

West Branch Community of Christ

Participant Companion Guide – Lectionary Lessons Pilot

February 8, 2015

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (Ordinary Time) YOUTH MINISTRIES DAY

Theme: COME AND BE HEALED

Mark 1:29–39 IV New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

29 As soon as they* left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

32 That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered around the door. 34 And he cured 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.

35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37 When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' 38 He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.' 39 And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Central Ideas:

- ***Jesus brings wholeness through his healing touch.***
- ***Faithful disciples respond to Jesus' healing by ministering and serving others.***
- ***Jesus models the need for intentional daily prayer in deserted places.***
- ***Jesus' mission involves preaching and healing. He invites all to come and be healed.***

Exploring the Scripture

The Gospel of Mark 1:29–39 offers two healing stories, an intentional time of prayer, and a reaffirmation of Jesus' mission. First, Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law. She has a fever, is confined to her bed, and unable to greet and serve her guests. Jesus immediately goes to her and heals her by taking her hand and lifting her up. Second, people from the village come to Simon's home to have their illnesses and demonic possessions healed. Jesus heals all who come. In addition, Jesus commands the demons not to reveal his true identity.

The disciples want Jesus to continue his miraculous healings. Instead, in the morning after the healing miracles, Jesus goes to a deserted place to pray. When the disciples invite him back to Capernaum, Jesus refuses. Instead, he reaffirms his missional purpose and invites the disciples to come with him. They go throughout Galilee inviting others to come, hear Jesus' teachings, be healed, and to share the message of God's generous love with more people in more places.

When Jesus healed Simon's mother-in-law, he made her whole. His touch changed her state of unwellness to wholeness. Touch is an intimate action between people. When Jesus touches, he brings the other person into relationship with him.

The woman responded by ministering as a faithful disciple. She greeted, cared for, and fed her guests. Some may think she fulfilled her social and domestic duties. In contrast, consider that Simon's mother-in-law responded to Jesus' invitation to come, be healed, and serve. She opened her home to family, Jesus and the disciples. She created a gathering place for the community of believers to be in relationship with one another. In addition, she opened her home to the entire village modeling Jesus' invitation to come and be healed. She received the gift of wholeness and shared her gratefulness through servant ministry.

Early Christian communities often met in house churches. These homes provided places to share new understandings and to invite others to hear Christ's messages of justice and peace.

The next morning Jesus rose in the dark and went to a deserted place to pray. Jesus understood how critical it was to stay connected with God. We are reminded to follow Jesus' example. Daily connection with our creator is essential for faithfulness.

The disciples did not understand the importance of daily prayer and meditation with God. They were frustrated by Jesus' absence. Simon, in particular, wanted him to return and heal more people. Jesus reminded them his mission involved preaching and healing throughout Galilee. Jesus' invites all to come and be healed.

As we look at the scripture for today, we see Jesus brings healing and wholeness through touch. When we look to the sacraments in Community of Christ, we see many of them include the ministry of touch. We lay on hands for the healing of the sick. We bless babies by holding them. We baptize through holding. We confirm, ordain, and offer blessings by laying our hands on the person's head.

There is power in Jesus' healing touch, and we are representatives of Christ and bring Christ's healing in the world through loving touch. Simon's mother-in-law responded to healing by going and serving others. When we receive the blessings of Christ, we are also called to respond by serving and sharing that love with the community.