

Mark 1:29-39

As you listen to the following reading from Mark, listen for something that stands out to you....what is something you relate to...or is there something that sounds unusual.. or really beautiful in your hearing of it...

Dramatic reading:

As soon as Jesus left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. Jesus came---and took her by the hand--- and lifted her up. --- Then the fever left her---- and she began to serve them!

That evening, at sundown, they brought to Jesus all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And Jesus 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.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went out to a deserted place---- and there he prayed.

Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said, "Jesus, everyone is searching for you!"

But Jesus answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also----- for that is what I came out to do."

And Jesus went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues --- --and casting out demons.

May God meet us in the hearing of this reading.....

Let us pray: O God of healing light, may the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts together be acceptable to you, our rock and our redeemer.

It is beautiful that you will be serving one another and sharing food when this is exactly what happened at Simon's house! First, Jesus heals the mother-in-law of a fever by taking her hand and lifting her up....what a beautiful act of compassion... I wonder if there can ever be healing...without love?

People sometimes laugh that the mother –in- law is healed and then immediately serves....what do you think about that? Was she being subservient ...or was serving, an honor...and perhaps a way of thanking Jesus?

So many people were healed by Jesus...he could have made this a big business...but he didn't? Instead...Jesus went off to pray. How is healing and prayer... perhaps interdependent? What are your experiences of prayer and healing?

In a book called *The Healing Light*, by Agnes Sanford, she describes God as being an active and powerful reality... "God is the Indwelling Light...who works through us, not *for* us...and prayers are fulfilled when we understand God's laws of love and faith."

Can there be healing, without love?

And what about the light? This is the "cross-quarter" time as described in Celtic cultures...the year is divided into 4 sections by the solstices...then divided again to make eight...and we are at one of those "cross-quarters" A midpoint between the winter solstice and the Spring equinox! Called *Beltane*, this is a beautiful time when we begin the "light half of the year!" We are beginning the "light half of the year!" What hope is there in that!?

It is a time when plants begin to turn towards the light from deep within the earth!....Also called Candlemas...also a time when lambing begins, the Celts recognized *Bridged*, the female deity of light and healing. She also was a healer and it was said that wherever she walked, small flowers and shamrocks would spring out of the ground....This is a time, right now, to welcome *healing light!*

Lastly, Jesus walked away from the crowds saying that he needed to go to neighboring towns....to proclaim the message...because that is what he came here to do.

What do you think Jesus' message is?

You will have some questions to explore together on a card at your table. We invite you to enjoy a good conversation together and be respectful and let one person speak at a time... You will also serve each other food as it is brought to your table. We have quiches and muffins and Marlene and George have made something special for us...they will describe it now.

Thank you for participating in this unique and hopefully enjoyable way of sharing Communion...through ritual, through conversation and through the sharing of a meal.

Before we start....let us say a grace: Loving and Healing God...bless this time together as we worship in new ways. Bless all those whose hands prepared this food...we give thanks for the gifts of your healing love, in this place and in the world. Amen