

Second Sunday after the Epiphany

Sermon Text: Luke 4:40-44

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And He rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that He was Christ. And when it was day He departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him; and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. And He said unto them: I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

Fellow Redeemed by Christ,

Our Introit and Gradual for today calls upon us all to make a joyful noise unto God, to give Him worship, honor, and praise as the King of Kings, the Most High God. For as we are told, "The Lord sent His Word and He saved them and delivered them from their destruction."

This season of the Church year is known as the Epiphany Season, the appearance or revelation of the Lord Jesus as the Christ, the Only begotten Son of God, the Promised Savior of all mankind.

And in our sermon text today, we witness this revelation, as

Jesus Shows Himself to Mankind: Firstly, as the Great Helper in all need and
Secondly, as the Savior of all.

Our text opens with the Sabbath day coming to an end. But what a very eventful Sabbath day it has been. For that morning after teaching in the church, Jesus is met by members of Simon Peter's family, who plead with Him to come with all speed to Peter's house, where Peter's aging mother-in-law has come down with such a terrible fever, she lay fully prostrate and unresponsive in her bed, her relatives fearing for her life on account of it.

Upon entering the house and seeing the sad state of affairs; Jesus has compassion on her and goes over to the poor woman's sick-bed.

Then, as He touches her hand, He rebukes the fever, and it leaves her.

Whereupon she immediately rises from her sick-bed and without any further sign of the illness or the usual accompanying weakness or unsteadiness, but with a truly thankful heart she sets about serving Jesus and His disciples with all manner of hospitality as her guests for the day.

But Jesus is to have little time for rest and relaxation once word of this miraculous healing spread.

For although the people have waited until the setting of the sun marking the official end of the Sabbath day, and so therewith faithfully observed the Jewish law regarding the prohibition of work on the Sabbath; now they come together in droves to the very door of the house where Jesus is staying.

They carry to Him all their loved ones who are sick with all manner of disease, as well as those who are possessed by the devil, in the hopes that Jesus will heal them and free them of the evil spirits which ravage mind and body.

Now, since the fall of Adam and Eve into sin, such is the condition of every natural unregenerate man, women and child on this earth.

For as a result of Adam's disobedience in the Garden of Eden, all mankind, everyone of us, lost the perfect spiritual image, the perfect spiritual health, of God's perfect holiness unto which man was first created.

All mankind have been so completely corrupted by the infection of sin that like Adam in the Garden, he is become so spiritual blind that he believes he can hide from his Creator and disregard the Law of God written in his heart and in the Ten Commandments.

And so, with the fall into sin, all mankind became willing servants to sin.

Willing slaves to fulfill the vile lusts of their own flesh, so that, as we read in Psalms 14:2-3,
"The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

As he is then, by nature, sinful; natural unregenerate man is spiritually dead, cut off from God, and possessed by the devil unto eternal damnation in the unquenchable fires of hell.

Furthermore, it is, as the result of man's sin, that all manner of evil which men do to each other, all the dread diseases which exist, all the physical maladies which plague us in this life, as well as physical death itself, has come upon mankind and continues unto this day.

"For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12)

All of us are guilty of disobeying God's Law:

Thou shalt have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not curse, swear, practice superstition, lie or deceive by His name; but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks.

Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not despise our parents and superiors, nor provoke them to anger, but honor, serve and obey them and hold them in love and esteem.

Thou shalt not kill.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt nor harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed and each honor and love his spouse.

Thou shalt not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or goods, nor get them by false ware or dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and business.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not deceitfully belie, betray, slander, nor defame our neighbor, but defend him, speak well of him, and put the best construction on everything.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house,

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God, that we do not craftily seek to get our neighbors inheritance or house, nor obtain it by a show of right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his cattle, nor anything that is thy neighbors.

What does this mean?

He should fear and love God, that we do not alienate, beg, or take away from our neighbor, his wife, servants, or cattle, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

The Bible says: "The wages of sin is death."

