

Mark 1: 29-34; "The Healing Ministry of Jesus",
Sermon # 6 in the series - "Astonished at His Teaching",
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on May 18th, 2008.

The scene is a Sabbath day in Capernaum, early in the public ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Son of God when He first began His ministry, preached to people the gospel of the kingdom of God. He had been doing this for some time, saying, "Repent, and believe the gospel." Now on this day He enters the synagogue and having gained the permission of the leaders of the synagogue to teach, He taught the people there "with authority". He taught them with the authority of One who was sent from God; One who knew God and who loved God with all of His heart. He was declaring the truth about God to them, and not merely sharing his opinions of truth or the opinions of the religious men of that day or of the past. His purpose in preaching was to fish for men and to catch the Elect of God in the gospel net. The people, it says, "were astonished at His teaching". It is at this point that a man possessed with an unclean spirit, who was there in their midst, realizing that the kingdom of darkness was undergoing a frontal assault from the Son of God, and that his possession of this poor man that he had taken control of, was about to be lost; he cried out, "Let us alone!" "What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?" "Did you come to destroy us?" "I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" Jesus rebuked him and said, "Be quiet and come out of him!"

The meaning of life is all about being in one of two kingdoms. You are either in the kingdom of God or in the kingdom of darkness and the devil. All men are born as citizens of the kingdom of darkness. All of us have sin-sick souls by nature and birth. We are subject to sickness and death. We live in a fallen world. But the forms that sin-sickness takes in some people, can be worse than the forms it takes in others. Because of Satan's malice and the activity of his demon legions, some in our day are afflicted with troubled and tormented souls. Some are deceived into believing in false and Pagan religions. Some may even be so desperate in their rebellion to God and His authority that they become heavily influenced by, or even possessed by demons. Our text shows us that there were many people on this Sabbath day who need to be healed. And our Bibles also teach us that if we are ever to be saved from our sins and delivered from our afflictions, and have eternal life, that we must be born again. A part of Christ's work by the Holy Spirit in connection with the New Birth is that we must by God's power and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, be transferred from the

kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. That means that the power of Satan to deceive and to control must be broken in our life. This is what Jesus did for this man. Jesus touched this man as the King who commanded and the demons trembled and left the ground which they thought that they could hold in this man's life. He healed him of this torment; this affliction.

That was the morning of this Sabbath day. In the afternoon of this same Sabbath we find Jesus coming to see and to touch a sick lady. To this lady He would become a physician to her body. By the evening of this day we find that the news about the power of Jesus to heal had spread so quickly that it says that, "the whole city had gathered at the door." We can see from this one Sabbath day in the ministry of our Lord Jesus, that what He came to do for the needy, afflicted, and sick people of that day was not only meant to help them but it is meant to help us as well. It is meant to help many others who hear of His power to heal. True and lasting healing by Jesus is meant to touch our soul as well as our body. Each one of us must come to experience the touch of the Son of God upon our soul, upon our life, taking away our sin-sickness, taking away the demonic influences from our soul, so that we are those who are spiritually strong and well. The free gift of God bringing eternal life comes in just such a fashion. Christ was very busy on that day, but He was not too busy to heal the many who came to Him for help. And He is busy, as well today, sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, the place from whence He heals troubled, diseased, and sin-sick people today. The power of the Lord Jesus to heal is the same today as it was yesterday; yes and it will be the same forever. Because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. I believe that this is what we need to glean from this passage today. Since this is the case, I want to ask the question, "What is our responsibility as Christians in this church; what are we to do in relation to the healing ministry of Jesus? And I think that we can find 3 things that we should do in relation to Jesus' healing ministry today, from these verses. 1st- We tell the Lord Jesus about the sick. 2nd- We should look to him for real results. 3rdly - We should expect that many others will come looking for help.

1st - We as a church need to tell the Lord Jesus about the sick.

