

Ruth asked me to reflect on these healing stories in Mark 1.

I said Yes, I would think on them....and I did....

this is Pastor Ruth's message! I am only here to '**BARE** witness"

Much of my life has been dedicated to the "healing business"

... growing out of my role in Pastoral Care in a psychiatric hospital setting,

and continuing in pastoral care and counseling,

here and in Japan,

and finally as a "teacher" to others

in the work of pastoral care in the General Medical setting..

And, yes, these stories in Mark, are wonderful, inspiring evidence that God/ through Jesus,

is on the side of healing and hope.

We share them to say that the **Holy One** "cares"

about our daily life,

our spiritual and mental states,

and our relationships!

God is on the side of "**healing**" our **spirits**,

our **bodies** and our **social interactions**.

*One of my first teachers of pastoral care was Ernest Bruder,
who frequently said,*

"The mentally ill are just like us....only more so!"

At that time it seemed like a very radical thought.

But as time continues we learn more and more

about the connection of "unclean spirits"

with our physical bodies

and our relationships.

some 30+ years ago we developed a program called :
“Recovery of Hope”, a program for healing troubled marriages....

These stories in Mark’s Gospel,

written long ago,
do speak to me today

about the state of my “*spiritual self*”,

that part of me that **struggles** with an awareness of my **mortality**,

the limits of my “**TIME**”,

the decline of my **mental functioning**,

the increasing **aches of my joints**,

an awareness of a **declining intellectual capacity**,

trouble **focusing** on important tasks,

small samples of **arthritis**,

a **loss of energy**,

a decline of my **hearing**.

So **is** there some “healing” **that can come to this time of life?**

Is there a “**balm**” for a “**wounded spirit**”
that I can find for **my** life?

Was this written to bring hope to those of us at the declining stages of our lives?

or to *any of us who can no longer expect our bodies to be “healed”?*
is that called “**FAITH**”?

I HOPE SO!!!

From Richard Rohr comes this thought:

*“As disappointed as I get with early stage religion, I can't give up on it, because religion still has the power to communicate to you that you are a participant in something bigger than yourself--and from the inside out. We call it the **discovery of the soul** or the **awakening of the spirit**. “*

Richard Rohr

Could healing include the decline of the body &

**the increase of the “spiritual?
the “Divine Spirit”?**

The Eternal PRESENCE?

I hope it means that God is with us whether suffering or not,

“God is with us, “*living or dying*”

God is with us!

“*Suffering or serving*”

God is with us!

Doing or being,

God is with us

.....if we keep our hearts and minds open to the work of ‘**God’s spirit**’ in us,

that is the work of ***love***,

the work of ***compassion*** for ***all life*** and ***persons***.

and then finally, the “***resolution***” of life

when the **SPIRIT** *consumes* all

.....comes

then...

spirit-in-oneness !

A time for “Amen” to life.