

**“Love God by
Serving Others”
February 4, 2018**

**Our Savior’s Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Bill Mann**

I want to welcome you, this morning, to one of the most holy and liturgical days of the Church Year, a day that is known throughout our churches as “SUPER BOWL SUNDAY!” Warning: Super Bowl Fever is highly contagious and there is no antidote. Did you hear about the young guy who was really in a difficult situation. He bought two tickets to today’s Super Bowl and he bought the tickets way in advance. Here’s the problem—he forgot that he and his fiancé had scheduled their wedding for the same day and same time as the Super Bowl. So, what are you going to do? He already has the tickets! Now he realizes he can’t go. It’s just out of the question. So, if you’re a guy who wants to go instead of him, here’s the information you need to know: It’s at St. Peter’s Lutheran Church in Schaumburg, Illinois at 4 pm. Her name’s Louise and she’ll be the one wearing the white dress.

Super Bowl Fever! Even pastors can get caught up in Super Bowl Fever. Did you hear about the church where after the prayers it came time to take up the offering. The pastor was a big football fan, so, he reached into his pocket, took out a quarter and flipped it in typical referee fashion and joyfully announced: “The ushers will receive!”

Enough about Super Bowl Fever. Today, I want to talk to you about a different kind of fever. In the Gospel for today, Jesus heals Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever. Did you ever think about Peter

being married? Well, obviously he was. Peter had a mother-in-law. Early church history records that Peter's wife was martyred in Rome. And 1 Corinthians 9:5 the Apostle Paul asks--"Don't we have the right to bring along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brother and also Cephas?" (Cephas is just another name for Peter.) The Bible tells us that Peter was married, had a mother-in-law, and in the Gospel for today Jesus heals her from a fever.

I want to ask you—how do you react when Jesus heals you from something—whether it is physical, psychological or emotional? Consider Peter's mother-in-law—how did she react to her healing? Mark 1:31 says—"The fever left her and she began to serve them." The desired response to being healed is to start serving. Listen to what the Bible says in Ephesians 2:10—"You are God's masterpiece, given new lives in Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others." My friends, you weren't created just to take up space — to eat and breathe and leave a carbon footprint on the earth. God designed you to make a difference. God created you to help others. You were created to be a value-added person on this earth. In other words, God wants our world to be a better place because you are a part of it.

Here are the facts: Fact #1--God has given you the gift of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ. Fact #2—God has given you your time, your talents, your resources—everything you have and everything that makes you, you. Fact #3--Now God wants you to love him by serving others. The Bible says-- "In our union with Christ Jesus he (God) has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do" (Ephesians 2:10). 1 Peter 4:10 says—"Use your God-given gifts to serve others."

Have you ever wondered why God didn't immediately take you to heaven the minute you believed in Jesus your Savior? I mean, why

does God leave us in this sinful world? God has a reason. You have a purpose. Once you have accepted His grace, God wants to use you. There is a reason you're in this Church and a mission for you in the world. Your job is to discover what that is and then do it!

We receive healing so we can begin serving. Now, here's the hard question—"Why is it that, sometimes, healing doesn't happen?" I want to go back to Capernaum for a moment and give you a taste for the place. This city--Capernaum still exists on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. You can actually go there--to the synagogue where Jesus preached and did his healings. You can visit the home of Peter and his mother-in-law. Take a look at this video and step back into Capernaum—a place where Jesus walked.

Now, I want you to close your eyes and imagine the city of Capernaum and Jesus there. Imagine Jesus there. It was a long day. Jesus is tired. First he healed a man in the synagogue. Then Peter's mother-in-law was healed. After the sun went down crowds of people showed up and the healing went on. Now, it's early morning—the next day. It's still dark. People are sleeping in the street around the house. Jesus makes his way through the slumbering people. He goes off to a quiet place where he can be alone and pray. Finally, the disciples wake up. Where is Jesus?—off praying again! The search is on. Eventually the disciples find him kneeling in that quiet place. "Where have you been? You should see the crowds. People are surrounding Peter's house. And the crowd just keeps growing. We don't know where they are coming from, but there's more healing to be done." Jesus looks up and says to his disciples, "Pack up our things. We're moving on—we're going to the next town." You know, I just have to wonder about those folks who came looking for Jesus. They wanted to be healed to, but for them the healing didn't happen. Why is it that, sometimes, the healing doesn't happen?

I ask that question because I believe. I've seen the miracles. I've seen a man on his deathbed come to faith in Jesus Christ and receive baptism—a miracle--the ultimate healing—faith and eternal life! I have seen a woman with tears in her eyes. After a diagnosis of inoperable cancer, after weeks of prayer, suddenly the tests are clear, the MRI shows no evidence of disease, the doctors have no way to explain it but they all agree—she is cancer free. A miracle--she has been healed. I have seen the miracles. But I have also held the hands of friends and church members for whom the miracle did not happen. I've watched life slip away and as they took their last breath and I've wondered—Why is it that, sometimes, the healing doesn't happen?

I once asked a pastor who was involved in a healing ministry why God healed some people and not others. Do you know what his answer was?—He said to me, “I haven't got a clue.” He said, “I don't know why, but God does. God has a plan. It may be that, this side of heaven, we won't understand or know God's plan. But God has a plan.” And, “God has a promise, for us—that all things work together for good for them that love God. We may not see that right now. But it's true.” In the end, it's not about how long you live on this earth, it's about how you choose to live.” Are you a value-added person in this world? Has the Holy Spirit come to dwell in your heart? Have you learned to love God by serving others? But most important, have you come to know the new life that is yours in Jesus Christ. The life won for you on the cross. The life not bound by the limits of the world. This life that is eternal. After the Super Bowl today they'll name the MVP. I hope each of you know that God counts you one of his “most valuable players.” He loves you. He sent His Son to give you a new life. If you want to love Him back then find a way to start serving.