

Gaines Congregational United Church of Christ

February 4, 2024

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40: 21-31

Responsive Reading: Psalm 147: 1-11

Epistle Reading: 1st Corinthians 9: 16-23

Gospel Reading: Mark 1: 29-39

Sermon: **For This Purpose, I Have Come**

By Rev. Jim Gardner

Summary: Jesus came for a purpose, so have we.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

Have is not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood the foundations of the earth?

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth.

Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain.

And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

He brings princes to nothing; He makes judges of the earth
useless.

“To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One.

And, the Psalm says, “The Lord builds up Jerusalem; He gathers together the outcasts of Israel. He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.”

This is God we are talking about. This is the God of unparalleled glory and power, and this is the same God that sent His Son to Earth for a purpose.

But what was His purpose?

His purpose was not to turn water into wine. His purpose was not to calm the gail with just a word and the gesture of His hand. His purpose was not even to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, make the lame walk, raise the dead and even to drive out demons.

His purpose was to introduce us to the Father and to proclaim Himself as the true Son of the Father and our Lord and Savior. His purpose was to redeem us and make us heirs to His Kingdom.

This was His purpose.

In our gospel lesson we find Jesus healing the mother-in-law of Peter. Jesus heals her so completely that there is no lingering effect to the extreme fever she had been experiencing.

“So, He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.”

Because it was the Sabbath the people who witnessed this healing waited until sundown to bring their sick to Jesus. In that time and place, the day ended with the setting of the sun.

“Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons.”

This is where the Bible starts into the teaching mode.

The following morning Jesus rises, “along while before daylight, He went out to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” Jesus the Son of God, not only believes that He needs to pray, He believes He needs to discipline Himself to do it when it needed to be done and not just when it was convenient for Him.

If that was important to the Son of God, maybe it should be even more important to us, mere mortals. Do you think?

When the disciples found Jesus, they informed Him that the people were looking for Him to come and do some more doctor stuff. But Jesus said to them, “Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.” Jesus knew His purpose. It was not to become

insanely popular in one small town but to spread His teachings throughout the Holy Land. Jesus knew that the miracles that He performed were meant by God to be the signs that would validate His claim as Son of the Father and not just some run-of-the-mill prophet.

Jesus knew that He had a purpose and Jesus knew that we have a purpose too. That purpose may seem small, but it is assigned to us by God. Notice that when Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law she got up and served them. Does not seem like a big thing but that was the purpose that God had assigned to her at that time, and she did it. (Note to self, small stuff is important stuff to God.)

Now we come to the Epistle. The Epistle hits on the big stuff. As Jackie, or Don, or I, or any other minister that is worth his or her salt can tell you, and I quote. "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!" This is our purpose. Oh, we are not Jesus, no minister is. No preacher has ever saved a single soul in the history of man. That is not our purpose. Our purpose is not to save, our purpose is to open the door for the Holy Spirit to do His magic. Our purpose is to open the door so that all might hear, and all might be granted the abundant joy and peace, not only for now but for all eternity. So, hold us accountable, but while you do that, hold yourselves

accountable too. Peter's mother-in-law fulfilled her purpose, you do the same. For this purpose, you have come forth. Hallelujah and Amen!