off as slaves to Persia/Babylon for 70 years. Yet God offers hope in the midst of heartache and suffering. We all need to hear God's promises in our own lives: ***"For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love."***

And also Psalm 30 says of God: ***"..His anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning."***

As we age God is preparing us, telling us that He has a heavenly home, a heavenly body prepared and waiting for us. Let us think more about the Heaven that awaits us instead of our obsessions with our earthly world.

We are Pro-Life because Jesus was so very Pro-Life, the human body and life is in God's Almighty hand. To show the sanctity of human life Jesus healed over and over again!

And so Jesus' healings are a picture of our heavenly home where we will live on the New Earth without pain and suffering, in this place. In Randy Alcorn's book "Heaven" He writes from Scripture that we were created to live in human bodies not just for a few years on earth, but forever on the New Heaven which is a new Earth, here eternally. But now on the New Earth of heaven our bodies will not get sick, will not fail us, will not die again. And this beautiful creation of mountains, plains and seas will also be cleansed of sin, of evil and of death and this will be our eternal home forever.

Our response? St. Paul writes that in great gratitude to God we are called to give generously, 2 Cor. 8:1-3: ***"We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part."***

If today you are suffering with the aches and pain, with the bad news of a medical problem, I wish I could touch you and heal you as Jesus did. But I have no power but God's Holy and Almighty Word. And in that Word we have Jesus present here who can and who has spiritually touched you with His Spirit, with His forgiveness, with His hope which is beyond this life. May our Lord give us patience, understanding, faith and hope from this precious Word that as St. Paul writes in Romans 8:28: ***"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his mercy"***

Finally, when Jesus was approached the home of Jairus, the synagogue ruler with a sick daughter, the friends gave Jairus the bad news, his daughter had died and not to bother Jesus. But Jesus said those almighty and powerful words that only God Almighty could say: ***"Do not fear, only believe."***

Dear Friends, ***"Do not fear, only believe."*** Jesus, the Miracle Worker did all His miracles for you and me. At the end of the book of John 20:30-31 John wrote about the purpose of Jesus' miracles and the purpose of this book: ***"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."***

Do not fear; only believe, in the name of Jesus. Amen

And the peace of God which is beyond human understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.