

Jesus Healing and Preaching

Matthew 8:14-17; **Mark 1:29-39**; Luke 4:38-44

And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed 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.

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.
(English Standard Version – ESV)

Background:

- Newly married couples usually lived with the husband's family until they made enough money to move out. Many parents died while their children were young adults. Therefore, it is possible that Simon and Andrew had taken charge of their parents' home. If his father-in-law had died, Simon and his wife would have taken her widowed mother into their home to provide for her.
- The Sabbath ended Saturday after sunset. Mark mentions that it was "sundown" to let readers know that the Sabbath is over, because it would have violated the Law of Moses for anyone to carry something or someone (e.g. "brought to him all who were sick") on that holy day of rest. The entire town gathered "at the door" because most homes around Capernaum had one room.
- It would be nearly impossible to find a place to be alone in compact ancient towns with narrow streets, where it was common for 10-20 people to live together in one-room houses. Most blocks in ancient towns consisted of four homes all facing a common courtyard. Residents could find a place alone in the hills outside their village if they arose early enough. People went to work as soon as the sun rose, so Jesus has to get up well before dawn to find a solitary place for prayer.
- The Greek word used for the other "towns" suggests large agricultural villages still governed according to regular village structures. Evidently, these were places that had not yet heard of Jesus. He probably could have drawn the largest crowds in the synagogues on market days and Sabbaths, and in late afternoons or early evenings when laborers had finished their day's work.

Questions:

- + In response to the illness of Simon's mother-in-law, "they immediately told [Jesus] about her." When you encounter a problem that is beyond your control, where do you go first, and why? What will prompt you to go to Jesus immediately when you have a problem, large or small?

- + It says, “They brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.” Who are “they?”
What would have prompted you to be one of those who brought a sick person to Jesus?
Have you witnessed or experienced divine healing? If so, how have you been affected?
- + Why does Jesus not permit the demons he drives out to declare him to be “the Son of God?”
Do you believe Jesus to be the Son of God? Why or why not? If so, how do others know?
- + How does the healing ministry of Jesus in this passage (see also Matt. 8:17) fulfill Isaiah 53:4?
What do you think and feel about the fact that “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases?”
- + What is significant about Jesus rising while it was dark and going to a desolate place to pray?
What is the best time and place for you to get away from others in order to be alone with God?
How will you protect that time and place to pray, especially when people are looking for you?