

Today's text is a continuation of the one we heard last week.

We are still in the very beginning of the Gospel of Mark.

So far, in his ministry, Jesus was baptized, then he went to the wilderness for 40 days and was tempted by Satan.

After that, he came back and he called his disciples to follow him, Simon, Andrew, James and John.

Now that he's been baptized, and he's gathered his disciples, he is ready to begin his ministry.

What does he do?

He heals people, right off the bat.

He heals the man with the unclean spirit, as we heard last week.

And in today's lesson, he heals Simon's mother-in-law, and many others who were sick with various diseases.

What I love about this is that Jesus' understanding of living out his call means to literally help people.

Maybe he knows that they don't want to hear lectures, they don't want to be told what to do, they don't want him to simply read the Hebrew Bible to them.

They need tangible help, and he delivers it.

He heals and he feeds people.

How do we live out our call as the body of Christ?

We too are called to offer tangible help to each other.

We are healers.

We pray for each other, we send cards to each other, we visit each other, we listen to each other vent, we drive each other to appointments.

We connect each other with resources.

We cook for each other and deliver covered dishes.

We pay medical bills and we furnish apartments.

We make sure our most vulnerable members have what they need.

In the wider community, we partner with organizations, which help those who are homeless and those who are food insecure.

We help survivors of domestic violence, veterans, and those who have been persecuted for being LGBT, and so many more.

You might think that we sound more like a social service organization than a church, but maybe that's because churches have been missing the mark.

We can teach and preach and profess and pray, but without the tangible help, without using our hands to serve one another, our words lose their power.

You see, Jesus was an indiscriminate healer.

He healed in public and in private.

He healed men and women, young and old.

He healed those with life-threatening illnesses and brought people back from the dead and he healed people who had the common cold.

What I love about our church is that we too, try to heal indiscriminately.

If you come to church on Sunday or contact the church office, or somehow let us know that you're in need, we do our best to try to help you.

We don't ask whether someone is worthy.

We don't ask to see their rap sheet.

We don't ask how many jobs they've applied for.

We don't ask who else they've asked for help.

When someone says they need help, we trust them, and we do what we can to help heal their mind, body and spirit.

To me, this is what it means to be the body of Christ, a body of healers.

This afternoon, we are going to have our Annual Meeting where we reflect upon what we did last year and hear about what is to come this next year.

I also encourage you to read the Annual Report, because it highlights all the ways in which we are healers, of each other, the community, and the world.

Thanks be to God that we are here and may we continue to offer healing to our community and the wider world for generations to come.

Amen.

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