

Sermon 1625

Mark 1.29-39

February 4, 2018

It is a worn-out stereotype, but one that persists because it is so authentic—the person who claims to be there for everyone, but in reality, is there for no one. It could be a governor in an eastern seacoast state, bragging up his humble roots, how he will never forget where he came from or the people he grew up with. He is there for every one of them. His door is always open. Then when the chips are down no one can even find the door without a key made of hundred dollar bills. What can he do? He's only human and he needs to run for reelection. It could be the aspiring socialite, arranging her calendar for this charity ball and that committee meeting. What is it this week? The PTA? Rats! How will she fit in Suzie's dance practices and Jimmy's Saturday soccer when her manicure appointment is at the same time? What can she do? She's only human and there's only 24 hours in a day.

Unrealistic? You haven't been paying attention.

But that's the way people think about God. Yes, he is there for all, but he is pretty busy. He can't look out for the little guy. Maybe that's why we don't take a lot of things to Jesus in prayer. "I don't want to bother him with it. It's no big deal."

Bother him. He won't mind. Jesus is

#### The Powerful Son of God

1. He is here for you (29-31).
2. He is here for all (32-39).

"As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her (29-30)."

If Jesus is the powerful Son of God, he's more than human. He can do anything. It's just a question of whether he wants to or not. And here's a typical "eye-rolling, let's get out of here quick to avoid an awkward situation" moment for lesser people. Peter is so excited about what happened during the synagogue service (Jesus had driven out a heckling demon), he forgot all about his sick mother-in-law. It was sort of hard to do, because she and his wife had uncharacteristically skipped services. Because his mother-in-law was sick. That's why Peter was alone in worship. Because his mother-in-law was sick. Does he remember that? No. He invites Jesus and the gang over for a Sabbath lunch. Clueless, clueless Peter.

Well, as soon as they get into the house you could tell something was up. After the daggers Mrs. Peter cast at her husband, she explained to Jesus that her mother was sick, really sick. Burning up with a fever, actually. She doesn't ask Jesus for a miracle. Maybe her faith in him isn't strong enough to do that, yet. Maybe she is thinking like so many of us often think, "I don't want to bother Jesus. He probably has better things to do."

"So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them (31)."

Jesus heals her. No trumpet fanfare. No center ring at the Barnum and Bailey Circus. He just goes in, gently takes her by the hand and helps her out of bed. So complete is her miraculous healing, there isn't any recuperation time needed. You and me, we run a quart low for a couple days after we get over a fever, but not Peter's mother-in-law. As soon as Jesus helps her up, there's a meal to set before the guests. "Here, try this pickled fish, Jesus. I know you'll like it. I made it myself. Take another helping and put some meat on those bones. Didn't your mother ever feed you?"

The miracle shows two things. Jesus is the Son of God. Only God can heal like that. Jesus can heal like that. Jesus is God. The second thing? Jesus cares. He is here for the humble individual. He is here for you.

So don't let the devil try to convince us Jesus is too busy. Don't let the devil try to fool us into thinking it is too trivial a matter. That's unbelief. Unbelief asks nothing from God. "This is too big for him to handle," unbelief says. Then it turns around and says, "That's too small a thing for him to bother with." Pretty soon you have a God who does nothing for you. And then the devils says, "It's because he doesn't care."

I you are like me and have walked a mile or so down that road, turn back! Ask Peter, James or John for directions! Repent! Jesus is the powerful Son of God. He is here for you. And he is here for all.

Jesus spends the day at Peter's. But then night falls. The Sabbath is over. There is a knock on the front door. Peter opens it. He looks past the person in the doorway. His small front yard is packed with people. They are in the street, flooding onto the side streets. Everywhere he looks, they have brought their sick, even their demon-possessed sons, daughters, husbands, wives, friends. News of what Jesus had done that morning in the synagogue had spread far beyond the circle of worshippers there. Now that the Sabbath was over, they were trusting Jesus could heal them. All of them. Peter turned around to Jesus. "It's for you." And without a word, Jesus walked out of the house and waded into the darkness and the crowd.

"Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons (34)."

We don't have to pull favors to get Jesus' attention. You know what I mean. A young couple with a newborn is told by one grandma, "I know you got married at that wedding chapel in Vegas. I told you to get married at St. Joseph's, but no, you had to marry a Lutheran boy. But don't worry, I know a priest who will baptize your baby, no questions asked. Just let me work on it a little." If Peter's mother-in-law were the only person Jesus healed that day, we could have our suspicions that you had to have an in with Jesus. After all, Peter was going to be a big man in Jesus' plans! Certainly Jesus would do Peter a favor! Well, what sort of an in do all the people waiting in the darkness have with Jesus? They aren't relatives of his

disciples. Since they were sick and demon-possessed, I imagine none of them were in worship that Sabbath. It wasn't exactly the best time of the day to be bothering Jesus. Take a poll about how many clergymen want to visit a couple to start marriage counseling on a Sunday night. And it took a while to get to them all.

Jesus cared for all of them. They believed in him. They trusted he had both the power and the will to help them. That's all the connection they needed. Whoever believes in him will never be put to shame. Faith holds on to the words and promise of God. Jesus was here for all of them.

Jesus is here for all of us. I'd love to say I am here for all of you, but I know, because of human frailties, that is not true. I get tired. I get weak. I get sick. One day I will get retired. Same with Pastor Kolander, only a lot longer down the road. I don't want it to be that way. I got scolded by one of you. "You've got other things to worry about. Stop worrying about me." No, I don't have anything else that is more important than caring about you. If Jesus is here for us all, a good pastor who is serving as Jesus' helper, should strive to be here for all, too. Don't let anyone make you lower your standards. A pastor is not a professional who only keeps day-time office hours, like a doctor or corporate lawyer, a financial consultant or bookie! The office of pastor exists to serve you with the Law and Gospel. Paul spent sleepless nights in prayer for those he served. There's lots of nights I don't sleep so well, either.

But Jesus has none of those limitations. Remember, his miracles prove that he is God. He can do anything. And he will do exactly what he promises. Want to hear some of those promises?

"Cast all your cares on him, for he cares for you (1 Peter 5.7)." "Before they call, I will answer (Isaiah 65.24)." "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you (Hebrews 13.5)." "Be not afraid (Luke 5.10)." "Given for you, poured out for you, for the forgiveness of sins."

So what are we going to say in response to this? Jesus is too busy? He's too weak. He's too distracted? It is only those who have no shame or are ignorant beyond repair who cling to falsehoods after they have been revealed to be falsehoods. Certainly we are not in that benighted, befuddled and bedeviled bunch.

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2. He is here for all (32-39).

If God be for us, who can be against us? The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?