

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2020

Pacific Presbyterian Church
Pacific, Missouri

TRINITY SUNDAY

GATHERING

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP *(based on Hosea 6)*

One: Return to the One Holy God who calls you to steadfast love.
All: **The Lord desires love, not sacrifice.**
One: Return to the One who heals and binds, revives and raises up.
All: **The Lord desires knowledge, not burnt offerings.**
One: Rejoice in the name of the One who favors all creation with light and life.
All: **Let us rejoice, and worship the Lord our God.**

***OPENING HYMN** “Come, Thou Almighty King” GtG 2

1. **Come, thou almighty King,
help us thy name to sing;
help us to praise:
Father, all glorious,
o'er all victorious,
come, and reign over us,
Ancient of Days.**

2. **Come, thou incarnate Word,
merciful, mighty Lord,
our prayer attend.
Come, and thy people bless,
and give thy word success;
Spirit of holiness,
on us descend.**

3. **Come, holy Comforter,
thy sacred witness bear
in this glad hour.**

Thou who almighty art,

now rule in every heart,
and ne'er from us depart,
Spirit of power.

4. To thee, great One in Three,
eternal praises be,
hence evermore!
Thy sovereign majesty
may we in glory see,
and to eternity
love and adore.

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***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We humble our hearts and bow our knees to you, O Lord our God, for we have fallen from your way and failed to obey. We grasp at straws to shore up our feeble lives instead of relying upon you. We have not shared your love as freely with others as we have received. Forgive us, gracious God. Touch us with your tenderness and relieve the fear in our hearts. Nurture us in our love for you and guide us in our love for others. Transform us in the image of your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***SILENT CONFESSION**

***ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: The God of mercy desires the well-being of all
people and creatures.

All: **The God of Abraham and Sarah, of the prophets,
of Paul and Mary Magdalene,
gives life and makes new what is old.**

One: In the name of the God who raised Jesus from the dead,
your sins are forgiven.
Walk in the way of faith,
and live in peace!

***THE PEACE**

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

(From your seat, a brief sign of peace may be shared: a wave of the hand, a nod of the head, a honk of the horn, etc.)

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 9:9-13,18-26

MATTHEW 9:9-13,18-26 (various)

⁹ As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

¹⁰ And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners joined Jesus and his disciples at the table. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

...

¹⁸ While Jesus was speaking to them, a ruler came and knelt in front of him, saying, "My daughter has just died. But come and place your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹ And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

²⁰ Then a woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak, ²¹ for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." ²² Jesus turned around and saw her, and said, "Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well." At that very moment the woman became well.

²³ When Jesus went into the ruler's house, he saw the flute players and the distressed crowd. ²⁴ He said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put outside, Jesus went in and touched her hand, and the little girl rose up. ²⁶ And the report of this spread throughout that whole region.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Your Word is powerful, O God.
and can transform the hearts
of men and women.
Speak to us today.
Open our hearts and minds
to your renovating Word,
and give us guidance and strength.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

SERMON “Healing!?” by Pastor Bill Vincent

Healing: can be a touchy subject: difficult, personal, sensitive.

‘Why was such-n-such healed and so-n-so not?’

‘I must have done something terrible to have this disease ravish me!’

When we speak of healing in its fullest sense it includes physical as well as mental healing, emotional and spiritual healing, healing of individual relationships and society as a whole.

I may take an antibiotic for a sinus infection. I may put a bandaid on a ‘booboo’. What do I need for a broken relationship? Do I need a cast for a broken bone?

Healing.

Though it may be nice to think I could offer a complete and exhaustive response to the subject of healing, I don’t think I can (so I won’t even try).

But I do believe our stories for today offer some important clues regarding healing, hints of truths that can be healing in themselves for what ails us.

First one to mention:

-1- Forgiveness may have something to do with healing.

Jesus is accused by the Pharisees of eating with “tax collectors and sinners,” and his response is to say that a doctor is needed by those who know they are sick.

Now, let me be clear: I am not suggesting that every illness we may experience is the result of something I (or someone else) has done wrong. Let us not slip too easily into the assumption that if someone is sick, they must have sinned or done something ‘deserving’ such ‘punishment’. No.

Having said that, let us also recognize that sometimes our illness, our dis-ease is indeed the result (direct or otherwise) of our poor choices and the errant ways we have taken.

I think I’m “Superman” and nothing can harm me. So I run my body into the ground, to the point of exhaustion; or I take overly unnecessary risks. In that state, I am ripe for being infected with some virus or ill-intended bacteria; I am primed for some unintended (though still avoidable) injury.

