

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany – February 7, 2021

“He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her and she began to serve them” – Mark 1:31

I never had the honor of knowing my mother-in-law. She died when my husband was just 2 years old. But from all the stories I have ever heard, I believe she and I would have become fast friends.

There are two stories in the bible about mothers-in-law. In the Old Testament, we read about Ruth’s mother-in-law, Naomi. In the New Testament, we read about Peter’s mother-in-law, laid up with a high fever. Both of these ladies were great women of faith.

Mark tells us that Jesus had cast a demon out of a man in the synagogue in Capernaum. After the service concluded, Peter, Andrew, James, John and Jesus walked over to the home of Peter’s mother-in-law. Her home was not far. The men came into the home and found her in bed with a high fever and she was in a life-threatening situation. Jesus merely touched her hand and the fever was dispelled. He raised her from her bed, and without any convalescence, she began to wait on Peter and his friends. This is the beginning of a life made immediately available to Jesus and His ministry. Whenever he was in Capernaum, he always had a place to stay.

Her priorities were changed. Her home became a safe haven. Time and again, the sick and oppressed were brought to her door. Remember the paralytic who was lowered through the roof so Jesus could heal him? It was her house – her roof. She understood desperation. Helping a paralyzed man get into the presence of Jesus was more important to her than keeping her roof intact.

The important message today is that not only does Jesus free Peter’s mother-in-law from illness, but when he touches her hand, he frees her for a life of purpose, and meaning, and good works – yes, good works. I don’t mean those things we do in the vain hope of justifying ourselves before God or others, but rather those things we do as a response to the Gospel, the Good News we have received as a result of the hand of Jesus upon our lives.

When Jesus takes hold of your hand, healing occurs, and your eyes will be opened to what God intends for your life. Imagine what marvelous deed he will do in and through you. Amen!

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