

## The Fifth Sunday after The Epiphany (2018)

**Mark 1:29–39** And immediately [Jesus] left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

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. And he healed 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.

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. *And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."* And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

In the Name of Jesus.

‘Have you not heard?! The LORD is the everlasting God, and Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary!’

And now—IN...OUR...FLESH! ‘And he went throughout ALL of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.’

Your poor pastor is a double threat! I earned a Ph.D.; but I’m still about the most ign’ant man you’ll ever meet! And I can read the Bible in various languages and was ordained as a minister of the Spirit of Jesus: and I surprise myself with my ign’ance of the Word! A failure, two times over! Or, just what you want; depending on how you look at things!

When I cobbled together some sermon notes this week to put in the bulletin, I thought of all the work Jesus did in the Gospel lesson today; how He left the crowd of sick and possessed after a hard night. And I put on the back of your bulletin: ‘Jesus wore Himself out with His service to us!’

There’s just one little problem with that note:  
THAT...AIN’T in da text!

Instead, He lives as the LORD Himself of Isaiah's preaching: NOT growing faint, or weary; as the Creator Himself Who sits 'above the circle of the earth'—whatever THAT means!—'and the people are like grasshoppers!'—whatever THAT means! Perhaps tiny in creatures with boundless egos? Perhaps swarming the earth, as if it is somehow—we dream in our delusion!—the earth is somehow IN...OUR...HAND! (Do grasshoppers have hands? Get back on track, pastor!)

But Jesus of Nazareth was NOT sitting way up above us as a great man over insects! Instead, His HAND—LOOK AT YOURS! He's got one, and It looks just like yours!—His hand touched the hand of Simon's mother-in-law. And the fever left her. And then, so happily: SERVED herself, SHE served!

And that nameless woman's service preaches a sermon which I can only DIMINISH by what I have to say! But, we're here.... Lord, have mercy! Do NOT let my words darken what you did with Simon's favorite mother-in-law!

It's the whole joyful picture of the life of a child of God, with Christ Jesus our Brother! Baptized as one of us—He then baptizes US...AS...ONE...LIKE...HIM!

*And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10)*

How ‘many?’ TRY to wear Him out with THAT question!

Ah! But was not THAT Jesus ‘growing faint and wearing out,’ over against what Isaiah had foretold? Was not the Hand that healed so many finally arrested and nailed and roped and crucified and made helpless?

Imagine the Good Lord’s problem, my friends. Come, let us reason together!

We are SO rebellious, that the Creator KNOWS that there is no movement from US to HIM that is going to be

sincere, that is going to work, that is going to last. (To imagine HIS predicament, think of that LIST of people you keep, and add to, of hopeless people, not worth your bother anymore, who just keep disappointing, disappointing.... YES! I can read your minds!)

And yet—only HE can reveal why this is so, how this is so!—Yet the Creator is eternally, unchangeably committed to being with us; even RESCUING us from the idols to which we cling, which can only bring us sadness.

What do you do? Well, what does grandma or grandpa do when the grandchildren's delight when they see you is, 'Hi, grandpa! What did you BRING me?!'

Well, if we don't want to deal with that my fellow parents, or dear grandparents—it's not really the children's fault that they exist, is it? There's the work! And what's the point of growing weary or faint over THAT?

It seems that's what Jesus did by taking up to the mysterious Godhead all that we are, and by coming as one of us; and by coming to serve—ONLY serve! As if while He teaches, and chides, and corrects, and even scares a bit with the Law and threats of punishment—at the core He is

devoted to us BECAUSE He is devoted to us!  
 And....THAT'S...ALL...HIM! ALL Him! Not us!  
 Praise the Lord!

So we may serve too! And, as the prophet guarantees,  
 just as the Lord does not grow weary or faint:

“He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no  
 might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be  
 weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who  
 wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall  
 mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be  
 weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

Bear with Doctor Anderson please! My students get  
 hours of this every week. Give me a couple minutes!

‘Waiting’ for the Lord is an eager thing, an expectation  
 thing. It is the confidence of our Baptism into Christ: that  
 the Lord is UTTERLY CONFIDENT that He is our Savior  
 and that HE has now satisfied for Himself whatever WAS  
 wrong with us in His eyes. And, so, WE may bounce and  
 shake with glee that HE tells us to count on HIM, rather  
 than on ourselves!

EVEN...IN...WHAT...WE...DREAM...WE...ARE...IN

...CONTROL...OF!

And the ‘renewing their strength’—whenever words don’t stick to your ears, grab hold of them and squeeze them; read, mark, learn, inwardly digest!

‘RENEWING,’ in Isaiah, means ‘EXCHANGING!’

And even Pastor Paul can boast that I know God! Ha ha, demons! Be silent! And leave us!

For when we look at what the NEXT MAN has to offer: full of faults, history of disappointment, weak, doing things YOU would never do, say, act out, in a million years....!

And when we look to OURSELVES, to see if an un-fainting or un-wearying power resides HERE, to bridge the gap, to turn enemies by our peaceable-ness, to heal breaks, to soothe wounds, to make what was dead alive again....

I don’t have it in me; and you don’t have it in you, my dear ones....

But WE...HAVE...IT...ON...US!

His washing!

His Name!

His pledge: that HIS Crucifixion was NOT a giving up, but GIVING...HIS...ALL!

So that even in the midst of excruciating labor, and tears, and trying, trying, trying again....WE can wear out, and STILL have hope, eager, expectant confidence, that the Creator sits ABOVE the whole deal and works out His wonders—AND He is one of us, with us, among us, even to the giving of His Body and His Blood!

It seems that He is NEVER going to grow weary or faint when it comes to overlooking OUR sad Ten Commandments performance; OR our weak and faint glow of the Gospel and Spirit He has put on us, in us, with us.

‘For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death until He comes!’

You and I, dearly beloved: WE show the world, all men, His death! That since He CANNOT tire of US—not HERE; not THERE; not NOW; not on THAT DAY—

Then what other poor, sick, wounded, possessed man—is ever going to wear US out? You, and me, and the Son of God, and His Father, and His Spirit, One God, now and forever! Amen!