Roman Catholic theologians, in particular, are fond of speaking of sins of commission and sins of omission. A sin of commission is something I do that causes injury. A sin of omission is something I fail to do that causes injury.

We sense the unrest in our country. We see protests. And sometimes they themselves are the cause of injury. But more often than not they are the symptom of a deeper societal ill, systemic dysfunction called racism.

“Tax collectors and sinners” was the social stigma of Jesus’ day: the people who were pushed to the margins of society. And who are those who are pushed to the margins of society in our day, sometimes by the specific actions we do in putting them there, and sometimes by our intentional inaction, allowing them to be put there (shoved to the margins of society).

Remember forgiveness requires someone to forgive. Forgiveness requires someone to ask for forgiveness. And forgiveness requires both parties to acknowledge the brokenness that needs to be healed.

There are indeed some illnesses, some situations where my lack of health is the direct result of ill-advised and even sinful choices, either by what we have done, or not done.

So, yes, forgiveness is a necessary component to healing.

-2- Faith has something to do with healing ... but not everything.

I personally am wary of the comment, “If you only had enough faith...”

Did Jesus heal everyone he met? No. Did that mean all those other people did not have faith? I don’t think so.

Does faith play a part in healings? Yes, including these in our passage. *“Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well.”* We cannot escape it: Faith definitely has something to do with healing. But not everything, or the only thing. But it is important.

Faith, trust: believing in something or someone. Trust in the one (or ones) helping to bring healing, be it a doctor or nurse or therapist or friend.

When I visit someone in the hospital, I will often ask them, “How do you like your doctor?” The rapport, the care and trust they have with their doctor makes a difference in their healing.

We also notice the difference it makes when trust is absent. When, during a protest, it becomes obvious that there is no trust between peoples and mistrust in the ‘system’ in which we find ourselves.

Faith also includes receptivity to the healing that may come, even in ways and manners unexpected. An openness to the work God might do in our midst in and through our situation, in and through others, in and through ourselves, in and through what we do not know.

Guy D. Nave Jr. (Associate Professor of Religion, Luther College, Decorah, Iowa)

Jesus looks at the woman and greets her with the words, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well" (v. 22). After this explicit act of mercy, the woman is instantly made well. Matthew identifies God's healing power as residing not in Jesus' clothing but, rather, in Jesus' mercy. In Matthew, God's power has always been associated with mercy. That is why Jesus says, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'" (v. 13). (Feasting: Exegetical Perspective)

Which leads nicely to the next point.

-3- Presence may have more to do with healing than we give credit.

You may have noticed in the scripture reading that a couple of verses were missing in the middle. Some people come to Jesus and ask him about fasting, and his response is, “*The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they?*” (9:15). And who is the ‘bridegroom’? Jesus is the bridegroom.

Eduard Schweizer points out,

perhaps ... what follows [with the healing of the woman suffering from severe bleeding and the raising of the ruler’s daughter] *is a demonstration of the presence of the “bridegroom.”* (228)

The presence of Christ brings healing and wholeness and restoration and life to
-Matthew, the “tax collectors and sinners,” by eating with them and gathering with them and sharing in fellowship with them.

-the woman “suffering from severe bleeding for twelve years.”

-the ruler’s dead daughter, and even the ruler (father) himself.

A presence that reminds us that God is with us in all things, at all times.

So we can affirm with the Apostle Paul, “**I can do all things through the one who strengthens me**” (Philippians 4:13). Because Christ is with us.

We do not face the challenges of life alone.

And we can embody that in our presence with one another: with a visit, a call; when we sit with someone, when we stand with another.

-4- And thinking of others is some of the best medicine of all, for their healing and for ours.

Cynthia M. Campbell comments on the ruler’s request regarding his daughter:

Jesus responds by getting up and “following” the [ruler] to his home. In Matthew’s Gospel the verb, “to follow,” and its nominal form, “follower,” is the usual way the author refers to Jesus’ disciples. Probably Matthew uses it here in the ordinary sense of accompaniment, but it is also possible that describing Jesus’ action in this way suggests that he functions here as a model for the behavior of faithful followers: he goes immediately where he is needed to bring hope and healing. (FeastMt:Exegetical Perspective, 239a)

Has someone done that for us, where we know healing through someone because they ministered to us, they were there for us?

Will we do that for another? To “*go where we are needed -- be it the bedside or the curbside -- to bring hope and healing*”?

Embodying the self-emptying of Christ himself, with a focus not on ourselves but on others.

