

## Home Service for August 21, 2022

### Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

*Just when we are about to dismiss ourselves or someone else, Jesus dignifies our lives with a touch, with healing power, and with the assurance that God is very near.*

### Call to Worship:

In the midst of trouble and turmoil, God is our refuge. God is our mighty fortress and shield. In God's strength we shall be healed. In God's love we shall witness the Good News. Come, let us worship God, grateful for God's wondrous power. Open our hearts, Lord, that we might truly become bearers of peace and justice. AMEN.

### Opening Prayer:

Lord of all creation, we pause before you today, laying our hectic lives on the altar before you. Summer's warmth and rest are almost gone, and our minds are turning to the time ahead: students and educators are thinking about school; farmers are thinking about crops and fall harvests; business people are thinking about profit margins and quarterly reports; politicians are thinking about elections; retailers are thinking about the holidays. As we bow our heads before you, help us put aside today's worries and tomorrow's fears, that we may worship and revel in your presence today. Amen.

### Prayer of Confession:

Lord God, we are so bound by rules and regulations that we fail to see the human need that goes beyond the bounds of structures. We easily relegate compassionate service to those agencies in our society that have that as their mandate, forgetting that you have given us the supreme mandate to care for one another, even as you have cared for us. We turn our backs on those in need, giving the responsibility to someone else. "Let someone else do the work," we proclaim. And in that proclamation we have revealed our selfishness and our inability to be your disciples. Stop us from our selfish ways, and heal our hardened hearts. Forgive us, again, as you have so often before when we have failed to be your witnesses and workers. Help us become involved in ministries of peace and justice right where we are, for there is nowhere in creation where your love is not needed. Let us bring

messages of love and hope to all people. Bring us to an understanding of the partnership of healing and hope that abides in your service. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

### Words of Assurance

*Though we have failed time and time again to be God's people, yet God heals and forgives us. God is with us always, ready to lift and guide our lives. Place your life and your cares in God's loving presence. AMEN.*

### Read Psalm 71:1-6

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.

<sup>2</sup>In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;  
turn your ear to me and save me.

<sup>3</sup>Be my rock of refuge,  
to which I can always go;  
give the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.

<sup>4</sup>Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.

<sup>5</sup>For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD,  
my confidence since my youth.

<sup>6</sup>From birth I have relied on you;  
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.  
I will ever praise you.

### Prayers of the People:

*Summer is almost over and we wonder where the time went, Lord. We look at all the plans we had, those that we accomplished and those that are now to be put aside for another time. We look ahead to the busy year of witness and service and wonder if we are ready to truly work for you. The rest that we craved at the beginning of the summer now seems to have slipped rapidly away, leaving us breathlessly facing the upcoming autumn season. Help us, O Lord, feel your strengthening presence with us. Help us place our trust in you, knowing that you will empower and enable us to be in service. As we have brought the names and concerns of those who are dear to us to this service of prayer, seeking your healing, compassionate love; let us also be willing to place our needs and*

*concerns before you. Give us a powerful sense of restoration and reconciliation to you, for we ask these things in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ.  
AMEN.*

## Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: Jeremiah 1:4-10

The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

<sup>5</sup>“Before I formed you in the womb I knew<sup>[a]</sup> you,  
before you were born I set you apart;

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

<sup>6</sup>“Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. <sup>8</sup>Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

<sup>9</sup>Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup>See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 12:18-29

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; <sup>19</sup> to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, <sup>20</sup> because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.”<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>21</sup> The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.”<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>22</sup> But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, <sup>23</sup> to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made

perfect, <sup>24</sup> to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

<sup>25</sup> See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.”<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>27</sup> The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our “God is a consuming fire.”<sup>[d]</sup>

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 13:10-17

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, <sup>11</sup> and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. <sup>12</sup> When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, “Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.” <sup>13</sup> Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

<sup>14</sup> Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, “There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.”

<sup>15</sup> The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? <sup>16</sup> Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

<sup>17</sup> When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

## Message

Today I would like to look at the Gospel Lesson and look at it through the eyes of the woman Jesus healed. The setting of the lesson is in a Jewish synagogue on a Sabbath and according to the records of the Gospel writers, at this point in Jesus’ ministry, he was no longer teaching and preaching in the synagogue. But on this Sabbath he was and this is the last account of him doing so.

