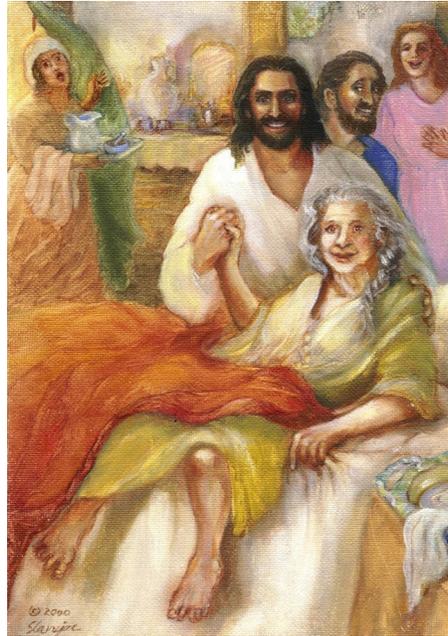


Devotion on the Miracles of Christ (Healing Simon Peter's Mother-in-Law) - 20 February 2014, Anno Domini (In the Year of our Lord)



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. 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. 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. 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. (Mark 1:29-39)

The occasion of this miracle of Jesus' healing occurs in three Gospels: Matt-8:14, Mark-1:30, Luke-4:38

Four chosen men of God begin to emerge as strong pillars of Christ's Gospel in today's text, but more importantly do we see the three whom Christ gave special privilege to witness the Transfiguration and to pray with Him His last night in the Garden. The house itself belongs to Peter. We see, too, the mother-in-law of Simon Peter lying sick of the fever. The disciples simply inform Christ of the illness but make no request. They were, perhaps, not yet aware of His power to heal. But Christ is a blessing, not only to those whom He calls directly, but the families of those so called. Christ heals the mother-in-law of Simon Peter. Just a few hours later, after sunset, Many diseased and possessed people were brought to Him for healing. How did these know that Christ would heal the diseased? Word of mouth had spread rapidly from house to house, street to street, and village to village of the healing of Simon Peter's relations. The glorious Gospel should, as well, travel rapidly from those who have come to know Christ.

When growing up, our family moved to the north Georgia mountain community of Chatsworth. About twenty miles south is the small community of White where Pine Log Methodist Church is located. In 1887, A.J. Showalter, an evangelist from Dalton, Georgia was preaching revival at the church. During the revival, he had occasion to write a letter of condolence to a man in Alabama whose wife had tragically died following another revival Showalter had preached there. In the letter, Showalter cited a verse from Deuteronomy 33:27: *"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."* (Deut 33:27) As he wrote these lines, the words to a wonderful poem came to mind. He jotted the words down and sent to the hymn tune writer in Philadelphia, Elisha A. Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman returned the poem in two weeks with music that fitted the words well – that old hymn favorite – **'Leaning on the Everlasting Arms'**. It is reported that this hymn made its way around the world in three months without the aid of radio or telephone. That is the power of the spoken word.

"And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her." It is a certainty that Christ already knew of the illness in the home of Simon Peter before He entered the door. But Christ is not imposing. He was not so with the men on the road to Emmaus following the resurrection, and He was never so, and IS never so, with any man or woman. He always followed etiquette and protocol of the times in dealing with others. So He enters the house and waits for the disciples to tell Him of the illness of Simon's mother-in-law. Following the tragedy of 9/11, Anne Graham Lotz was being interviewed on the CBS Early Show by Jane Clayson.

In an apparent attempt to disarm Lotz early in the interview, Jane Clayson asked: *"I've heard people say, those who are religious, those who are not, if God is good, how could God let this happen? To that, you say?"* Lotz responded: *"I say God is also angry when he sees something like this. I would say also for several years now Americans in a sense have shaken their fist at God and said, 'God, we want you out of our schools, our government, our business, we want you out of our marketplace.' And God, who is a gentleman, has just quietly backed out of our national and political life, our public life - removing his hand of blessing and protection. We need to turn to God first of all and say, 'God, we're sorry we have treated you this way and we invite you now to come into our national life. We put our trust in you.' We have our trust in God on our coins, we need to practice it."* Guess which of the two were disarmed.

