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THE HEALER OF BROKEN HEARTS

Jeffery D. Woodhams

One of the things we hate about the broken state of this world is the prevalence of pain, misery and suffering. We want those things to end! We look forward to a new life in heaven with no pains, no misery, no injury, no doctor's visits (or doctor's bills, for that matter!). Some of you know what it's like to take a handful of pills two or three times a day. The struggle with disease and pain has been with us since our very first ancestors, Adam and Eve. That's why people tend to get excited about "miracle cures," and you'll find this to be true in any place, in any epoch of world history, including our modern times. When traditional medicine fails, people look for miracles through the occult (by means of witchdoctors and shamans), through home remedies, through encounters with quacks, and especially through so-called faith healing.

Now, if we really wanted to fill up this auditorium, all we'd have to do is advertise that we have someone here with healing power. People will come for that! We could fill this sanctuary to standing room only, and then have overflow capacity on closed circuit television, and even more, if we were to tell people they could come here and be healed of their cancer, their kidney failure, their diabetes, or their mental disorders. But let me tell you something—that is not how God operates!

I want to be careful here because I don't want anyone to get the impression that God cannot or does not heal people. He absolutely can, and He does. But when we see Jesus healing people, He never did it to draw a crowd or to solicit money or to make a name for Himself. He never did that! What did He do? I want to take a look today at Jesus' motivations and methods for healing people here in the first chapter of Mark. Let's pick up where we left off last time, in verse 21:

²¹ *And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.*

²² *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*

²³ *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,*

²⁴ *Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*

²⁵ *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.*

²⁶ *And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.*

²⁷ *And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.*

²⁸ *And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.*

Here's Jesus, teaching with authority like we discussed last week, when all of a sudden someone starts to get angry! My preacher when I was growing up had a saying: "If you throw a rock into a pack of dogs, the one that gets hit howls the loudest." He was a real fire-and-brimstone preacher; but the truth

is that if you speak the truth, yes, even speaking the truth in love, some people will not want to hear it and they'll get angry. It happened to Jesus, it happened to Paul, and if I speak long enough it may happen to me!

This one who got angry happened to be under the influence of a demon. Yes, demons are real, and they do exercise influence in this world. Nowadays we classify such people as mentally ill and we try to control them with medication. My purpose is not to get into the specifics of demonic and occultic influence today, but I assure you that it does exist now just as it did in Jesus' day.¹

Notice what this demon says to Jesus. He recognizes who Jesus is and why He has such authority. In the KJV, we read, "Art thou come to destroy us?" You might see it in other translations as a statement, not a question, along the lines of, "You have come to destroy us!" That word *destroy* in Greek means *to ruin*, not *to annihilate*. You see, Jesus' mission will ruin Satan's power, just as God had told Adam and Eve way back in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise [crush] thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The devil's power, his "head," would be irreparably damaged, but Jesus would be hurt in the process. And the demon addressing Jesus that morning knew it all too well!

How did Jesus respond? There was, in this case, no negotiation. In fact, the words "Hold thy peace"—folks, that's a direct order. It's a command. It means, "Be muzzled!" It's the same word used for muzzling an animal, and interestingly enough, it's the same word He used when He calmed the tempest, saying, "Peace! Be still!" He said, "Be muzzled!" Then Jesus commanded the demon to leave. There's no incantation, no hocus-pocus. Jesus told him to leave, and he left. He left violently, but he did leave.

So the people in the synagogue got quite a shock that morning. First, Jesus taught them with authority, and they were amazed at that. Then, Jesus demonstrated authority over a demon. They were even more surprised; and of course, they began to talk about it. Now, remember, it's a Sabbath Day; and Jews could only walk so far on the Sabbath. Even so, the word got out very, very quickly: "Hey, did you hear about that Jesus guy? He's a rabbi from Nazareth, of all places. Yeah, seriously! Well, they say that this morning..." Without telephones, without Facebook, without Katie Couric, everyone got the message. Oh, wait...it seems nobody watched her anyway. Well, you get the idea!

But the point is that Jesus healed this person. We would call this individual a very sick person, we would put him on medication and probably keep him under close watch in an institution. And when a person like this does some terrible crime, the first thing you read in the paper is, "He didn't have his medications." I'm not saying every case of mental illness has to do with demons. Not saying that at all. But some of these cases do—and Jesus healed this man. He gave him the relief he needed. I wonder what it was like for his family to finally be able to talk to him without having to worry for their safety.

Let's take a look at what happened next.

