

22nd Wednesday
Luke 4:38-44

Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law

We are now in the Gospel of Luke for the **weekday cycle**, which picks up with Jesus' exorcism of the demons from the man in the synagogue of Capernaum. Jesus heads straight from the synagogue to Simon Peter's mother-in-law who is sick with a fever.

Peter must have loved his wife very much to have her mother live with them, but we will see why after she is healed. Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately and waited on them. I am sure he had no intention of finding her own place. In Luke's Gospel, **women** play important roles, beginning with Jesus mother, then Anna in the Temple, then Elizabeth his mother's cousin.

All who were sick came to Jesus and he cured them. **Demons** also came out from those he healed. Which isn't too strange in biblical times, since Jews believed that many diseases were from bad spirits or demons. However, these demons shouted, "You are the Son of God!" Why did the demons know who Jesus was, but it would take the disciples even longer to recognize him, with Peter's proclamation?

There are three types of **miracles** that Jesus performed: miracles of Healing, miracles of exorcism, and miracles of Nature. *Healing* would be the blind can see, the deaf now hear, the lame walk. For *nature*, Jesus walks on the water, or calms the storm, or feeds the 5000. For *exorcism*, he drives out demons, and sometimes send them into a herd of swine.

The healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, seems like a mix of both healing and exorcism. Notice that Jesus **rebukes** the fever, hence an exorcism. The importance of this miracle, though simple, is that Jesus heals by **voice** command only, "He rebukes the fever and it leaves her!" In the next stanza Jesus heals by using his hands, "He laid his hands on each one of them and cured them"

Why is this so important? We are in the beginning of Luke's gospel now, and the evangelist is still setting the stage and introducing the players, especially Peter and

the initial disciples. He is also dropping small but significant signs of Jesus power, in this scene, the power of his **word!**

It is this word, in the end, that all the miracles point to, the **Word of God** as at his baptism, "...And the heavens opened up and a voice was heard that said, 'This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.'" Later on at Mount Tabor that same voice will add, '...Listen to Him!' that is, listen to him whose word heals and casts out demons.

In the end, it is this Word of God that we hold in our hands called the **Good News** and read of these miracles and wonder what all that can mean. It is this Good News that will bring us into the Kingdom of God now as when Jesus responded to those who asked, "Who are my mothers and brothers and sisters?" And he responded to his own question, "Those who hear the Word of God and keep it."

And how do we keep it, when we get up and serve the people of God as Peter's mother-in-law did and all the holy men and women who came after her, all the founders and foundresses of religious orders that serve throughout the world, especially in missionary countries with health clinics and hospices, with education and technical training, with orphanages and respite centers and places for the elderly...and here.