

Season of EPIPHANY



Prayers

Collect of the Day

O Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Psalm 147:1-11
(antiphon v. 5)
Isaiah 40:21-31
1 Corinthians 9:16-27
Mark 1:29-39

Hymns

Hymn of the Day – 398
Other Hymns – 790 (OT), 664 (E),
551 (G), 841 (G), 846 (G)

Father of glory, You are great in mercy, abundant in power and Your understanding is beyond measure. Remember Your whole Church throughout the world. Renew and strengthen Your children as they wait patiently for Your glorious salvation to be revealed. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, You send forth messengers to preach the Gospel. Help all servants of the Word to proclaim Your truth with joy and zeal. Guard and protect them from the assaults of the evil one and their own flesh. Give them grace to live self-controlled and disciplined lives, that Your name may be hallowed. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Ruler of all, You sit enthroned above all human might and power. Give to all entrusted with authority among us wisdom to recognize Your rule and humility to serve the common good of our citizens. Remember all in our armed forces and our first responders in every community, and protect them in their service. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Healer and Physician of all, as the people of Capernaum gathered about Your Son, bringing to Him all who were in need, we bring before You in prayer this day all who are sad and lonely, the sick and injured, the hospitalized and homebound, the anguished and despairing [and all we have been asked to remember, especially Your servants _____]. Heal the broken-hearted, bind up their wounds and give Your people grace to trust Your unfailing love. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy Father, Your Son has promised to raise all the dead and give to all who trust in Him eternal life. Receive our thanksgiving for Your faithful ones who have fallen asleep in Christ and who await the moment of their final and full healing at the resurrection of the dead. Bring us with them to share in the joy of His glorious appearing. Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



EPIPHANY SERMON

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY FEBRUARY 7 2021

Sermon Text: Mark 1:29-39

'Fighting Our Illness and Uncleaness'

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father, and from His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Out of the synagogue and into Simon Peter's house. You know that time of the day, when you leave church and head home for lunch. It's supposed to be peaceful. Maybe the most calm moment in your week. Not for Jesus. Not for this new King who has burst onto the scene looking for a fight with evil. No. Wherever He goes – is going to get stirred up. For His presence disturbs our disorder. It confuses our chaos. It dispels our darkness. His flesh brings order into the world, and whatever it meets is going to react.

The head of our chaos had to flee from Him in the desert. Fishermen followers have been sucked into His ordering orbit. And back in the synagogue people are still arguing over His utter domination of the unclean spirit that He muzzled like a little lap dog. He is on the move, and no matter where He goes something cosmic is going to go down.

Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told Him about her. Illness is disorder. A sad symptom of our broken, sinful world. How will this fever fare against the One from whom the unclean spirit fled only moments ago? He's come for her. He takes her by the hand, brings His flesh to touch hers, lifts her up, and the fever leaves her. No, it cannot be in His presence. It cannot abide by His touch. But scurries away like darkness vanquished by the light.

What about you? Are you laid up by the disorder of our broken world? Has it got you down? Is your spirit low? Or have you ignored your symptoms, all the sin and brokenness in your life, tried not to look at it? Tried not to acknowledge

it? Well, Jesus won't. He's come for you. Sees you in your pain and enters with His Word, even His flesh to touch you, to lift you up.

Will you let Him? Or do you just want to stay lying on the couch? Will you let Him take your hand? Will you let Him touch you? You may pull away, but He does not hesitate. You may feel unworthy. Untouchable. Still the Holy One reaches for you. Can you trust Him? What about those hidden places within your heart? Can you trust Him?

At His touch the fever left her, and she began to serve them. She wasn't just healed. She was lifted up with purpose. She was restored. Made part of His kingdom's work. Made a blessing to the people in her life.

What about you? Has His touch healed you in body or soul? Serve Him. Has He lifted you up out of sin? Serve Him. Has He taken your hand in this life and promised never to let it go? Serve Him. In your family. In His Church. In the world. Serve Him. Manifest His kingdom. Be an extension of His love, His mercy, His grace, His power.

That evening at sundown they brought to Him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Everyone. Looking in one place. At that door where Jesus stands. Can you picture it? What are they doing here? What do they want? Healing? Yes . . . and more. They want Him. Do you? Do you want all He has to offer? Will you gather at the door? Will you bring others, lay them at His feet, and expect Him to act in their lives too?

It was one man with an unclean spirit in the morning. One woman with a fever in the afternoon. But here at sundown it is everyone. All the sick and oppressed. Our Lord is on a warpath. His kingdom has come and is taking over. Its breaking-in. The true Ruler is here revealed for all to see.

Rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed. What is He doing? Going back into the desert? And in the middle of the night? He needs to pray. He needs some time alone with His Father. "They're all coming to Me Father, but is it for the right reasons? Do they just want some miracles, or are they truly interested in the Kingdom? Are they just in it for handouts, or do they want to be found in My kingdom of grace and faith and order? What should I do Father? What should I do?"

What does it do to you, dear one, to see the Son of God approach His Father like this? He's asking for you, of course, seeking His Father's will for your sake. Do you dedicate time to be alone with your Lord? To stop yourself, be still, silent, not move in heart or mind that God may rule and act on you? Make His kingdom come and His will be done in you. Jesus did. Even He needed it. Lord, teach us. Help us to stop there with You. Help us to rest.

Others are always going to try and interrupt. Peter and the disciples hunted Him down. They wouldn't give Him any peace, but came to argue with Him. "Everyone is looking for You." They're angry. They left everything to follow Him. Lord, You called us. This whole thing was Your idea, and everyone is looking for You. What are You doing?

When do you argue with the Lord? When do you think you know better? When do you insist on how He should act in your life? It can be hard to let Him be Lord, let His Word rule, let Him shape you. But He is just as patient with you today, as He was with Simon Peter that day.

"I need to preach Peter. That is why I've come. To call people to repent and believe in the Gospel. The miracles simply reveal that this message is true. They are just signs that tell people, 'Listen to Him. Listen to Him.' For My Word heals far more than physical illnesses. It makes all things whole. It brings unity on every level. I have been given as a gift to the world. I need to preach."

People don't always know what they need, so they simply settle for what they want. And what do you see? What do the people of Capernaum want? Healing or Preaching?

What about you? Are you just in this for the healing, or does your heart ache to hear what He might say? Is this just about a result for you? Or do you hang on every Word that comes from the mouth of God – can't wait – for Him to teach you the next incredible aspect of His grace – who He is and what He has for you? Is this just a business transaction, or do you actually want to grow up forevermore into who He is, and who He is creating you to be as His child – hearing Him – trusting Him – and living with Him eternally?

Well, that's what He did. He went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. He always has more to teach you. More ways to step in and fight for you. So hear Him once more as He says to you: "Repent and believe in the Gospel." In the Name of Jesus. Amen.