

Church Begins at Home

February 4-10
The Fifth Sunday after Epiphany B

A Verse for the Week
The Lord heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.
(Psalm 147:3)



Daily Readings

SUNDAY'S GOSPEL Mark 1:29-39

In this reading we hear about many of Jesus' healing activities. He heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law and many who were sick with various diseases or possessed by demons. Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals them, and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.

MONDAY 2 Kings 4:8-37

Elisha was the successor to Elijah. Both were prophets who worked many miracles in the Northern Kingdom of Israel in the 9th century B.C. In this passage, Elisha is involved in the resuscitation of a young boy who has died.

TUESDAY 2 Kings 8:1-6

Elisha's relationship with the Shunammite woman and her son continues. During a time of famine, the woman moves to the land of the Philistines (along the SE border of Israel — today it's called the Gaza Strip). When she returns, she finds people have moved onto her property and claimed it as their own. Elisha's servant, Gehazi, intercedes with the king to have her property restored.

WEDNESDAY Mark 3:7-12

Mark here recounts events similar to what happened in Sunday's gospel—Jesus heals the sick, casts out unclean spirits. The unclean spirits recognize Jesus for who he really is, but he commands them to keep silent. This is a recurring theme in Mark's gospel, often called the "Messianic Secret". One explanation that has much support is that Jesus tries to deflect attention away from the miracles and healings until the true nature of his messiahship is revealed in his suffering and death on the cross.

THURSDAY Job 6:1-13

The book of Job is an ancient tale that explores the mystery of why bad things happen to good people. Job is a righteous man whom God has allowed Satan to cause to suffer. Job's friends figure that his suffering must be due to some sin he has committed, so they urge him to confess his sin. Job does not profess to be without sin, but knows he has done nothing to merit such severe suffering. This passage is part of Job's response, appealing to God that if he can't be healed, then let him die.

FRIDAY Isaiah 40:21-31

Chapter 40 begins a section called "Second Isaiah", written by a prophet to those in exile in Babylon (about 550 B.C.). As they lament their condition, he speaks a word of hope that God has not forgotten them.

SATURDAY Mark 9:2-9 (Tomorrow's Gospel)

The season after Epiphany comes to a close with the account of the Transfiguration.

Catechism Corner

(from Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*)

The Fifth Petition

Forgive our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

What is this?

We ask in this prayer that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins or deny these petitions on their account, for we are worthy of nothing for which we ask, nor have we earned it. Instead we ask that God would give us all things by grace, for we sin daily and indeed earn only punishment. So, on the other hand, we, too, truly want to forgive heartily and do good gladly to those who sin against us.
