

## Turn to the Great Physician for Healing

1. He Heals Our Bodies
2. He Heals Our Souls
3. He Prays for Our Healing
4. He Searches for the Sick

Where do you turn for medical expertise? Do you have a family doctor that you trust? If you have heart problems, do you see a cardiologist? If you've been in an accident or have pain in your body, do you visit a physical therapist? Do you take your children to see a pediatrician? Whom do you turn to for medical expertise? Sometimes in a pinch, people scroll through WebMD.com for advice. But for our serious health concerns, we want a professional; we want someone who can help us make the right decision on our treatments, who understands our medical condition, and who knows how to fix it. We want a good physician.

But is that the only place you turn? Do you put all your confidence in just one doctor? Some people seek a second opinion from another doctor – but that's not what I mean. As Christians, when we need healing, we turn to Jesus, the best doctor, the Great Physician. Jesus made our bodies, and he knows how to heal them. He knows our illnesses, and he can take them away with his healing touch. We turn to Jesus, our Great Physician, for healing.

That's what the people of Galilee did. In today's gospel, many people turned to Jesus: the disciples, Peter's mother-in-law, the whole town of Capernaum. They booked his schedule full with healing appointments because they knew his power and his love. Jesus had a busy day in our gospel, as many people turned to him for healing.

Our encouragement is to do the same. Turn to the Great Physician for healing. Jesus does what no other earthly doctor or skilled surgeon can do. Jesus not only heals our bodies; he also heals our souls, and he prays for our healing, and he searches for the sick – because he's the Great Physician. So turn to Great Physician for healing.



### 1. He Heals Our Bodies

Our lesson begins, **vs. 29-30**. In last week's gospel (and sermon) Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, and the people asked, "Who is this?! He teaches with authority!" So the disciples knew that Jesus' authoritative word could perform a medical miracle; they'd seen it before. So they brought him to see Simon Peter's mother-in-law. We don't know much about this woman, this mother of Peter's wife, except that she was on her death bed and that her life was in great danger. So, **vs. 31**. Jesus healed her body.

And Jesus does no less for us today. Jesus is the one who heals our bodies, as well. We may turn to a family doctor, a cardiologist, or a pediatrician for medical expertise and advanced treatment. And we ought to thank God that we live at a time when modern medicine can do things never done before. But for all our advances in healthcare, Jesus is still the Great Physician, and anytime anyone is healed, that healing comes only from Jesus. Jesus is the one who formed us in the first place. At creation Jesus wrote the blueprints for the human body. He knows exactly how our bodies work, how they function, and he knows exactly how to fix them. He also formed each of us, individually, in our mother's womb. He carefully knit us together, and to this day has watched over our lives and protected us in untold ways. We confess with the psalmist, "**I praise you [O Lord] because I am fearfully and wonderfully made**" (Ps 139:14).

So from minor scratches to major surgeries, Jesus heals our bodies. His healing touch reduced the fever of Peter's mother-in-law, and his healing touch cures our sicknesses and diseases, as well. And sometimes Jesus' will is not to grant someone physical healing, but rather to give them eternal life, or to ask them to bear pain patiently until he does give them eternal life. But even then, Jesus is still the Great Physician. So whether it's your own health or the health of a loved one, always turn to Jesus the Great Physician, because he is the only one who can heal our bodies.

### 2. He Heals Our Souls

The people of Capernaum realized this right away. **Vs. 32-34a**. It says the "**whole town**" showed up. Capernaum was not that big of a city, but we're still talking about dozens and dozens of people. And our lesson says "**Jesus healed many**" that evening, including people plagued with a disease that we don't hear about very often today. **Vs. 34b**.

Demon possession. We heard about it last Sunday in the sermon. Remember how the demon shook that man from the synagogue violently and left with him shriek (Mk 1:26). Demon possession was pretty common back then; we hear about it all the time in the gospels. Last Sunday, Pastor Waldschmidt called it a flurry of fighting against Jesus, who had just arrived on earth – like the flurry of fighting at Normandy, when Allied forces arrived on the beach.

