

## JESUS HEALS PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW

Jesus is the Light of Life -- The Gospel is the power of light and life.

Luke 4:38-44

**TEXT:** *Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So, he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.*

In Jesus' name, fellow redeemed:

Gene Cernan, the last man ever to set foot on the moon died this week at 82. Many who knew Astronaut Cernan personally spoke about their experiences with this famous American. One of the men who made the trip to the moon with Cernan spoke of his personal reflections on the experience of looking out of the space craft's window on one side and then the one on the other side. Looking out the window on one side offered a dark and ominous view of space. The stars were distant and lonely. But then to look out the other window you could see the earth in all its awesome beauty. Cernan is said to have exclaimed that nothing like the earth could have possibly evolved, but that instead something of such beauty, light and life could only have been the creation of an Almighty God.

On one side was a view of cold darkness and death; on the other side was the view of beauty, light and life. It's like the Bible says: ***The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*** Ps 19 So what does this have to do with Jesus' miraculous healing of Peter's mother-in-law? In this as with all his healing miracles, Jesus reveals that he is the Light of Life and the preaching of the Gospel is the power of Light and Life.

Simon, the one whose name Jesus would later change to "Peter," was obviously married. You don't get to have a mother-in-law without having a wife. Among all of the healing miracles, Simon Peter's family would be one so blessed with the Lord's healing power. The Bible says: ***Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So, he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them. When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!"*** In these early days of his ministry, Jesus used such powerful miracles to reveal the fact that he is true God and the Man God had sent to be the Savior.

There would be many other great miracles, from feeding thousands of men, women and children in one sitting by multiplying just 5 loaves of bread and two small fish, to raising a man who had been in the grave for four whole days back to life. All of this was meant to demonstrate to the world that this man, Jesus, is the Lord, the LIGHT OF LIFE. This is the one of whom John writes: ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*** Jn 1 It struck Astronaut Cernan when he looked at the earth shining brightly from the darkness of space all beautiful and teeming with life that this was all the work of God. He understood that truth. What Jesus' miracles demonstrated is in the words of John when later he writes: ***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*** Jn 1

What many did not understand was that there was more to Jesus than his power to do miracles. What Jesus wanted men to know and to believe is that he was sent into this world to provide life beyond this life in the world. Yes, Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law so that she would get back to work and serve her guests as any good mother-in-law would do. But she would someday soon have to get sick all over again to die and to go to heaven. What then? Paul tells us what the Light of Life that is Jesus is. Paul writes: ***Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life***

*set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. ... if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.* Ro 8 The One who created the universe becomes human, is made to be God's sin offering to satisfy God's justice, and is raised to life so that in Jesus, all who believe also will be given eternal life: *he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.* Ro 8

This power of God comes to us through the preaching of the Gospel as Jesus also demonstrated and proclaimed: *I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."* *And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.*

Even though Jesus was sent to be our Redeemer through his death on the cross and he resurrection from the dead, until that Good Friday and Easter Sunday would arrive he was determined to preach the Gospel throughout the area among the Jews. It often happened that when the crowds of people were only interested in his miracles and what he could do for their immediate needs, when it became obvious that they were not interested in the message of forgiveness and life eternal, he would leave them and go somewhere else. So important is the Ministry of the Word!

It also explains Jesus' reaction to another phenomenon. Luke tells us that besides healing Peter's mother-in-law, there were miraculous healings of the demon possessed. It appears that Satan's demonic hoards were quite active during Jesus' ministry. Luke writes: *Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.* Some would say: what difference does it make that the demons would identify Jesus as the Christ? Isn't that what Jesus is?

The answer is in that the Ministry of the Gospel is given only to those whom the Lord has called through his Church. And Scripture clearly sets before the world the Lord's qualifications for those who would serve in the public ministry of the Word. And among those qualifications is the one that guides the Church in the training of pastors and teachers.

For demons to proclaim "He is the Son of God, Christ of God!" was not to be allowed for they were demons. And even for humans the divine qualifications listed in Scripture disqualify many, even those who are good and faithful Christians. Why does Scripture require certain qualifications for those who would be pastors and teachers? It is because the Ministry of the Gospel is the handling of God's sacred Word of Truth. There can be no false doctrine, human opinions, changes, additions or subtractions, or there is no word from God.

Our nation just experienced the peaceful transfer of power from one president and his administration to another. What an awesome blessing from God that this happened without any war or bloodshed! How thankful we should be that it appears that the Lord is offering our land another time of freedom wherein the Church is able to continue training Christian men and women to be pastors and teachers; to continue our worship in peace and tranquility, and to operate Christian schools without the doctrines of demons! More than economic growth and better healthcare, we should value the spiritual blessings that are ours through the Ministry of the Word!

And like Peter's mother-in-law who, as soon as she was better, got up and began to serve, let us also commit ourselves to the service of the Ministry of the Gospel! Amen.