(Verses 29 and 30)

"Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John." "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once." You notice that right after church, right after they got out of the synagogue on this Sabbath Day that some of the disciples entered Simon's house which

must have been close by. Perhaps they went there for a meal or rest or refreshment. Perhaps they wanted simply to have fellowship with each other. But when they came into the house they found that Simon's wife's mother was lying sick with a fever in one of the rooms. The kind of a fever that she had was not a slight one. Luke's gospel calls it, "a high fever." It was a dangerous and life-threatening fever. But it is the disciple's response to what they saw that I want you to take notice of. "They told Him about her at once." In Luke's gospel it says, "They made request of Him concerning her." They didn't say to themselves, "Well, it looks pretty bad for Simon's mother-in-law doesn't it?" "There's nothing that we can do for her now; she's on death's door step." No, they immediately went to Jesus with their concerns. They told Him at once about it and made request that He would come to see. They believed that He could help her. I think that every Christian should take notice of this. It is not as if the Christian does not believe in the use of means such as earthly doctors or physicians. But it is that the Christian knows that healing only comes from God. And if this is so, then should not the Christian, when he hears of someone who is sick or afflicted with a disease or illness, first seek to the Living Risen Christ who has all power and authority, and make request of Him? Are earthly helpers to be sought before the heavenly helper? No, for the Christian, the answer is plain. The Scriptures are plain. It is to the Great Physician that we ought to seek, and we ought to seek Him immediately. We have heard of His power, we know His love and compassion. We would make request of Him before any other medical person or treatment is attempted. There is a good example of a failure to do what the disciples did in our text. It is found in 2 Chronicles 16: 12 where it speaks about good king Asa. "And in the thirtieth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians." "So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty first year of his reign." Only God can keep us in life. Only the Lord can heal us. It is not that good doctors and medicine or treatments are to be shunned. God is a God who uses means. But we must always believe that He can and sometimes does choose to heal people immediately because of His great compassion, love, and mercy. But when He does not choose to heal immediately, He is to still to be sought and trusted to help through the efforts of trained medical personnel. Our God and our Christ are still to be entreated first, but doctors are to be prayed for in their efforts, by the blessing of our God upon them. They are to be seen as being able to help as a part of the means that God will use to bless the sick person with good health through the treatments and the medicines that they administer.

We are not those who believe in the healing ministries of mere men today, even if they do profess to be Christians. But we do believe that the healing ministry of Jesus continues today. It most certainly true that God gave gifts of healings and the ability to heal to the Apostles in the days of early church. But when the Apostles left the scene and left behind the Scriptures, we believe that the ministry of revelatory gifts of prophecy, tongues and gifts of healings ceased. The need of men to be healed did not cease. But the greater need was the healing of men's souls. Jesus and the Apostles and others of that time in the early Church did have gifts of miracles given to them to verify to those whom they preached to, that their teaching of the gospel was the true gospel which would save men from their sins, heal their souls, and give them the gift of eternal life. The healing of the body is a great help, but it is not necessary to living a godly life. But O how it should convince every one of us of the power of Christ's grace to save and keep the soul! Do you believe that Jesus Christ is raised from the dead? Do you believe that He still does heal people according to His sovereign will? Then will you not also believe that the purpose that He has in mind in His healing a person's body is to demonstrate His greater purpose of healing people's souls; his power to give to every one who believes in Him, spiritual life and health and peace? We should learn to make request to the Lord Jesus immediately for both in relation to ourselves and in relation to other people. Prayer for the healing of the body is still commended and commanded in the Word of God. James Chapter 5: 13 and following show us the true pattern. "Is anyone among you suffering?" "Let him pray." "Is anyone cheerful?" "Let him sing psalms." "Is anyone among you sick?" "Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." "And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raised him up." "And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven." You can see that there is a possible connection between sins and physical illnesses that is mentioned here. But it is not always the case. But if it is the case that there were sins involved which brought about the illness, "they will be forgiven". What a great incentive for each of us to tell Christ about the illnesses of our friends and loved ones at once. It is indeed the right thing and the loving thing that Christians should pray and immediately bring the matter of the bodily illnesses of their loved ones, to Christ. The prayer of faith will save the sick. That is, the prayer of those believers or those elders who are praying for the person who is sick. The oil that may be used, I believe, is the emblem of the request of the elders for the power of Christ's Holy Spirit to come and minister healing to the one who is sick.

Now 2ndly- All Christians in the body of Christ have the responsibility in relation to the Healing Ministry of Jesus to look to Him for real results.

