

---

24 Thursday

THURSDAY, Week 2 of Year

1 Sam 18: 6-9: 19:1-7

Ps 55: 2-3, 9-14

Mark 3: 7 - 12

Today's gospel is a summary of what's happened so far in Jesus' ministry, and points towards the next stage. In the opening chapters of St Mark, Jesus is presented as healing sick people, and releasing people from the power of unclean spirits. He's about to start more direct preaching and teaching. What we hear today is peoples' reaction to His healings, large crowds starting to come from all the neighbouring towns and regions, eager to be healed by Him. As He himself often physically touched people in curing their illnesses, the crowds too wanted to get near enough to Him to touch Him and so receive something of the power that came from Him. But their enthusiasm and pushing closer to Him on the lakeshore began to become dangerous, and Jesus had to ask for a boat to take Him away from the seashore for safety.

Healing of illness of various kinds is one of the main things people ask for in prayer, whether for ourselves or for someone dear to us. How aggressively do we "chase" Jesus for this healing, trying to get close to Him, as those crowds did? Of course, that 'closeness' is not now a physical one, but in the deeper intimacy that comes from personal communion with Him in our hearts. And there are other 'healings' also, for which we ask: healing of hurts and wounds in our hearts, our memories, our souls. Especially in this Week of Prayer for the Unity of Christians, the healing of divisions and disagreements among those who claim to follow Christ and to love Him should surely be a priority of our prayer.

---

Text wordcount: 275