

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany – February 4, 2024

“Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.”

– Mark 1:30-31 –

Stay-at-home moms know what it is like to get lost in the crowd. Their lives revolve around their children; their identity is so connected to their kids that at times even their names are lost. They are usually known only as Mom or Mommy or Mother. These moms don’t mind; they feel blessed to be so active participating and available in their children’s lives. But no matter how much a stay-at-home mom loves being with her children, most have moments when they feel like they have no purpose. Oh, they know that raising children is the most important job a woman can do, but they all have gifts and abilities that deserve recognition. They feel like a nobody, a no name, an invisible person in the world.

There is comfort in today’s story from Mark for all those stay-at-home moms. Here we see Jesus ministering to an unnamed woman in her home. He goes everywhere, even to the places where the invisible people reside. In the story just before this one in Mark, Jesus healed a demon-possessed man after preaching and teaching the scriptures in the synagogue. He was seen and heard by many who were amazed at His authority over the word and the spirit. He was gaining notoriety and accomplishing great things. Yet, the public healing in the synagogue is followed by a private and intimate moment with the ill mother of a friend. Jesus touched her and she was made well. She wasn’t healed for some great purpose, at least that she was aware of; she was healed so that she could continue to live out her God given vocation: serving those she loves.

She was a nobody, identified only as someone’s mother. She was not being recognized as having tremendous gifts and abilities, and yet Jesus loved her so much that He took her hand, healed her and restored her to her place in her community, to her place in her home. He gave her the gift of life again, to do what she was meant to do. He does extraordinary things for ordinary people in ordinary places on ordinary days. Jesus can, and does, the same for all of us nobodies as we live our ordinary, yet valuable, lives in this world.

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