

Epiphany 5B, 2012

Text: Mark 1:29-39

Title: One of those Days

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Have you ever had one of those days? One of those days where you are so busy, so involved, you spend so much time giving and giving and giving of yourself, that you just need some time to yourself. You are exhausted, you are spent, not just physically, but emotionally. You have invested so much time and energy caring for the needs of other people, and you just need some time for yourself.

I'm sure many of you have felt this way. Many of you spend countless hours caring for your children or grandchildren. You have a spouse or a parent who needs extra time and attention. And you just feel drained and exhausted from time to time.

Jesus was having one of those days. He had been at church that day, and while he was there, he was confronted by a man with an unclean spirit. He cast out the Spirit and taught the people (that was last week).

Now we hear about the rest of Jesus' day and the next one, too.

Jesus comes home from church (well synagogue) with Simon. As it turns out, Simon's mother in law was living with him, and she was ill from a fever. She was practically burning up. And so Jesus graciously heals her.

Once the sun sets, the Sabbath is past, and people are now allowed to work once more. As soon as the sun dips below the horizon, there's a knock on the door.

It's one of the neighbors who's brought someone for Jesus to heal. He is moved by pity and mercy, and heals the person. And just as he has shut the door, there's another knock. Another person to heal. By now a line is beginning to form as the word spreads about Jesus. Eventually the line goes down the sidewalk and all the way around the corner.

And so it continues late into the night, until it feels like Jesus has healed everyone in the town. That next morning, while it was still dark, Jesus leaves the house, and He finds a deserted, desolate place. He needs to pray. Even though He's exhausted from the night before, He needs to spend time with His heavenly Father.

But before He could finish His prayers, His disciples come huffing and puffing around the bend. "Where have you been?" they ask. "Everyone is looking for you."

How does Jesus respond? What does He say to the disciples? Does He say, "Too bad." Does He say, "Tell them to wait, tell them to find someone else?"

No. Jesus says, "Let's go." "Let's go to the next town, and the next and the next. This is the reason I have come, to preach the Good News."

And so they keep going from town to town, as Jesus preaches the Gospel and casts out demons.

Jesus easily could have said, "No, I need a day off, I need some time to myself."

But the Good News is that Jesus keeps going. He doesn't stop, He doesn't take a break.

And that's Good News, not just for the those people back there, but for you, too.

Sometimes you may wonder if God really has time for you, if God really cares about you. There are literally billions of people out there in the world. And all of them have real needs and concerns.

There are so many people who are sick and dying, so many people who are poor and needy, so many people who are desperately praying for themselves and for other people.

Does God really hear your prayers? Does He really have time for you?

The answer is yes! God always has time for you. God will always listen to you and hear your prayers.

Why? Why would God care about someone like you? Why would He make time for you?

You are a sinner. You've lived your life as an enemy of God. You have failed to keep His law. You have acted selfishly, and put yourself and your needs first.

But God doesn't listen to you because you are such a good, righteous person. God listens to you for the sake of Jesus Christ, His own Son.

In Baptism you have been clothed with Jesus Christ, you have become one with Him. When you pray, it is not as yourself, but you pray as if you were Jesus Christ Himself. You pray in Jesus' Name.

That is why you call God, "Father." He has time for you, because you are in Christ, and He always has time to listen to Jesus.

God will always listen to you, and He will always speak to you, too.

God has given you His word, so that you will always be able to hear His voice. That same good news that Jesus preached to all the towns in Galilee is still preached to you.

When you hear the pastor proclaim the Good News, you hear Jesus Christ Himself, because He has sent him to you, so that you would know that comfort of the Gospel.

Jesus sent His disciples into all the world to preach and to baptize. He told them, “He who hears you, hears me.” When you hear the gospel, the good news of salvation proclaimed to you by those whom Jesus sent, it is as if Jesus Christ Himself were here preaching to you today.

Now pastors may not have the same energy and determination that Jesus had. They may get busy and tired from time to time. They may not always be there when you want them to be.

But a good pastor will be there to speak God’s Word to you when you are sick or dying, when you have questions or doubts, or when you are celebrating.

And along with pastors, God uses other people in your life, your family and friends, your brothers and sister in the body of Christ to care for you and support you.

You are the body of Christ. You are the presence of Jesus Christ in the world. Through you, Jesus continues to be present where there are people who are sick or oppressed by demons, people who are yearning for hope and good news.

Yes, you will get tired and exhausted by it. You will get discouraged some times when you are caring for children or those with chronic illnesses, when you spend so much time and energy with people who are needy.

But don’t give up. Those are the times when Jesus Christ is there for you. He always has the time and energy to listen to you and to speak to you.

Even today Jesus is here to hear your prayers, to forgive your sins, and to give you health and healing in His Holy Supper. Jesus always has time for you.