

# Grace & Peace

FEBRUARY 1, 2012

## HEALING AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Mark's gospel moves pretty quickly in chapter 1 to revealing Jesus as a healer. In the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus finds a man possessed of an unclean spirit:

*And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."*

Mark 1:26-27

Immediately (a word Mark likes to use) Jesus went to the house of Peter and healed his mother in law, in bed with a fever.

Jesus taught in parables and in wise sayings. He also taught by healing. He taught by showing, not just telling. If you had to summarize the reason Jesus came among us, you might choose the word "healing" and be not far off the mark.

Think of that phrase in *Hark, the Herald Angels*

*Sing*, "Light and life to all he brings, Risen with healing in his wings." If Jesus the healer kept talking about the Kingdom of God, then maybe a good description of the Kingdom has to do with healing. Listen to Brian McLaren, the pastor and writer, on the subject:



**James Tissot, *The Healing of Peter's Mother in Law*, 1886-94**

We might adapt the metaphor and speak of the **medical mission of God**, adding

the relational connotations of caring and healing. Imagine that everyone on earth has become infected with a horrible virus. The virus makes people physically sick and mentally insane. Its symptoms vary from person to person and place to place: In one place it causes violence, in another sexual aggression, in another lying, in another paralysis, and so on.

Imagine that a doctor develops a cure. He brings the cure to you and says, “Once you take this medicine, you’ll begin to feel better, but I’m not just giving you the cure for your sake. As soon as you feel well enough, I want you to make more of the cure and begin bringing it to others. And tell them the same thing: they are being healed not just so they can be healthy but also so they can become healers for the sake of others.” Just as the disease spread “virally,” now the cure will spread. A healing mission—where you are healed so you can join in healing others—would be an apt metaphor for the kingdom of God.

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So what do you think? The Kingdom of God that Jesus talked about over and over again—is a healing mission: ***where you are healed so you can join in healing others.*** Sunday we will be preaching on Jesus as a healer, and the connection of healing and forgiving of sins. Stay tuned.