

**ST PAUL'S RONDEBOSCH  
SERMON: (FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY)  
07 FEBRUARY 2020  
YEAR B**

**READINGS: ISAIAH 40:21-31//PSALM 147:1-11//1 CORINTHIANS  
9:16-23// MARK 1:29-39**

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*God of light and life, open our eyes as well as our ears that we may not only hear your Word today but might see your Word lived out fully in our lives in your world, through Christ our Lord who is the Light of the World. Amen*

Today is the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany--- the season that we are reminded of God's manifestation in the world through the person of Jesus Christ to be a light and bring salvation to all nations. It is also is a season where we as the local and worldwide church are challenged to fulfil our calling and mission.

Our collect for today reads *“Everlasting God, you heal the sick and restore the distressed make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be experienced throughout creation”*

Dumisani Sevias  
*Nominated by Nadia de Lange*

When lockdown started in late March Dumisani Sevias had no idea how he would feed his family. He had been doing part-time jobs making ends meet, when his pittance of an income was wiped out, he searched Facebook for feeding schemes, appealing for food for himself, his girlfriend and his child. Help came from Nadia de Lange and with his belly full, he realised he had to return his blessings

“The way I suffered I knew I could do this for other people”

A resident of Diepsloot Johannesburg now focus in helping his community where there are many new born babies and elderly people with no help. Dumisani is now an administrator of the Diepsloot Community Active Network group on Facebook and works together with the Gauteng Together Initiative to feed and clothe the community members.

This morning I want us to focus on

**How can we as Christians be followers and witnesses for Christ and continue to proclaim and make Christ known as the light and Saviour to others by following his example, especially during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic.**

Let us turn to our Gospel reading

Our sermon text is a continuation from last week text where Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and healing, a man possessed by an evil spirit – to the amazement of the congregation.

In Mark 1 v v 29 -31 *“As soon as they left the synagogue they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew: “Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. So he went up to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.”*

(she served them(RSV))

### **What do we learn from Jesus in these verses?**

#### ***1. Jesus meets us in the ordinariness of life***

When Jesus comes into Simon’s house: he enters the domestic world of his followers.

And so it is with us. God enters our world; he enters in our domestic world and in the ordinary day to day tasks of our lives. Being a follower of Jesus isn’t some mystical, experience that takes us out of the responsibilities of this world. Being a follower or witness of Jesus means that God comes into our lives and he ministers to us in the ordinary, in the everyday.

We must not see our ordinary family life as a barrier to our relationship with God. If we want to meet with God, he comes to us in the everyday lives (at work, at school, at university, while I am busy with my daily chores at home) and he finds us where we are.

#### ***2. Jesus is considerate and shows compassion to our needs***

Here was Jesus. He had just been teaching at the synagogue. He had healed a man from an evil spirit. He had left a huge crowd of people in amazement at his authority. He was confronted by the teachers of the law. And then he gets to Simon's house and he's told: "My mother-in-law has a fever".

Jesus could have said no I'm too tired – she just has a fever she will get better (give her some flutex/cough mixture) ----

However he goes to the house and heal Simon's mother in law---- because he was not motivated from his own perspective but always the perspective of the person in need.

It is easy for us, isn't it, to discount the suffering of others because their pain may seem so small in comparison to our own pain. But pain is pain – whether it seems to us to be large or small – and if we want to be Christ- like, we must address the pain and suffering wherever we find it and not judge that pain or compare it to the suffering of someone else and say your pain is not such a big deal.

Verse 31: "***Jesus went up to her, took her hand and helped her up.***"

Over and over again in Jesus' ministry, his compassion is conveyed through the power of touch; taking hands, touching shoulders, helping up, touching blind eyes, holding people. Touch is an immense pastoral gift that conveys the compassion of Christ. (But how ironic because of the Corona Virus we can't touch and hug people)

Even after healing Peter's mother-in-law Jesus enjoyed the evening meal with Peter's family, and James and John. But that peaceful rest with his friends was to be short lived. We read: 32-33 "***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***"

And sure enough, Jesus met them with compassion and mercy. Jesus did not ask why are you bothering me so late I am tired, come back tomorrow? No, he met them at the door – the whole town – and healed many.

My dear friends how compassionate, how considerate are we, how do we portray God's love to others?

What does our body language say to each other?

What does our body language says to the newcomer in our parish?  
What does our body language says to our non-Christian neighbour?  
Even our way of speaking our tone of voice --how compassionate are we, how considerate are we how loving, caring are we?

### ***3. Jesus came to serve***

When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, he showed no matter who we are he came to serve. In healing her he made it possible for her to help others and to serve them with dignity. (*\*some may interpret that now she is healed her place is to work in the kitchen and wait on the men No it is about serving others Yes, she served the men, but her service was a way of showing respect and gratitude to her healer*)

Peter's mother-in-law made her life immediately available to Jesus and His ministry. We have been healed to serve, healed to help and touched so that we touch others.

When Jesus heals (not only physical healing, but also emotional, psychological and spiritual healing), he also gives new life. Those who receive this new life become willing and able to serve others. When one receives, one usually wants to share. (like Dumisani) The best witnesses among us do their work with a sense of joy that comes from their experiences of Jesus "healing them and raising them up."

When we have gone through dark difficult times and challenges we want to share what Jesus has done in our lives to others. The new life Jesus gives us gives us the power to see the needs of others and respond with energy and enthusiasm.

### ***4. Jesus takes time to pray***

Jesus' busy night of healing didn't translate into "sleeping in" the next day –. No, we read: 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. Jesus needed time to be with his heavenly Father in prayer. What did Jesus pray about during those times when he went off alone?

Most properly He prayed for strength and help and prepare him for the challenges he would face –especially as he faced the prospect of dying on the cross for the sins of the whole world. But he also prayed for others. He prayed for the spread of the Gospel, the protection of His disciples, the salvation of all, and the healing of the demon-possessed and sick. And as Jesus prayed and

meditated on God's Word, he found peace and refreshment to carry on his work.

How much more you and I my friends. Even when our plans are laid out for us, we need to take time to listen to God's will for our lives. We need to ask God for strength for our challenges. We have to pray for our families, friends our communities especially during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic.

## **CONCLUSION**

As followers and witnesses of Christ we must continue to proclaim and make Christ known as the light and Saviour to others by being.

We must take our prayer life seriously

Compassionate toward those who are sick, the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable, those infected and affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

We must be willing to serve and we must take our prayer life seriously then we will have peace and feel refresh to be witnesses for Jesus Christ