Can any claim to have kept these commandments of God perfectly?

Are we not poor, wretched, blind, lost to sin and death?

Are we not in most dire need of healing, of salvation from sin, death and eternal damnation?

Where can we find such healing? Who shall save us from the curse of sin and reconcile us unto God?

Our text says in verse 40, that Jesus "laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying: Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

Neither disease nor demon could withstand the power of the Son of God's almighty mercy. By these miracle healings and the casting out of demons, Jesus shows Himself indeed the great helper in all need,

Dear Ones, No need of body or soul is beyond His power.

For Jesus herewith demonstrates to all who will understand that the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4 is fulfilled in Him.

St. Matthew writes about the same incident in chapter 8 verse 16 and 17, with this to be our understanding. We read,

"...He cast out the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, (He) Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

Though the prophet's reference is to griefs and sorrows, to diseases and pains of the soul due to sin and its curse, Jesus, and only Jesus, is, by His sinless life, and His suffering and tortuous death on the cross in our place, more than familiar and acquainted with all the griefs and sorrows which are ours in this world because of sin.

He that bears the greater is master of the smaller.

Because of His holy innocent suffering and death through which He bore your sins and mine, yea, the sins of the whole world, in His own body on the cross; Christ Jesus is the Victor over sin, death and the devil, and we; you and I share in that victory as a free gift from God.

For through Christ we are redeemed from sin and death. We are wholly reconciled to God, we have salvation through the Atoning blood of Jesus Christ alone. **It is Accomplished!**

You see, Christ's pure righteousness is our righteousness and eternal life with Him in the glories of heaven is our inheritance as children of God in Christ.

As we read in Romans 5:1B-21,

"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the Law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto everlasting life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Yes, Dear Ones, the chains of sin which once bound us in slavery to sin in this life and an eternity in hell on account of our sins were broken forever, not by anything we merit or could ever hope to earn or deserve, but we were freed from sin and death once and for all when Jesus shed his life's blood for you and for me on the Cross of Calvary.

Through His obedience unto death; through His blood and His righteousness, we are washed clean of the guilt and stain of all our sin and thus freed from the power of sin, death and the devil.

That Dear Ones, is the grace of God in Christ. The free gift of the true healing that we really need: forgiveness of all our sins, life and eternal salvation offered to all in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So how do we lay hold of and receive this gift?

A gift not received by the person for whom it is intended cannot benefit that person right?

So this is important information:

Ephesians 2:B-10 says it all,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God bath before ordained that we should walk in them."

We lay hold of, apprehend, and receive this gift of God by the hand of faith alone, worked in our hearts by God's Holy Spirit through the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If in genuine sorrow over your sins, you confess and repent of your sins before God and by faith alone you trust and believe on Jesus Christ alone as your Savior, you will be saved.

And then, born again as a new creature in Christ Jesus, a sanctified life in word and deed will be the fruit, the result, of that faith created in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Returning to our text, we find Jesus departing into a desert place the next morning, where He might give Himself to prayer and communion with His heavenly Father.

But His absence is soon noticed and a large multitude of people seek Him out. They no doubt wish to bring him back into their own city.

But Jesus will not be persuaded by them, for He knows these do not seek him for the Spiritual healing He offers, but they want to be witness to more miracles.

Miracles by which they, themselves might gain some benefit in this earthly life.

And so Jesus explains to them the principle purpose of His ministry.

He is obliged to bring the Gospel news of the kingdom of God to other cities as well.

So this too should be our earthly ministry. Each one, as he or she is able, motivated not by thoughts of personal benefit or seeking glory and honor which might be given by men, but by what your Heavenly Father has done for you and given you so freely in His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Go, then with joyful and thankful hearts and witness to others about the Gift of Salvation in Christ Jesus. To Whom be all the worship, glory and honor forevermore. Amen.

And now may the peace of God, the Love of Christ and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always. Amen.