(Verse 31)

"So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her." "And she served them." Matthew's gospel says, "So He touched her hand, and the fever left her." "And she arose and served them." Luke's gospel says, "So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her." "And immediately she arose and served them." When you and I pray to the Lord Jesus and make request of Him to heal our loved ones, we must also have the faith to expect real results. The disciples here had that faith and because they were looking to Jesus to do what they knew that no other man could do; because their prayers were prayers of simple trust, and it was not a matter of the degree of trust which Jesus acted upon. This is the way that it is with us as well in the healing of both soul and body. It is not always the will of the Lord that people be healed physically. It is a matter which the prayerful Christian lays before the Lord and watches to see how the Lord will act. Prayer is not a demand, it is not a statement to him of our rights, it is a humble request that He would see and intervene, and act in accordance with God's perfect will. You will remember that the great Apostle Paul was so given the miraculous gift of healings, recorded in Acts 19: 11 where it says, "Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them." But this same man says in 2 Timothy 4: 20, "Erastus stayed in Corinth, but Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick." It is not always the Lord's will to heal the body. But it is always his will to heal the sin-sick soul of those who will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. You will find this joyfully true if you will trust in for it, if you will pray for it, and will ask others to pray for it. Turn over to Psalm 30 and you will see the joy of receiving of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ to your soul. "I will extol You, O Lord, for You have lifted me up, and have not let my foes rejoice over me." "O Lord my God, I cried out to you, and You healed me." "O Lord, You brought my soul up from the grave; you have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." Let it always be remembered that God is a prayer hearing God. When we cry to Him He lifts us up and when we pray He hears us and brings definite results. "So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up." This was the definite result to this dear woman. It will be the definite result given to all who call

upon Jesus' name. For even if God does not choose to heal you bodily in this life, and you die, you will still go to heaven. And there you await the coming Day of the Resurrection of the Dead when your body will be raised and you will be lifted up and given the transformed Resurrection body, the same body that you have now except with no sin, no disease, but only glory and beauty and power and strength. There are always definite and immediate results when the Lord Jesus heals someone, and when He wants to make His power known. And when He waits to heal, it is so that His Holy Name would be magnified when the full and total healing is done.

The other definite and immediate result that we as the disciples of the Lord should look for when Jesus heals someone either physically or spiritually, is the immediate desire to serve and to be of service to others around them. Not only did the fever immediately leave this woman but "immediately she arose and served them." The power of Jesus is accompanied by virtue. There is a very thankful, joyful, and praising heart toward God. And there is a real thankfulness for the prayers of the people who prayed for that one and cared for that one when they were sick. This leads to a desire, now that life and health and strength have returned, to serve God and others. Physical healing, when accompanied by grace, causes the person healed to think more of the people around them, out of thankfulness for the miracle done for them, than they do of themselves. This is one of the great indications of a true miracle having taken place, and not some phony healing show. Many ministries of "healing" by men in our days might cause those supposedly healed to praise God for some personal gain, but it is unlikely that it will result in an immediate desire to serve others. Whereas, service is one of the the very first things that the one truly healed physically or spiritually thinks about when they are healed or saved. Think of the Apostle Paul in Acts 9: 6. After the Lord brings about his conversion by means of light shining upon him and a voice speaking to him he says, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" It is always a good indication of a true conversion, the real healing begun in the soul, when that person goes about to serve God and the church which they become a member of. It is a great indication of continued spiritual health when that person continues to look for ways that they might serve God and the church as they grow up into Christ. A selfish soul is a diseased and afflicted soul. But a soul that has been healed is ready to be unselfish and generous and giving. Let us consider it and pray for it in ourselves and for Christ's power to come in saving healing strength to many.

And then the 3rd thing that we should do in relation to Jesus' ministry of healing is to expect that many others will come looking for help.

(Verses 32-34)

"At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed." "And the whole city was gathered together at the door." You can see from this, that word had spread about Jesus' healing ministry. People knew that there was power with Jesus to really heal, to really get rid of demons permanently. Word spread like wildfire that Jesus was the Great Physician of men's bodies. It says, "Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak because they knew Him. How good and how gracious was the Lord Jesus not to turn anyone away who needed healing. It does not say that each one who was healed also believed in Him for salvation. But who could think that there were not many who did. Physical healing doesn't always lead to spiritual healing, but when we come to know that it is from God, through Jesus Christ, it ought to lead us to expect that many others will come looking for help because some have been truly and really healed. The same is true of the healing grace of the gospel. When a person comes to Jesus and believes in His power to save from sins and to change the heart so that it will head down the path of righteousness, many others will come to see and to inquire whether it is real and whether it is true. They may not all come for the right reasons. But perhaps God will so work that they will learn in time, that the Lord's power is not only mighty to heal physically, but mighty to save the soul; mighty to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. Is this not what we pray for? Is this not in accordance with the promise which comes to us from Jesus Himself? He says in Mark 11: 22, "Have faith in God." "For assuredly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain 'Be removed and be cast into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says." "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray believe that you receive them, and you will have them." Lord, let the power of Jesus to heal and to save be understood to the salvation of many people in our days. Amen.