

Mark 1:29-39 2/7/21

There's a phrase that you don't know a person until you walk a mile in their shoes. If we were to literally do this it would feel weird, awkward, painful or almost impossible. Now figuratively it means we really don't understand their place unless we put ourselves in their place. We empathize with the other person. Why do we do that? Why do we say that? Is it so we can connect with that person and love them as we love ourselves? Is that what you Christians do with your neighbors? You hear what Paul does in his letter to the Corinthians. Paul says "I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some."

Here Paul followed Jesus who could dine with Pharisees and with publicans and come into contact with prostitutes without receiving a stain or leaving a false impression. This is a fine line dear Christian. You are to give them the love of God, you are to give them the Good News, but at the same time you have to stay apart from them. They cannot walk away feeling that you condone sin they may live in, nor that you are above them because you are a Christian.

This is a tall order, love your neighbor as yourself. You know this as one of the greatest commandments, but what does this entail. Does this mean, waving "Hi" and small talk or is it something more than that? Are you supposed to sacrifice for your neighbor? Does the phrase "Always look out for number one." fit into that commandment anywhere? No dear Christian it does not. Can you get rid of the poor? Can you get rid of drug addicts? Can you get rid of gangs? Can

you get rid of the people that are the lepers of our society? No, the answer is no. Nor are we called to do that. Can you interact with those people? Yes, but do it in safety and wisdom. You are commanded to love them. Now let me give you an illustration, to hopefully help understand what I am talking about. My sons, I love them, and I only want the best for them. What is the best for them you may ask? I want them to grow up to be God fearing young man that will do what is right and just, show mercy and be forgiving. Teaching responsibility and discipline to my sons is not fun for them, but I do it out of love. They also know that whatever I do I do it with their best interest at heart. Now as a sinner I don't accomplish this and I am nowhere near perfect at doing this. When I teach my sons to take out the trash, wash dishes, mean what they say, and forgive each other after a fight are lessons they may not like or enjoy at the moment. I want my boys to see the love and grace that Christ has given to me and help them see that same thing. Now can I boast in it? No. Anything good that I have done is only by God. This is what I look to for my help when I do anything. It is in His strength and power that I root my trust. I know I will fail as a father, but He will not fail as my Heavenly Father.

This is how you love your neighbor. You trust completely in Christ. It is your faith in Him that can make a mountain be thrown into a sea. Alas, you are sinners, you doubt, you fail.

This is where the OT reading comes in. You hear in Isaiah 40 how great God is. How powerful He is, how He rules over all of creation, the whole universe. What did this Sovereign Lord do? He put Himself in His creation. He was made man. Why? To save us who could not love our neighbor perfectly. To save us Who saw someone in need and worried about their own concerns above anothers. He put on our flesh so that He could literally take all of sin that has ever existed and is yet to come and paid for it by going to the cross. He came not to Lord His power over all, but He came to serve you! He came to heal

you. You see the intentionality of our Gospel when Jesus immediately left the synagogue and immediately he was told about Simon Peter's mother in law and He healed her. After, he healed those who were sick, diseased and cast out demons. He did not do this for one class of people. He did not put a condition on these people to come to Him. He accepted all that came. One thing I want to point out is that all these people knew something was wrong with them and that is why they came to Him. It's hard to convince someone that says they are healthy that they are sick, Pharisees included. You have to entrust that to God and the law that they may see their illness, their sin. God, on that Christmas morn took on humanity, then Jesus took on the mantle of bearing our sin in His baptism. This Gospel reading takes place the same day as the sermon on the mount. He spent His whole day teaching and healing way into the night. He put your needs, the needs of His creation before Himself. He was and still is doing His Father's will. He on that day used His Word and His flesh to help people. This day He is still reaching out to the sick, the dead, the sinners with His Word and His Flesh. He heals you with His absolution, He brings the dead alive in baptism, He feeds you with His flesh and Blood and gives both Law and Gospel, the two edged sword with the liturgy, our readings and the sermon. He loves you His neighbor as Himself. He laid His life down for you. He walked a mile in all of our shoes. He understands every single one of us and carried that burden to the cross for you. He knows you, cares for you, loves you more than you will know on this side of heaven. Jesus remained perfect while he walked, ate and talked with sinners. He brought the world the Good News, He brought Himself to this fallen world that you might be saved. You have the guarantee that through His death and resurrection that even though you have not loved your neighbor as yourself, you are forgiven through His payment. That through His forgiveness of your

sin that you now can truly love your neighbor and yourself. He has made you clean and covered you with His blood so that you will appear spotless before the Father. This gift is not only to those who have earned it, but to every single person. Not one person is left out of this. There is no deed great or small that man can do to add to Christ's payment, or Christ's death means nothing.

This is the greatest gift and this is what Christ tirelessly worked for. He desires to reach all people. He died for all people. This is why Jesus said "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." He came here for all, but in Corinthians you know many men will harden their hearts to the Good News and only some will be saved. However, you do not know the will of God and cannot pronounce that judgement on any man that has breath in his lungs.

You know Christ's sacrifice, and what Christ has done is the only thing saving you from eternal darkness, dread, terror, and death. He has saved you from all of this by becoming man by taking on our flesh, but still remaining unblemished. It is by His death and resurrection that He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; It is by Christ and Christ alone you shall run and not be weary; you shall walk and not faint.

He, Jesus Christ has come for you, reaching out to all the lost, to all the broken, to all the dead. His message is that through Him you are saved! You are forgiven! This Peace be with you always!

SDG

Mark 1:29-39

29 And immediately he[g] left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told

him about her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

#### Jesus Preaches in Galilee

35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, 37 and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." 38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." 39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

#### 1 Cor. 9:16-27

For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but if not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel.

19 For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. 25 Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. 26 So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. 27 But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

#### Isaiah 40

Do you not know? Do you not hear?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,  
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;  
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,  
and spreads them like a tent to dwell in;

23 who brings princes to nothing,  
and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness.

24 Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,  
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,  
when he blows on them, and they wither,  
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

25 To whom then will you compare me,  
that I should be like him? says the Holy One.

26 Lift up your eyes on high and see:  
who created these?

He who brings out their host by number,  
calling them all by name;  
by the greatness of his might  
and because he is strong in power,  
not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob,  
and speak, O Israel,  
"My way is hidden from the Lord,  
and my right is disregarded by my God"?

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

29 He gives power to the faint,  
and to him who has no might he increases strength.

30 Even youths shall faint and be weary,  
and young men shall fall exhausted;

31 but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.