

## Mark 1:29-39

### Epiphany 5; February 7, 2021

*I don't know if I can handle this?* The student goes off to college and soon realizes that they will now have double the homework over High School. They also soon realize that in order to keep the student loans to somewhat of a manageable level, they need to get a part-time job. That part-time job needs to be fit around their class schedule. They look at their life and think: *"I don't know if I can handle this for the next four years."*

You, a family member or a friend, have lost their job as a result of COVID-19. You haven't been able to find a full-time job to replace it. So, you have begun to work multiple part-time jobs with all kind of schedules, just so you can keep your head above water. You have had to work harder and longer than ever before. You look at your life and think: *"I don't know if I can handle this for all that long."*

A person is suffering chronic pain. You have seen a number of different doctors to see if there is anything that can be done to help you. You go to a new specialist who puts you through all kinds of different tests. After the tests are all done, the doctor tells you that there really is nothing that he can do, and he says to you – *You are just going to learn to live with the pain.* You then ask yourself: *"I don't know if I can handle this."*

Being a parent can really make you tired. You bring your newborn son and daughter home the hospital. When they are at home, they seem to have their days and nights all mixed up. But not only do you have that new-born baby to care for, but your other children have needs as well. As the days and weeks go on, you are just plain tired. That lack of sleep starts to get to you and you think: *"I don't know if I can handle this."*

*I don't know if I can handle this.* This statement is nothing new. People have been making that statement for thousands of years. Mark writes in our text: **"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"** People had come looking for Jesus. They couldn't find Jesus. They knew that they could not handle all the people that had come looking for Jesus to heal them. When they find Jesus, you can hear their fear in the words: **"Everyone is looking for you!"** In other words: *Where are you Jesus?*

In our first lesson for this morning, we see Job ask the question: **"Do not mortals have hard service on earth? Are not their days like those of hired laborers? Like a slave longing for the evening shadows, or a hired laborer waiting to be paid, so I have been allotted months of futility, and nights of misery have been assigned to me."** Have you ever felt like Job? There are times in life that things are going so well. But then the suffering hits. From the depths and the pain of suffering we cry out – *"Why me? Why now? Why this?"* **"Everyone is looking for you!"** The Devil tries to use pain and suffering to drive us away from God. Perhaps, God is using that pain and suffering to bring us to our knees to draw us closer to him. When we think, *"I don't know if I can handle this?"* God says to us that he can handle it. Job would see that later on.

In our second lesson for this morning, we see the Apostle Paul writing to the Christians at Rome. They were going through suffering. God doesn't promise that there won't be suffering in life. But God does promise that he may use suffering to make good things happen in our lives. **"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."** Yet, it's not easy to trust that promise is it? Too often in life we find ourselves asking the question: *"Where are you God?"*

So, how do we handle the suffering that enters into our lives that just seems too big? We do the same thing that the people in our text do. Earlier that day, they heard Jesus preach with authority in the synagogue. They saw Jesus drive a demon out of a man during that service. They saw what Jesus did for Peter's mother-in-law. It's no wonder why Mark says: **"That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was."** Jesus turned no one away. He helped them all. He handled all the walking wounded that showed up.

But that was not why Jesus had come. He didn't come to just be a miracle worker. He came for something that was much bigger. He didn't come to just solve the symptoms of sin in this world. All the sickness and suffering in this world comes from a broken world. A world that is no longer perfect as God created it. He came to solve the root of all suffering. He came to solve the problem of sin.

As Paul writes to the Romans: **“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

God is not punishing us because of sin. He punished his Son on the cross. Therefore, as we face suffering because we live in a broken world, Jesus wants to bring us closer to him. He wants you to have the freedom that Christ brought into this world. You see, Jesus came to destroy the Devil. He came to handle everything that the Devil tried to throw into this world. He comes to you and says: *“I have handled this.”* That's why Jesus came. He didn't come to be just the newest miracle worker. He came to handle sin and the one who brought sin into this world.

Jesus wants you to know that he can handle all the suffering that we may experience in this life. When he cries out on the cross: **“It is finished,”** he wants you to know that your sin has been handled, along with everything else that goes with it. Perhaps, the question that we can close with today is: *What kind of Jesus do we want? Do we want a Jesus that only does miracles? Or do we want a Jesus that has solved the problem of sin?* As you leave this morning, leave with the assurance that there is nothing too big or too small that Jesus cannot handle. Your God goes with you. That's why he came. Amen.