



**The Healing Ministry
A Lenten Message from
Rev. Keith Nelson,
Superintendent
Sakakawea District
of the Dakotas Conference**

Hello, I'm Keith Nelson, Sakakawea District Superintendent. Today we continue our journey in this season of lent by looking at another dimension of Jesus' ministry shared with us in Adam Hamilton's book "The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus".

Chapter two which I'm focusing on, speaks of the healing ministry of Jesus, represents one of the significant ways that Jesus connects with people.

Now in each of the first three gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus' first miracle involves a healing. In Matthew, Jesus heals a leper. In Mark and Luke, Jesus heals a man with an evil spirit.

Then both stories say that immediately Jesus goes to peter's home where he heals peter's mother in law, who has been ill.

And if that isn't enough for one day, then Mark and Luke take it further and say, that after healing Peter's mother in law people bring the sick and the demon possessed to Jesus. And the story says, he heals them.

This shows, I believe, the compassion that Jesus had for those who were hurting, who were less than whole, and who were on the edge of society. But it also expresses

the value that sometimes the best way, or the first step, in connecting with people and sharing or showing God's love to them is to care for a need or a hurt that the person is experiencing in life.

As you read through any of the gospels, it becomes so apparent, that Jesus truly cared for people. Those he encountered along "the way" as he traveled. It didn't matter what their nationality or religious affiliation was or whether they were male or female, young or old. All that mattered was that these were people - God's people and, all of them had value in Jesus' eyes.

Just a couple weeks ago I purchased a new file cabinet for my office in Bismarck. When I got it home and out of the box I discovered it was damaged. There were three places it was dented. But, the cabinet was still usable. I went back to the store with pictures of the damage. The manager apologized and took 25% off the regular price, since I was willing to keep and use the cabinet.

The manager also shared with me that unfortunately, this happens quite often. File cabinets are returned damaged. If the customer isn't willing to keep and use the damaged item the manufacturer has instructed the store to simply throw the item out. It's not worth it to repair - it's a disposable product

So many items that are a part of our lives today are seen as disposable. It's more cost effective to simply buy a replacement than try to repair something that is damaged or broken. But we shouldn't be surprised - this same way of thinking has been around for quite some time.

In fact, in Jesus' day, people on the fringes of society, were often seen as sort of disposable, not worth the energy or time to seek to restore wholeness. Unfortunately, this attitude can still be found in our day too. But Jesus very quickly in his ministry shows that in God's kingdom, in Jesus mind and heart – there are no disposable people. There is always a willingness to reach out with grace and mercy and with God's healing love.

Today I want to ask you a question, is there a place that you need to feel or experience God's healing presence in your life? Lent is often seen as a time of self-reflection, time to pay particular attention to our own walk with God. As you do that today and throughout this week, again I want to ask is there a place of brokenness within you? Is there part of you that feels less than whole?

Remember, in god's kingdom and in Jesus' heart there are no disposable people and that includes you. Jesus' desire is for each of us to experience the healing presence of God's love within our own lives. You and I are people of great worth to Jesus. Jesus longs for each of us to receive the healing that we need.

Please remember that healing and wholeness can come in many different ways and through many different forms in our day. It might come through doctors, counselors, medications, pastors, friends, neighbors, family, and so many other ways. In our brokenness, Jesus' desire for us is that of healing.

Finally, I want to leave you with this thought. In the midst of receiving the healing that you need, keep in mind that you just might be the presence of Jesus, to bring healing to someone that crosses your path in this ongoing journey of life and faith. The journey is before us – lets each seek to walk in the footsteps of Jesus today and everyday.



God, open up our hearts, our minds, and our souls to receive the healing that we need. We thank you that you are a God of healing – a God of new beginnings. Strengthen us for the journey ahead as we walk along the way with you. Amen