

About a year ago I met a nine year old boy in town with his mother for treatments at the ProCure facility on Memorial. He had brain cancer and was down from Nebraska getting treatments five times a week for six weeks. They came because the proton therapy was top of the line. It zaps the tumor with minimal damage to the surrounding tissue in his brain. Their hopes and prayers were that this would stop its growth or get rid of the cancer all together. I felt terrible for this little boy having to experience so much. Little did I know how much. This wasn't his first cancer.

Talk about hopeless situations. Two different cancers within a nine year lifespan. Chemo treatments, radiation, and proton therapy all before middle school. What kind of life would this kid have going forward if this was his normal? You know of other medical situations too. Maybe you're in one yourself. A situation that seems hopeless. Sometimes it's not the cure you're hoping for, just some therapy or medicine to make things feel better and take the pain away.

It's those kinds of hopeless situations that we carry in here this morning. We sit down and they weigh on us. We wonder if we'll ever be able to lose the burden. For the time being we just keep carrying it, thinking it probably is a hopeless cause. In the gospel this morning Mark records an event early on in Jesus' ministry where he reveals himself to have power. We might even say that...

Jesus heals the hopeless
Those needing physical healing
Those needing spiritual healing

I asked the catechism students on Wednesday what some excuses or reasons were for missing church. They gave typical responses like sleeping in or working. They also mentioned being paralyzed or sick. When the sick stay home that's a reason especially if it's contagious. Simon Peter's mother-in-law didn't stay away from synagogue because she had a cold. She was laid out in bed with a fever that was serious. There was no way she'd be able to listen to Jesus teach and pray. Even less chance she'd be able to serve the meal. Peter doesn't go begging and screaming to Jesus to heal her. He simply shares the matter with Jesus.

It's a great thing when we see a believer in the Bible go to Jesus with a request and he responds. It reminds us we can trust Jesus to act on requests from our prayers. **"He went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them."** Jesus wasn't afraid to touch this woman, to get personal with her. The fever and sickness she was experiencing couldn't stand up to the healing touch and power of Jesus. The physical healing was instantaneous. Immediately she responded with thanks without any side effects at all.

How do your requests often get made to God? Are they quiet like Peter? "Jesus, I know you've got a lot going on but I really could use your help. I've got this problem. I don't deserve your help but I don't what else to do." Or are you more forceful because you're not entirely sure you can count on Jesus? If you feel a cold coming on and there's a field trip the next day, "Oh no God. Not now. Do something about this so I don't miss my field trip." Or you're at the bedside of a relative or friend who is dying. "Just a little more time God. Jesus you have to heal this person. I haven't had the time I want with them yet. Come on!" And the worst is when God doesn't seem to answer; when Jesus doesn't seem willing to heal. "Doesn't Jesus care about me? Am I not worth healing?" We need it, we're hopeless, we need physical healing.

Jesus made it clear he was here for those who needed physical healing. After word spread that Jesus and his miraculous healing powers were in town it seemed everyone came to Peter's house and wanted Jesus to do something for them. And Jesus stayed up all night healing. He didn't turn one soul away. He had compassion on all those hurting and in need of healing. Nothing has changed. Jesus still aches when you have a tummy ache. He hurts when you suffer a disease. He is in pain when you suffer with pain. He knows just how hopeless your situation is. But that's why he allows them, so you know the hopelessness too. So you know that Jesus works in hopeless situations. Without him we have nothing. He hears each of our prayers and requests for physical healing. But in his wisdom your friend, your relative, you might not be physically healed right now.

When you pray for healing and don't get it, how you handle yourself in the midst of physical pain and suffering says a lot. A need for physical healing is one way that Jesus brings us close to him. That's when he reaches us with his ultimate goal, the saving message. **"This is why I have come."** So if you aren't healed still live hearing Christ's saving message. Live looking forward to something better. Find in Christ a message bringing healing of a different kind. Eternally better than physical healing, Christ's message turns our thoughts forward to heaven where all our physical ailments will be taken away forever.

The doctor sits and listens while the patient describes the symptoms. "I have a runny nose, a headache, and a cough. I know I have the starting of the flu." The patient has picked up on the symptoms and what they mean. But the trained doctor notices something that the patient doesn't. The diagnosis then leads to a prescription with the appropriate medication for the visible and hidden symptoms. The people coming to Jesus had already diagnosed what they wanted Jesus to do. But Jesus saw the hidden symptom. He diagnosed what they really needed. He came to help the hopeless who needed spiritual healing.

Imagine what Jesus prayed when he went off by himself. Was it strength, directions where he should go next, or just peace and quiet? I think a clue is in his response when Peter and the rest found him. **“Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also.”** The people were getting a little too clingy. They were starting to see Jesus as their own personal miracle worker. It was time to go. Jesus prayed because he had a mission and it wasn’t healing people of their diseases. That only backed up his message. Healing brought people close. Once close they heard Jesus preach and teach what they really needed. His message was that the saving activity of God was near; in fact he was that saving activity. This message is what Jesus wanted to share. He wanted all to hear. He wanted to expose them to the gospel so the Holy Spirit might work and save them. That’s why he came.

We have problems. They’re financial, personal, and physical. When they start to get the better of us we start looking around wondering where healing will come from. That’s when we start thinking of Jesus as just the healer of our troubles. We recognize a financial problem with our church and school. The problem doesn’t have an easy solution so we turn to Jesus thinking we’re doing it in faith. He’ll answer our prayers for money, he has to right? It’s a school where we teach Jesus. But are we looking to Jesus just for his miraculous power to get us out of a financial mess? Are we completely missing his main purpose for allowing the hardship in the first place? We want Jesus for what we want him for. But Jesus wants us to return to the message for spiritual healing.

If we’re not careful, Jesus might say to us it’s time for him to go. We need reminding Jesus is here for spiritual healing. We’ve got the sin disease and he’s the only one with the cure for healing. Jesus comes among us with his Word so that we might hear it and believe it. There in the Word is the message of sins forgiven. There is the gospel, **“that is why I have come.”** Jesus has power to heal, but he alone sees the real healing we need. Even if we got physical healing or financial help, if we aren’t connected to him by faith we’ll die because of our spiritual problem. But because of him, because of his gospel message, because of his cross we are connected to him by faith. We have the spiritual healing he won for us.

This is a message to be shared. We can’t hold on to it ourselves. We must take this to other towns and villages like Jesus. For us that might mean different parts of our city or different people who haven’t heard it before. We have to get this message out there in a variety of means and methods. It’s ours to share and that is why we have it.

You came in here this morning with hopeless situations. You stood no reasonable chance of getting out from them yourselves. But here you came because you knew there was healing here. If you have physical ailments this is the place to pray for relief. If you have things you want gone ask Jesus to take them from you. He can, he just might. But don’t despair if he doesn’t. Jesus knows your greatest need. It’s a spiritual one. He has seen your sin and by his life and death has removed it from you. Jesus has taken your hopeless situation and healed it.