²⁹ *And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.*

³⁰ *But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her.*

¹ I strongly suspect demonic involvement in the recent story of a man beheading a woman on the island of Tenerife (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/8512540/British-woman-beheaded-in-busy-Tenerife-supermarket.html>) and of the cannibal in Russia (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/05/17/3219496.htm>).

³¹ *And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.*

Jesus and His disciples, these four that are with Him at this point, go to Peter and Andrew's house (remember, they are brothers). Peter's mother-in-law is there, but she's not feeling well. Now, this is not a life-threatening illness. She has a fever, she's down for a few days, but she'll recover in time. However, it would seem, without reading too much into the passage, that she feels bad that she can't entertain the guests. That was a big responsibility in those days. So she's sick, and it looks to me as though Peter and Andrew came to Jesus saying, "You'll have to excuse her; she's not feeling well, so we are shorthanded in the kitchen." It does not appear that they asked Jesus to heal her—but that's exactly what He did! He took the initiative here to reach out to her and heal her. And once she was healed, she was able to be the hostess that she wanted to be.

So we started out in the morning in the synagogue, moving in the afternoon to Peter and Andrew's house. Remember that during the Sabbath, Jews were restricted by tradition to staying very close to home; but in the Jewish culture, the Sabbath ended at sundown. That's why we see what happened next in verses 32–34:

³² *And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.*

³³ *And all the city was gathered together at the door.*

³⁴ *And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.*

Once the sun has gone down, it's a new day in the Jewish mindset and the travel restrictions are lifted. The next thing you know, there's a knock at the door; and suddenly the whole city is gathered outside this little home in Capernaum. Now, think about this: how many people are on the prayer list of this little church? More than the number of church members, I'll tell you that! We all know people who are hurting. Jesus healed and healed and healed that night.

But notice something peculiar: do you see how Jesus treated those demons? He wouldn't even let them speak! The really interesting bit tells us why: "because they knew him." He did not allow the demons to make a scene and argue with Him. In other words, He could have let them speak and tell people exactly who He is—but He didn't. He made the situation a lot less spectacular and self-serving than He could have.

You'll often see Jesus doing just that: telling people that he's healed, "Now, don't tell anyone who I am or what I've done for you." He did heal people as a part of His ministry, but there was no theatrical component to it. There were no media blitzes beforehand. There were no sensational "miracle-thons" or anything of that nature. Jesus healed, but He didn't advertise. The apostles followed suite in the book of Acts.

We would expect that after a day and evening of so much success—where people were gathering, crowds assembling, the word getting out—that Jesus would build upon that success. That's exactly what we'd find today. You'd have somebody setting up a ministry and making millions of dollars "serving the Lord" with a miracle ministry. Jesus didn't do that; so wherever you see such things, don't fall for it. Don't buy it. God can and does heal miraculously, yes, even in these latter days; but He doesn't advertise. He never has and He never will.

As further confirmation, let's continue this passage and see what happens next:

³⁵ *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.*

³⁶ *And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.*

³⁷ *And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.*

³⁸ *And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.*

³⁹ *And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.*

Do you see this? There was a crowd already gathered in Capernaum! Jesus goes out early to pray, even though I'm sure He was tired after a long night of healing people, but He made time to talk to His Father. While He's praying, His disciples tracked Him down and said, "Look, there's a crowd all ready for you, Jesus. People are looking for you!" But Jesus didn't go back there that day. He came to preach, and He wouldn't be able to do that in a place where everyone wanted only what He could do for them physically. He wanted to heal them on a greater and deeper level—He wanted to heal them spiritually: "for therefore came I forth."

Our physical pains and our hurts are a concern of Jesus; but ultimately, a blessing of healing the body is a *temporary* blessing. These bodies are getting older. Eventually, they'll die. Those people that Jesus had healed in Capernaum the night before—where are they now? They're dead! A blessing of healing is wonderful, and it can make the time we have here on earth that much more pleasant; but ultimately, we need a greater healing. Our spirits inside of us are broken and diseased and utterly unfit for heaven, but Jesus came to heal our broken spirits. He came to seek and to save those who are lost.

That is why the demons continued to resist Him and His message. Where He preached, He also cast out demons. They knew He had come to heal the broken spirits that were ripe for the demons' influence. He had come to ruin their domain. And ruin it He did!

Friends, if you're here today looking for a miracle, let me tell you that the greatest miracle you'll ever experience is the salvation and the healing that Jesus Christ brings. He knows your heart. He knows your hurts. He died on a cruel cross at the hands of vile men to take your suffering upon Himself. If your heart is in need of His healing, all you have to do today is ask. He knows your condition, and He holds the cure; will you come today to Jesus? He's the Healer of broken hearts.