

FPCU

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A Service of Healing and Blessing

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Meditation on Healing

In the Gospel of Mark, the first Gospel written, Jesus gathers a group of disciples to him. And then he starts preaching, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news,” and healing (Mk 1:14) He goes to the synagogue in Capernaum and heals a man with an unclean spirit. He goes to Simon and Andrew’s home, and heals Simon’s mother-in-law. He decides to do a preaching tour in Galilee and heals a leper (as you’ve just heard from Matt). And he finally returns to his home in Capernaum where crowds come to be healed, pushing and shoving to get near him.

In so many of the healing stories of Jesus in all 4 Gospels, Jesus asks the sick person what he or she wants. In many of them, there are many obstacles to be overcome. Some of the obstacles are physical ailments – not being able to walk, or to see; others are the physical problem of being heard over the noise, or of getting close through the crowds. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the lack of faith – not just in the individual who needs healing, but in the people around him or her. Jesus leaves Nazareth not having healed anyone, because they see him simply as “Joseph’s son,” not a prophet, much less the Messiah. Jesus declares the old proverb, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown”; and slips away. Notice that in today’s story of the paralytic’s healing, Jesus “sees their faith,” i.e. the faith of the friends that go to the lengths of taking off a roof and using ropes to get their friend to the Healer.

Faith, not even necessarily of the individual, but of their community, is important. That is why we pray for each other here.

People are puzzled when Jesus says to the paralyzed man, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Often it may be that our sins that need to be forgiven before we can be healed. We may be fearful -- afraid of full healing because more would be asked of us. We may be carrying hatred, or anger, or resentment, or jealousy, or vain pride – each keeping us from the healing in our bodies or our souls.

And to be healed, we may have to give up some of these emotions, we must heal our relationships and forgive the other.

Unfortunately, sometimes we may have to accept the reality that our bodies cannot be healed – but Jesus will heal our spirits and our souls and will grant us his peace, which passes all understanding.

Today we are going to pray for healing and forgiveness. We will have prayer leaders here up front, and at the back, who will pray with you individually when you come to them. They have anointing oil if you choose to be anointed. Oil symbolizes healing and is the mark of being called, called to follow the Christ, the Anointed One.

To prepare for prayer, walk with me in a guided meditation through this story, putting yourself in the place of the paralyzed man.

What is paralyzing you? What needs healing in your life?

What obstacles might be causing healing and blessing not to happen?

Who are the people that could be of help? Name some of them to yourself....

Picture yourself with Jesus – his love for you – what might need forgiveness to help healing happen?

Stay with Jesus: hear him say, “Your sins are forgiven. Stand up and walk – you are healed.”

Come back to this moment, and continue in prayer.

Offering Prayer: We offer our gifts and ourselves to you, Healing and Holy One. Guide us, that we might join in the healing of our world. Amen.

Mark 2: 1-12 (NRSV)

1 When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Child, your sins are forgiven.” 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, 7 “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves, and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” —he said to the paralytic— 11 “I say to you, stand up, take your mat, and go to your home.” 12 And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”