

## **SERVING IS A PRIVILEGE (MK 1:29-39)**

Given by the Rev. Corinne Hodges

Sun., February 8, 2009, St. John of the Cross, Bristol

- I. Seven-eight years ago serving as a chaplain in hospital
  - A. Start day, energized, meeting with people and hearing stories
  - B. End of day, exhausted. After nine months, returning home, TV
  - C. Moments enjoying social aspects of job, then just wanted to be alone, go into hiding: introvert/extrovert, balancing 2 sides of self
  
- II. Love this Gospel which highlights the humanness of Jesus, wrestles with demands of balancing public and private time: 3 scenes of the reading:
  - A. SCENE ONE: Just after feeding of 5,000, impact of needs of so many, goes to home of two disciples and mother-in-law sick; social
    1. Not sure why—maybe tired, food, sustenance
    2. Rather than rest, faced with more work, yet another healing
  - B. SCENE TWO: Goes out again after a meal, more healings, touch, conversation, energy, “whole town at the door” ; VERY social
  - C. SCENE THREE: Desert time, Jesus leaves early when all others asleep, can’t see or hear; SOLO/GOES INTO HIDING
    1. Disciples “pursued him,” “hunted for him” and “Everyone is looking for you”—give him a break! Leave the man alone!
    2. Went out to pray, needed time alone with God
      - a. Rest and restoration
      - b. Clarity—by discerning God’s will:
        1. Direction--time to move on to other villages
        2. Purpose--to preach and heal, bring God’s presence and message to others
    3. So he goes out again
  
- III. Reassuring to know that Jesus needed “time-outs” too!
  - A. Time-outs provides the same for us:
    1. Rest and renewal—illness, exhaustion, “lostness”
    2. Chance to step back and see things with greater clarity
      - a. Pray receive new insights and GOD—good orderly direction and a renewed sense of purpose
      - b. With break, new perspective—return to life more whole
  - B. Without break, Job says life becomes drudgery, long for the shade, restless, life is like the wind, chasing after something, but never know what
  
- IV. Simon’s mother-in-law
  - A. Scene:

1. Problem: Don't know cause of fever—worked too hard caring for others, not self? Fever then could have been life-threatening
  2. Action: Jesus “lifted her up”
  3. Effect: She was healed, fever left
  4. Her response: She began to serve. Why?
- B. Have you or anyone you've known ever been seriously ill?
1. Father's case of bladder cancer
  2. Treatments
  3. Lifted up and healed
  4. Shared desire to get back to work, life return back to normalcy, feel normal again—not uncommon
- C. Larger lesson here in story of Simon's mother-in-law
1. Have you ever had someone do something for you that you were most grateful? Something huge
  2. You wanted to thank them, but what they did was so big, you did not know how to express your thanks sufficiently
  3. No way, nothing you could do, that could ever say thanks enough
- D. This was the case with Simon's mother-in-law
1. How in the world could she ever say thank you to Jesus?
  2. What could she do that would possible repay him for restoring her life back to normal?
  3. All she could do was use her gifts in gratitude to the best of her ability
  4. Try to imagine the scene—the woman how she must have waited on Jesus, the man who had saved her life, serving him with great eagerness, love and care, attentive to his every need
- E. Much like Jesus after his desert time, the woman returned to life with a new sense of awareness of her gifts and how she could offer them
- V. Serving is a privilege; Jesus knew it and so did Simon's mother-in-law
- A. Each of us has unique ways we are called to bring God's help and healing to others
  - B. Whether you are an introvert or extravert, no one has your exact set of skills, talents and passions, in the same places you live and work, with the people you live and work with
  - C. Does not mean we are to give till it hurts—need time-outs (Rest, Clarity-Purpose & Direction)
  - D. But serving was at the very core of Jesus' life and ministry...as followers of Christ, it is at ours as well
  - E. Let us realize the incredible opportunity and privilege that lies in serving others and let us carry out our service with great praise and thanksgiving