People actually possessed by a demon are under Satan's control. Their bodies are no longer their own; their souls are sick. But Satan doesn't have to actually possess a person to infect their souls with sickness. All he has to do is convince them to reject Jesus as their Savior. If you're an unbeliever, you're under Satan's control, and your soul is sick. But even if you're a believer in Jesus, Satan still tempts us to doubt God's love and turn away from our Savior. He wants us to contract a spiritual sickness because he knows it leads to spiritual death.

Right now across America there's a national flu epidemic; you see it in the news all the time; the whole country is infected, it seems. But even more dangerous than the flu is the epidemic of sin and unbelief, around us and within us. Satan constantly coughs contagions and temptations into our lives that weaken our spiritual immune systems. Our souls are spiritually

susceptible to infection. We don't wash our hands enough with the soap of confession and absolution and with the water of baptism. We don't take our daily dose of "vitamin G" (gospel). We breathe in the contagious sins of others. And when we do fall into temptation, we don't treat our wounds enough with the medicine of Holy Communion or the bandages of public worship. Our souls are sick!

So turn to the Great Physician to heal your soul. Sit down in the clinic of Christ. There's no waiting line or co-pay or deductible to worry about. The doctor wants to see you, and his medicine is the gospel of God's forgiveness and grace – the good news that Jesus forgives you, Jesus loves you, Jesus is with you, and Jesus heals you. Jesus suffered and died on the cross to heal you, and that blood he shed is now the medicine that makes your soul well. Jesus is the living water that wells up to eternal life within us (Jn 4). Jesus is the bread of life that strengthens the ill (Jn 6). Jesus said, **"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest"** (Mt 11:28), rest for your souls. Jesus cleanses us of the spiritual sickness of sin and strengthens our healthy heartbeat of faith and breathes new life into our souls. So turn to the Great Physician for healing. He heals our souls.

### 3. He Prays for Our Healing

Now it had been a long and tiring evening for Jesus, with all these healings and exorcisms. But instead of staying in bed and sleeping in the next morning, vs. 35. Does your doctor pray for you? Maybe you do have a doctor that prays for you. I once had a Christian doctor tell me that he was praying for me and my family. And isn't it so comforting to know that people are praying for you? One of the things that makes our Great Physician so great is that he prays for our healing. And here we see Jesus doing just that – going off to a quiet place to pray for his people.

We don't have the words of that prayer recorded for us here, but Jesus often prayed for his people. On the night before he died, on Maundy Thursday, Jesus prayed this prayer (and listen for all the times he says "they" or "them;" he's talking about believers). **"I pray for them... Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name... I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them... My prayer is...that you protect them from the evil one... Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory"** (Jn 17). That's a prayer of Jesus, for us, for our healing! Jesus has us on his mind and on his lips as he prays to the heavenly Father for our all our needs. People pray for each other when they care for each other. And Jesus cares for us! That's why Jesus prays for our healing.

### 4. He Searches for the Sick

And, finally, Jesus also searches for the sick. You've heard of doctors who make house calls and in-home medical care. But how many doctors actually go out and look for the sick. Jesus does. Vs. 36-38. For Jesus, the most important task was preaching the gospel and sharing God's forgiveness and love. Everything else (all the miracles and the driving out of demons) simply supported and validated his message. It did no one any good to be healed in their body but never hear the gospel. So after preaching the gospel in Capernaum and healing many diseases, Jesus said, "It's time to move on. I need to go to a new place. I need to preach the gospel to more people so that more people can hear the good news. That's why I have come – to search for the sick."

And that's what Jesus still does today. He still preaches his gospel all over the world – through his word, and through pastors and teachers who share the word. And that word of the gospel still brings people to faith and comforts souls. And sharing that gospel is still Jesus' #1 priority. **"That is why I have come,"** he said.

So listen to his preaching; Jesus is speaking to you. He wants you to know that he's taken you by the hand and lifts you up from the deathbed of sin. He wants you to trust that, by his Good Friday sacrifice and Easter Sunday resurrection, he's healed you. He searched for you and healed you, just like he searches for others and heals them.

So turn to the Great Physician for healing. He's better than your best doctor; and he's certainly better than WebMD.com. He heals our bodies, heals our souls, prays for our healing, and even searches for the sick. **"That is why I have come,"** he said, so that people like us, who need healing in so many ways, would find in Jesus the healing that makes us truly well.

#### Mark 1:29-39

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> 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.

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, <sup>37</sup> and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."  
<sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.