"And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them." Amazing things will ALWAYS happen when Jesus takes us by the hand! See what happened to the lifeless daughter of poor Jairus: *"And when he was come in, he saith unto them, **Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.** And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, **Talitha cumi;** which is, being interpreted, **Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.** And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment."* (Mark 5:39-42) The hand of Jesus is filled with more than simple healing – it is filled with a kind of love that is inexpressible. We are made whole in every whit by His Hand. We are told that *"immediately the fever left her."* True, yet an altogether different fever possessed her – a fever serve the glorious Lord and demonstrate His mercy for *"she ministered unto them."* Friend, I have heard that the Lord has cured you of the terrible

blood disease of leprosy. Is this true? The Leprosy of sin is a blood disease inherited from your father, Adam. It is a filthy, deadly disease that may be hidden for a time, but will eventually separate you from family, friends, and the land of the living. Have you received that blood cleansing touch of Christ in your own life? If so, minister to us!

“And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.” Disease and devils go hand in hand. When the devil has your hand, you are diseased and dying but, when Christ takes your hand, you are made whole. Why would anyone reject the hand of Christ and take the hand of the devil? In His early ministry, Christ casts out many devils. When you begin a work of the Lord in a new place, you are going into enemy territory. This territory has been the sole possession of devils since that old serpent misappropriated the possessions of God at Eden. You will have a fight on your hands for sure. So Christ must hush the demon mouths and eject the demon spirits from the many who are possessed thereby. The healing of the body is an essential corollary to dealing with the devil. *“And all the city was gathered together at the door.”* Amazing proof of the swift travel of the news of Christ’s healing powers. And at which door were these people gathered? *“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”* (John 10:9) I urge you, if you desire healing, to go to the right Door!

“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.” We learn in the account of St Matthew, relating the same occasion, by what power Christ cast out the devils: “When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick.” (Matt 8:16) It was the power of His Word by which demons were cast out. Perhaps there would be fewer demons residing in the branches of the Church (Matthew 13:31-32) if the Word of God were preached with greater power and conviction! Christ even shut the mouths of the devils. Have we, as ministers of God, preached with the power and conviction that will shut the mouths of devils? Christ, in order to defray the malice of the scribes and Pharisees to till the prescribed time, forbids the devils to reveal His complete identity at this early moment in His ministry to their accomplices.

While men still slept, the Lord goes about a Holy Communion with His Father: *“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”* Why should we arise early and pray? Because the whole world is asleep to the Gospel of Christ! Note that Christ goes to a ‘solitary place’ to pray. When we pray, we need to avoid distractions of the world. A ‘solitary place’ to the world is a place where we can be closest to God our Father. I love the early verses of the 63rd Psalm: *“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.”* (Psalms 63:1-2) The Word of the Lord is filled with such treasure, and I love it! *“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”* (Isaiah 55:6-7)

If God be in the Solitary Place, His disciples will always find Him there: *“And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.”* If we belong to Christ, we will follow Him wherever He goes. *“And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.”* Our minds are so provincially small that we often consider ‘ALL MEN’ to be only those of our immediate environment, but the Mind of Christ considers the world of men and not the village. *“And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns,*

that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." God plays no favorites in dispensing His Word. He has preached, healed and cast out devils in Capernaum – now it is time to carry the blessings of His Word to others.

"And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."
Notice here again the emphasis on casting out devils. Before building a highway through the swamps, we must first deal with the alligators. At the beginning of every God-honoring ministry, we must first deal with the devils for they always come early and stay late unless we rely upon the power of God's Word to dispel them. When was the last time you felt the need to say, "*Get behind me Satan?*"