

**Sermon for February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Fifth Sunday of Epiphany**

**Mark 1:29-39**

BLESSINGS TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD THE FATHER, OUR LORD  
AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

This is the fifth and final week of the **season of Epiphany**—the time of inspiration, vision, and insight into what God was and is doing in the world through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Let us **look** at how we have seen God revealed in Jesus during these **past** few weeks.

In the **first week** after Epiphany we heard the story of how **John** was in the desert region preaching a baptism of repentance for the **forgiveness** of sin, of how Jesus was **baptized** at the Jordan River by John, and how a **voice** from heaven was heard saying, “*You are my Son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased.*”

The **second week** after Epiphany our **gospel** reading told us of how Jesus found Phillip and Nathanael. Phillip was **excited** about having found ‘*the one Moses wrote about in the Law and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*’ Nathanael had to be **convinced for himself** about who this Jesus was. Nathanael was **finally** convinced and confessed, ‘*Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.*’

On the **third Sunday** after Epiphany we found Jesus in Galilee, **proclaiming** the Good News of God. Walking along the shore line he saw Simon

and his brother Andrew. **Immediately** Jesus called out to them, *'Follow me.'* and so they did. When they had gone a little farther they saw James and John.

**Immediately**, without delay, Jesus called out to them as well. They left their father who was in the boat and **also** followed Jesus. Seemingly **no** questions asked.

**Last Sunday** we heard about how Jesus and the 4 disciples went to Capernaum. Jesus began to **preach and teach** in the synagogue. This caused great amazement because of the **authority** with which Jesus taught. The people were **astounded!!!** Then a man with an unclean spirit entered the synagogue and **challenged** Jesus by saying, *'What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us—Holy one of God?'* Jesus **ordered** the unclean spirit to come out of the man—and so it did. Because of this act Jesus' fame spread **immediately** throughout the whole region of Galilee.

**Today** we enter into the concluding week of this season. **Next** Sunday will be the Transfiguration of Our Lord, from there we move onto Ash Wednesday and into the season of Lent. *God continues to move us forward.*

In this morning's gospel text, **immediately** the story from our last week's reading **bursts forward** toward the rest of Galilee as Jesus and the disciples have **relocated** from the synagogue to the house of Simon and Andrew—there was no time for rest as once there they were **confronted** with Simon's mother-in-law who

had a fever. Now in those days a fever was **no small matter** or something which could **easily be taken care of** like we might like to think of it today. There was no pharmacy readily available. A fever was not only debilitating for a **short** while; it was **often a symptom** of a condition that would lead to death. **Immediately** they told Jesus of this situation. I want to tell you something about this unnamed woman: because of the fact that she was living within her daughter's house—meant that she must have been a widow with no son to take care of her which would have made her station in society in that time one of **very little value**. Nevertheless, she **mattered** to Jesus. He had **compassion** on her, he **came** to her, he **grasped** her by the hand, he **raised/lifted** her up. The Greek word used here for this act was **EGEIRO**—which means ‘*to raise up*’ which will take on **powerful** meaning later on in Mark's gospel at the resurrection of Jesus. The **fever** left her and she was **restored** back into her community as well as **restored** to her station in life—she began to **serve** them wherein she becomes the first character in Mark's gospel who **exemplifies** what true discipleship means.

**Before** we know it, at the **end** of the Sabbath, at **sunset**, all sorts of folks were brought to Jesus for help. The **whole city** was there. The sick were laid at the doorstep; Jesus healed illnesses and cast out demons by the score.

The **next** thing we hear is that in the morning, while it was still **very dark**, Jesus **got up** and **went out** to a deserted place and prayed. For you see, the **reality**

is that Jesus was fully human and fully divine so he had a need to care for himself to **regain strength and energy** for the mission ahead.

Coming to terms with human limitations of time, space, and energy is **crucial** if we are to **survive** in this world and Jesus was no exception. There was no word 'burn-out' in Jesus' time. But we **certainly** know that means for us if we do not take care of ourselves; if we do not have God at the center of our lives for our **own strength and wellbeing**.

**Here** is where Jesus' ministry and the **mission** of God comes in. Because even though many people **continued** to search for Jesus he **knew** his mission was to move on, to continue to do God's work. *But how could he do leave when there were so many people in need? We are in need, Jesus help us!!!*

Jesus did not exercise his ministry on the basis of his need to be needed, but on the basis of what he could do as a bearer of the Good News of God's Kingdom. That is **enough**—and yet there is never enough to meet the **needs** of all. **Many** of us have run up against that reality in our own lives. No matter how much we do there is always something more to do. The need never seems to end.

**That** is why Jesus moved on. *'Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.'*, he said. Jesus had a very clear path, a very clear vision, of what His mission in this world was. Jesus **knew** what He was about and He **never** lost sight of that.

*How about us? Do we have a clear sense of our mission in the world?* I believe that here at Eden we do. We give so much to people in **other parts of our country**, to the **local community**, and to **each other**. Our **mission statement** bears witness to who we are as a community of faith. The challenge for **each** of us is to **think about** how we bear witness to Jesus' mission in our own lives? How do we live out our mission as Christians on a daily basis?

Mark's story is inviting us into a **new existence** of faith. What if we were to be persuaded by the Good News of such an existence? What about if our lives here and now are shaped by our **confidence** in the Holy One of God who invites us to follow Him with promise and mission? How about if we locate **ourselves** within the Epiphany story—in the **midst** of the story of inspiration, vision, and insight of Jesus in which we will engage all of our own stories as they go **beyond** the walls of Eden Lutheran taking us into the rest of our week and beyond with **God beside us guiding us** all the way. Thanks be to God. **AMEN**