

## Gospel reflections

Mark 1:29-39

<sup>29</sup> As soon as Jesus left the meeting place with James and John, they went home with Simon and Andrew. <sup>30</sup> When they got there, Jesus was told that Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with fever. <sup>31</sup> Jesus went to her. He took hold of her hand and helped her up. The fever left her, and she served them a meal. <sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset, all who were sick or had demons in them were brought to Jesus. <sup>33</sup> In fact, the whole town gathered around the door of the house. <sup>34</sup> Jesus healed all kinds of terrible diseases and forced out a lot of demons. But the demons knew who he was, and he did not let them speak. <sup>35</sup> Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray. <sup>36</sup> Simon and the others started looking for him. <sup>37</sup> And when they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you!" <sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, "We must go to the nearby towns, so that I can tell the good news to those people. This is why I have come." <sup>39</sup> Then Jesus went to Jewish meeting places everywhere in Galilee, where he preached and forced out demons.

In these first frenetic weeks of the school year, we hit the ground running with the lectionary gospel readings from the fast-paced gospel of Mark. We are swept up in the early days of Jesus' ministry as he goes about healing, casting out demons and preaching and we haven't even reached the end of Chapter 1. The passage for this week comes straight after the exorcism in the synagogue where Jesus enters the home of one his new followers Simon, whose mother-in-law has a fever. Jesus goes to her, takes her hand and helps her up. Jesus "takes her by the hand" reaching out to care for the woman, healing her in breach of Jewish law that would forbid him touching her or healing on the Sabbath. Of significance is that Jesus' first healing in Mark's gospel is a woman. Mark making clear that Jesus' ministry is inclusive of all needs and especially of those who were considered the least. Jesus' healing restores the woman to health, to her community and vocation.



Jesus goes on to cast out demons, heal and restore all kinds of people setting them free from illness and possession to be the people God created them to be. I can't help but wonder if we fully grasp the radical nature of the good news of Jesus. Some of us have heard the story many times. It isn't news to us anymore. We think we know how the story ends, so we stop paying attention. NT Wright suggests,

*"But many people today assume that Christianity is one or more of these things – a religion, a moral system, a philosophy. In other words, they assume that Christianity is about advice. But it wasn't and isn't. Christianity is, simply, good news. It is the news that something has happened as a result of which the world is a different place."*

— Tom Wright, *Simply Good News: Why The Gospel Is News And What Makes It Good*

In Jesus everything changes. A cosmic shift occurs and God sets us free so that we might live into our God-given identity and potential, claiming our calling as children of God, and joining in the mission to love, heal and bless the world. The stories of the gospels invite us into the story of what God has done and is doing in and through our lives today. Mark's gospel is 'The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God,' and each one of us continues that good news as we reach out in love and care in our communities. What an exciting start to the year!

Every blessing as you and your community continue the good news of Jesus.

Anne

### [Growing deep](#)

**Lutheran schools and early childhood services**, as part of the mission of the Lutheran church, **are communities** of worship and service, sharing and living the good news of Jesus Christ.

**Lutheran schools and early childhood services are communities** where grace abounds. While recognising the brokenness of humanity, they reflect the unconditional love of the Father, revealed through the saving work of his Son, Jesus.

**Lutheran schools and early childhood services are communities** of hope, nurtured by the promises of God's word, love and forgiveness which empower staff and students to embrace the future with confidence.

*Our task as image-bearing, God-loving, Christ-shaped, Spirit-filled Christians, following Christ and shaping our world, is to announce redemption to a world that has discovered its fallenness, to announce healing to a world that has discovered its brokenness, to proclaim love and trust to a world that knows only exploitation, fear and suspicion... The gospel of Jesus points us and indeed urges us to be at the leading edge of the whole culture, articulating in story and music and art and philosophy and education and poetry and politics and theology and even--heaven help us--Biblical studies, a worldview that will mount the historically-rooted Christian challenge to both modernity and postmodernity, leading the way...with joy and humor and gentleness and good judgment and true wisdom. I believe if we face the question, "if not now, then when?" if we are grasped by this vision we may also hear the question, "if not us, then who?" And if the gospel of Jesus is not the key to this task, then what is?*

— N.T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering Who Jesus Was and Is*

Song: [Graves into gardens](#)

### **And All Be Made Well: A Healing Blessing**

That each ill  
be released from you  
and each sorrow  
be shed from you  
and each pain  
be made comfort for you  
and each wound  
be made whole in you

that joy will  
arise in you  
and strength will  
take hold of you  
and hope will  
take wing for you  
and all be made well.

Jan Richardson