

Mark 1:29-39. As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. ³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" ³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Let us rise up each day and serve our Lord.

For he is our helper!

He is our salvation!

Each day is a gift. More than a mere motto or a cute phrase, these words ring with a fuller sound after the year that we have gone through. After enduring a year when illness and death touched my family, friends, and neighbors, I can tell you that I have a heightened awareness of how precious life can be. Maybe you do too.

As those living in a world so plagued by sin, we can be sure that we will face problems, trials, sickness, and hardship – no matter what year it is. We are, therefore, blessed to know from God's Word that He cares for us. The God who created us took on our flesh to save us. He breathed in our air and He saw first-hand the pains that we feel. The One who followed Simon Peter to his mother-in-law's sick-bed still welcomes our prayers. Bring them to Him each day. Cast your daily anxieties on Him because He cares for you. Dwell in the peace that He brings.

And so today we take a closer look at this account from the Gospel of Mark chapter 1, which in just these few verses, is chock full of good stuff. In this section of Scripture, we see how Jesus helped his disciples, how he heard their concerns, and how he responded with compassion and care. We see his power over sin, death, sickness, and hell. We see how Jesus' tirelessly went about his mission of

accomplishing our salvation and preaching the good news as he traveled from place to place. And in the midst of it all, he found the time to go off to a solitary place and pray. How amazing it would have been to spend just one day with Jesus!

By faith, we are blessed with the understanding that Jesus is with us every day. He promises us that even in days of difficulty and sadness, joy and activity, boredom and busyness, that he is with us always to the very end of the age. He is there to hear our prayers. He is there to bless us with his Word. He is there to comfort and to save us, each and every day! Renewed by his compassion and care, blessed today by his Word and his touch, let us rise up each new day and serve our Lord. For he is our helper! He is our salvation!

And so we pick up the account where we left off last week with Jesus and the disciples as they leave the synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus has spoken the Word of God with authority and has driven out a demon. Mark records for us that as soon as they left the synagogue, they all went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew, who had heavy hearts and an issue that weighed on them. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. Notice how the disciples simply took their concerns to Jesus. Notice how Jesus responded with compassion and care. With words that are concise yet profound, Mark proclaims the compassion and the power of Christ. ***So he went to her, took her hand, and helped her up...*** Jesus heard their request and he responded with care.

Jesus hears our personal prayers. He listens as we pray for others. The Savior who came to take away our sins by dying on the cross for us shows us by His life of compassion that He cares for our bodies and our souls. He makes it so clear and simple he has the power to help! He wants us to bring our prayers to him!

How could we forget the power and the compassion that is jammed packed into these verses?! How could we take our eyes away from this simple stunning moment and so soon forget the personal touch and the care that jumps off this page as we see this woman spring out of bed and serve those around her?! But sadly, we do. So often we do. We forget, we take our eyes off who Jesus is and how he helps his people with compassion and care.

As we are confronted by the daily problems of this world, by sickness and death, hardship and trial, we forget to take all of this to Jesus. We forget to look to Jesus and we stare at our problems. We stare at the symptoms of sin, we sink down under the weight of these things, and for one reason or another, we cannot bring ourselves to take this all to Jesus. Do we fear that he is too busy? Do we doubt that he has the power to help? Do we forget who he is and what he has shown us? Are we somehow hindered by reason or hampered by pride to bring this to our Savior? We are so filled

with pride or a lack of trust in God that we try to handle all of this by ourselves because we are convinced *that's how things really work?*

Once more Jesus shatters the darkness of sin and unbelief, of doubt and fear! Look at the word of God before us today and believe! Believe in the one who cares for you. The one who drives out demons scatters our doubts and fears! He comes near through his Word. He touches our hand through the sacraments to remind us of his love, his presence, and his power! The Lord Jesus, the friend of sinners is near! Rise up in faith and bring your prayers, your petitions, your requests to the Son of God, and trust that he will do what is best.

It's interesting to see how the disciples were growing in their trust of Jesus. After they were called to follow him, they saw so plainly his compassion and care, they heard so clearly his words of authority. The Spirit was, therefore, working in their hearts and so they brought their concern to Jesus. We are then told that the Savior hearing of this concern, went to this dear woman, took her hand, helped her up and the fever left her. Notice what happens next! ***The fever left her and she began to wait on them.*** With her health and life restored, we are told that she immediately began to wait on them! Acutely aware of how each day is a gift from God's hand, this woman was compelled by a grateful heart to serve her Lord and others.

Best of all, Jesus had not only come near to give her a new lease on life, He came to provide the gift of eternal life for us all through his life, death, and resurrection. This is made clear in the rest of the lesson. Not only is Jesus our helper and friend, *He is our salvation.* Watch, in the rest of this lesson, as the Savior makes his ultimate mission so wonderfully clear.

Word must have gotten out about Jesus, news about him had spread so quickly, that the whole town would soon descend upon the home of Simon and Andrew. ³² ***That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed.*** ³³ ***The whole town gathered at the door,*** ³⁴ ***and Jesus healed many who had various diseases.*** Well into the night, Jesus helped and healed and drove out demons, but once more we are told ***Jesus would not let the demons speak, because they knew who he was.*** It was *his* mission to proclaim this truth. Jesus had come to proclaim and be the good news of eternal life. He had come to fulfill God's promises and give his life for ours on the cross. He had come to open the hearts of sinners to faith and the mouths of those believers to declare his praise. Jesus had not come to win a popularity contest. He had not come to be a mere miracle worker or even some grand physician nor some earthly leader. He had come to be our Savior. The one who so clearly cares about people and their earthly needs and their daily aches and pains and problems had come to rescue us from sin and hell and eternal death. He had

come to proclaim the gospel and fulfill the promises of God. He had come to pay for the sins of the whole world and proclaim peace with God and open the gift of eternal life for all who would believe. Therefore, after this incredible day and night of healing and driving out demons, Jesus gets up so very early in the morning, while it was still dark, and he went off to a solitary place to pray. He went to speak to his Father, to inquire of his Father's will, to be restored and refreshed in his resolve to serve according to the Father's plan.

And so when Simon Peter and his companions find Jesus and they exclaimed, ***"Everyone is looking for you!"***, it ought not to surprise us when Jesus answers, ***"Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."***

Jesus only had so much time on this earth and he was compelled to share the good news with as many people as he could. He was compelled by his love for us to care for the needs of our bodies and our souls. Thus, Jesus would go from there and would tirelessly (relentlessly) go about preaching and teaching and driving out demons on his way to the cross. For that is why he came.

Remember that Simon Peter's mother-in-law was healed, much like those many others that gathered at the door of that house that incredible night, but sickness and trouble and death would come knocking again. That is just the awful truth of this life of sin. However, God's Word assures us and by faith, we know and believe that the one who stands at the door came to give us eternal life. He cares for our bodies and our souls. He hears our desperate pleas for help in our times of trouble. He draws near when you are ill, when your loved ones are ailing and dying, he is your helper and friend, He is our Savior. Bring your requests to him. Ask for his help. Trust in his power and care. Hear and believe his word. Know of his promise that he will make all things work out for the good of those who love him. Jesus is the great physician of body and soul, and he is the resurrection and the life. Therefore, be assured and reassured, that whatever happens, even when death does come, he will raise us up to eternal life, and we see him with our own eyes! How amazing will it be to spend, not just a day, but an eternity day the presence of Savior in the perfect bliss of heaven!

Bless the Lord and praise His name, for each and every day is a gift from the hand of God. He is our Help. He is our Salvation. Compelled by the endless love of your Savior, rise up each day and serve God and serve one another to his glory knowing that you are in his care. Amen.