Like the prayer attributed to St. Francis (of Assisi):

**O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
not so much to be understood as to understand,
not so much to be loved as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
it is in dying, that we awake to eternal life.**

(Eerdmans' Book of Famous Prayers: A Treasury of Christian Prayers through the Centuries, compiled by Veronica Zundel, 1983 Lion Publishing, p.30)

Remember Jesus with his cross, and his invitation to us to take up our own: *"For those who lose their lives will find them."*

Could that be the ultimate healing? Where we give of our lives for another's healing?
Where in giving, we receive.

As opposed to much of the world's emphasis on "Me, me, me!" and "Mine, mine, mine!"

Could it be that our giving of self for another's healing will make a world of difference for our own?

There is much in our lives -- in our world -- that needs healing.
And some of that need is far more obvious than others.

My few words here today were not intended to offer the solution to all that need and all that healing.

However, I do believe that the words I have shared -- indeed the stories we have pondered -- serve as a reminder to us.

As we go about the work, the ministry of healing -- for ourselves, for others, for this country, for the world -- we need to remember and embody these truths:

-That forgiveness is a part of our healing: forgiveness of ourselves, forgiveness for others, God's forgiveness of us all.

-That faith is a part of our healing: faith in God and all that God can do for us; faith in God's ability (and indeed, desire) to care for us in and through others, and through the wonders of creation and the discoveries of science.

-That our presence, to one another, is a part of our healing: being with another, standing by them, enfleshing God's presence with us all.

-That our thinking of others -- caring for another, showing mercy towards another, giving of myself for others -- is a part of our healing.

May this serve as a guide for us as we seek healing for ourselves, and for and with one another.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.**

**We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised this Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

(from A Brief Statement of Faith, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Confessions)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Merciful God,
you remind us through Scripture
that you desire mercy and not sacrifice.
You showed us an example of your mercy
in the life and actions of Jesus Christ.
Let your church live out that mercy for others,

as the healing and compassionate presence
that Jesus was in the world.

God of all goodness,
we give thanks for the newness you give each of us every day.
We thank you for your surprises,
for the people you put in our paths to show us
new dimensions of your faithfulness and mercy.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for all people of faith,
for the differing insights into your will
offered and proclaimed by many teachers to guide
and refresh your people.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for all nations and all peoples,
for differences we celebrate,
for the variety of languages, foods, and lands
you have created.
Mold us into people who praise you
for the marvels you set before us.
Help us not to fear distinctions but to embrace them
as your gifts and channels of your grace.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

Soften us, Lord, so that we are able to enter
into others' pain.
When we are healthy, make us grateful.
When we have, teach us to share of ourselves.
When we are in need, help us to receive
the care of others.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who suffer:
for those who have no home,
for all who lack enough food,
for people who have no work or work that is
not life-giving,
for all who live in fear,
and for all who hunger for peace and healing
and struggle with knowing where to turn.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who serve in spite of the chaos around us.
We pray for those who serve in the midst of the chaos around us.
May their example stir us to serve as well,
giving of ourselves that the world may come to know you.
God of grace and goodness, **hear our prayer.**

Fill us, O God, with your power and mercy,
that we may journey in faith with all who seek healing in your world.
Into your hands we commend all who need our prayers,
trusting in your compassion,
through Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Contemporary Version)

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
 and the glory are yours
 now and forever. Amen.

OFFERING

Invitation

God, who knows our needs and our wants,
gives us all we have
and invites us to give in gratitude and joy
so that we can bless others
as we have been blessed.
Let us worship God
as we offer ourselves
in thankfulness and love.

Reflection

(Time of silence to ponder and reflect on our response to God's grace.)

**Unison Prayer of Dedication*

**For your provision each day, we give you thanks, O Lord.
For your presence and peace, we give you thanks.
Give us the wisdom and the courage
to be a blessing to this community and to this world.
Through these offerings
may we be channels of your compassion and healing to others,
for the sake of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

SENDING

***CLOSING HYMN** “We Cannot Measure How You Heal” GtG 797

- 1. We cannot measure how you heal
or answer every sufferer’s prayer,
yet we believe your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross,
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.**

- 2. The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds,
are present as if meant to last.
But present too is love which tends
the hurt we never hoped to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memories that haunt the mind.**

- 3. So some have come who need your help
and some have come to make amends,
as hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind, and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain,
and make your broken people whole.**

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***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Walk in the way of faith,
sure of God's endless and life-giving presence.
Turn to the Lord with your needs
and to your neighbor with aid,
for in seeing ourselves as friends to others,
we learn anew each day the meaning of our fellowship in Christ.

May God our Father bless you
so that you can be a blessing to others.
May Christ bless you
so that you can be healers of a world that is hurting.
May the Holy Spirit bless you
so that you can spread the hope that only the triune God
can inspire and give to this world.

Pastor: ...And let the gathered people of God say...
People: ...**Amen.**

POSTLUDE

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