

**Mark 1:29-39** They left the synagogue and went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup>Simon's mother-in-law was lying in bed, sick with a fever. Without delay they told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup>He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began to serve them. <sup>32</sup>That evening, when the sun had set, the people kept bringing to him all who were sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup>The whole town gathered at the door. <sup>34</sup>He healed many people who were sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But he did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

<sup>35</sup>Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went out. He withdrew to a solitary place and was praying there. <sup>36</sup>Simon and his companions searched for him, <sup>37</sup>and, when they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is looking for you!"

<sup>38</sup>He told them, "Let's go somewhere else, to the neighboring villages, so that I can preach there too. In fact, that is why I have come."

<sup>39</sup>Then he went throughout the whole region of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. Today is Super Bowl Sunday. How many people tuning into the game tonight will be watching it for the game? Many people watch it only for the commercials. Much of the talk on Monday morning will be, not about the game, but, "did you see that commercial!?" It's kind of funny that so many people will tune in just for the commercials, and could care less about the game, but it makes sense. There's only 2 teams in the super bowl. Chances are it's not your team, especially since we live in Michigan. So it make sense that the big game isn't what most people are interested in, but rather, the commercials. And some people only watch it for the half time show. Still others only watch as an excuse to have a party. But take away the game, and everything else would go away too. It's Super *Bowl* Sunday, not Super *Commercial* Sunday.

How many people outside the home of Simon and Andrew were there to hear Jesus preach? If Peter's mother in law hadn't gotten sick, would the people have been there at all? But because they heard what Jesus did for her, someone else who was sick was brought and healed by Jesus, and word spread quickly about what Jesus could do. It must have been crazy, surreal, **the people kept bringing to him all who were sick and demon-**

**possessed.** <sup>33</sup>The whole town gathered at the door. Everyone was there. Everyone was healed.

Everyone went to bed thinking, "What an amazing night!" I wonder if they really got any sleep? Their lives had been changed. Suddenly someone that powerful was in *their* town and they had not just heard what he could do, so many of them saw it first hand. Can you imagine their mindset? Our troubles are over! Things couldn't be better! Everyone happy, amazed, joyful, and filled with hope that Jesus was there!

Jesus got up early in the morning, while it was still dark, and went out. Interesting. Didn't he know everyone would be looking for him? Didn't he realize there would be more people to help? Wouldn't he want to keep this going? How many couldn't get to see Jesus the night before but went home thinking, don't worry, we'll go see him first thing in the morning. But he was gone. Finally the disciples found him and told him, "**Everyone is looking for you!**"

No doubt the disciples imagined Jesus would say something like, "Ok, let's go, back to the town and continue where we left off last night." And why not? Isn't that what Jesus wanted for his people? Isn't that why Jesus came into this world? His reply makes us wonder...

Wouldn't it be nice if Jesus showed up here each week to heal our sicknesses and take away our pain? Who of us couldn't benefit from that? Instead of confession and absolution we could have people with minor difficulties come forward and have everything worked out. Instead of the sermon we'd use that time for those with sicknesses and diseases to come forward and be cured. Instead of the Lord's supper we would have those with aches and pains come forward and be healed. Wouldn't that be great? Wouldn't you just love that?

You know who would really love that? Satan. Because where would our hope be then? Where would our comfort be found? Why would we keep coming back to church week after week? For an earthly savior from earthly problems, and nothing more.

Certainly Jesus is here for us in all our problems, physical problems too. But that's not the only reason he came, or even the main reason. What if we only looked to him for help in earthly things? The spiritual things would fade out of the picture. Confessing our sins and hearing about forgiveness? Who needs that? We feel great! Hearing in a sermon what

God has done for us? Who needs that? Did you see what Jesus just did? Receiving Jesus' body and blood for forgiveness? What's the point? We're good! While the whole town might gather at our church, it would not be to hear about a Savior from sin, death, hell and the devil, but from the temporary problems of this world and this life. Seeking out such an earthly savior comes at an eternal cost.

Jesus must have surprised his disciples a little bit when he answered the news that everyone was looking for him with, "**Let's go somewhere else...**"

But listen to his reason: **So that I can preach there too. In fact, that is why I have come.** More than healing earthly diseases Jesus came to heal us from the sickness of sin. More than earthly miracles of changing water into wine, Jesus came to change our futures from hell to heaven. More than feeding thousands of people with bread and fish, Jesus came to feed our souls with the eternal life giving food of the gospel. He came to preach, so that the world would know God's message of sin, grace, mercy and forgiveness. Jesus moved on because others needed to hear it. And, yes, as he moved on he still performed miracles, still healed, still cast out demons, but he made it clear hear, his main purpose was to preach the message of the gospel.

How many of us are here to satisfy a parent's or spouse's desire? How many are here because it's the only chance we have to get out of the house during the week because of covid? How many are here because, I'll feel guilty if I'm not? How many are here to be entertained, hopefully by some good hymns, not too long of a sermon, and a few conversations with fellow members?

Don't be mistaken, I'm glad you're here! But don't let Satan use those reasons to rob us of the main reason we are here, and the best. To hear the Words of our Savior, the words of our God. The promises he's made, and the promises he's kept — all of them.

The main message that we're sinners deserving God's wrath and punishment in hell, but that Jesus' life for us and death in our place has paid the price of all our sins and given us the perfection God demands. The guarantee that his resurrection on the third day proves his promise that he will raise us on the last day.

Jesus' words are more important than his healing. So why did he heal? To prove his words. Sure his miracles were flashy, powerful, and attracted crowds, but his words save souls. Take away the message of the gospel and Jesus has no reason to be here, and neither do we.

Sure other churches have other messages that might be more attractive to the world or make us feel good for the here and now — <sup>1</sup>God doesn't mind your sin. Live free and be happy. <sup>2</sup>You're not that bad of a sinner. God loves you and will save you because you're making an effort. <sup>3</sup>God wants you to be rich, you're just not praying enough. Pray harder. On and on the worthless words of men go, providing no real hope, no meaningful comfort, no lasting peace.

Isn't that why we are here? To find those things that can't be found anywhere else in the world? Only Jesus' words give us those things. His life, death, and resurrection for us provide us with sure and certain hope for our eternal life — it's real, he's done it all so that we need to do nothing but stretch out our hand rooted in God's gift of faith and receive it; his words give us meaningful comfort as we suffer now — one day all these effects of sin will be behind us; and together his words of hope and comfort give us lasting peace at the end of every day, no matter what the day brought us.

That's why we are here, to see more amazing things than the side show of sicknesses healed or diseases cured or paralyzed walk. We're here to see the main event, to hear how God has taken us, poor miserable sinners and made us clean and holy again. How God has washed all our sins away not by the blood of rams or lambs or goats, but by the blood of his one and only Son. The message that you and I are no longer children of the devil or of the world, but children of our God and heirs of everlasting life with him. We're here to see this power of God in action — the gospel for the salvation of everyone who believes.

Why do many tune into the super bowl? To see good commercials. But sometimes, they also catch a great game.

As sinners, God's Word might not always be what we come to hear, but it's always satisfying. Confronted by our sins, we are never left alone and without hope. For here we always see Jesus our Savior, and the glory in his Word. May it ever be. Amen!