So let us think about the woman and what she saw, heard and felt. Her view was always the same, feet. She was bent over. She had been for quite some time; eighteen years to be exact. As the years progressed, she had become more and

more severely bent over. Her body looked more like a right angle than a figure standing erect. So she was an expert on the ground. She knew the lay of the streets. She knew every uneven stone, each puddle. She did not recognize people by their face. She knew them by their feet; their feet and their sandals. Because it was nearly impossible for her to look someone in the eye as they spoke, she was not able read their expressions very well. Instead, she had learned to pay attention to the tone of their voice. She made her broken way to the synagogue that Sabbath. For years now, she had learned to muscle through her pain. The constant pain in her back, in her neck. Gravity played its cruel game on her. But she had learned that if she did not keep on living, the world was not going to stop for her. So she muscled through. At a slower pace than the typical person, but she did her best. She did her best not to let her bent over condition dominate her life. Her daily goal was to live as much like anyone else as she possibly could. She kept her “chin up,” even if it was not really up in her case.

She arrived at the synagogue. And present that day was that rabbi, Jesus, who was making such a name for himself. The synagogue leader did his best to make a show of welcoming Jesus. But she could detect in his voice a tinge of standoffishness. He welcomed Jesus, but something in his greeting sounded forced. The woman picked up her ears to the sound of Jesus’ voice. He greeted the people in the synagogue. His voice was warm and COMPASSIONATE. As he spoke, the warmth emanating from him seemed to take hold of the rest of the crowd gathered that day. The timbre of the collective tone in the synagogue took on a joyful lilt. But then the call to worship came and the chatter silenced.

When it came time to read from the scriptures, the scroll from the prophet Isaiah was handed to Jesus. She could hear him manipulating the scroll to find the passage he was looking for. Then he began to read: Isaiah 40:4-5: “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” When he was finished, he gave the scroll back to the attendant.

I think we can agree that when somebody has a passion for something, it shows. Well, Jesus had a passion to be kind, caring and compassionate for those people suffering around him. Remember that the synagogue was a place for men to worship. There was a place off to the side for the women and the two did not mix. So this lady should not have even been in the same room with Jesus and the other men, but she was. I can almost hear her thinking something like this:

"I have been ill for many years. This new rabbi is not like the others. He seems to care. The other people accuse me of having done something that caused this condition, but I have heard that Jesus does not accuse, but heals. Blind men, another woman who was bleeding, so maybe if I very quietly walk over to the other side, he might see me and heal me. I am going to give it a try." I can almost see her very quietly walking over to the other side. Staying in the shadows. But Jesus sees her and says: "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. Can you imagine her delight, her excitement at this event.

Her thoughts might of been these: "He did it, he made me free! He healed me! He did not yell at me or accuse me of having sinned or my family of having sinned, no He just healed me. I am free, praise God." And I would imagine that she wanted to walked over to the other side, show the other women what happened, and then worshipped God praising Him for her healing. But the leaders of that synagogue turned their attention to Jesus. The leader states: "There are six days on which work can be done. Come on one of those days and be healed, not on the Sabbath day." They accused him of working on the Sabbath. But Jesus counters that with a statement about untying an animal on the Sabbath to lead it to water and then saying or implying that if you can water an animal on the Sabbath, can't I, Jesus, do about the same thing. Let a lady be free her bonds of this infliction.

Jesus had a passion for people not rules and regulations. Yes some rules are needed, but Jesus saw through all those artificial rules to the most basic rule that being kind to people and helping them is the most important rule. Jesus gave only two commandments in the New Testament. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love our neighbor as our selves. That is it. Loving God means for one thing to come to worship to praise Him and listen to his word in the bible and relive God's actions on earth through the live of His Son, Jesus. Loving our neighbor means we are to reach out with the compassion of Christ that is in us to those around us who are hurting.

That woman must have marveled at what had happened. Jesus was right. Somehow it was more fitting that her healing had fallen on the Sabbath. It did not take away from the Sabbath's holiness. Just the reverse. It crowned it. She would never, ever forget that look he gave her. His deep compassion. He was simply filled with love. And then, it occurred to her. There was a connection between holiness and love. She used to think that holiness was a distant and elevated quality. Holiness was something so perfect it could not be approached. That was certainly what the synagogue leader had modeled. But Jesus' overwhelming compassion showed her

that was not holiness at all. No, God's holiness was perfected in love. God's love flowed through Jesus' hands. And it had made her new. God's love made all things new.

When somebody has a passion for something, it shows. May our passion for our Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit always show in our lives, by both our actions and words every day. May they also show God's love and His compassion. Amen!

Benediction:

*Lord, this day you have healed us and restored us. You have given us new strength and courage to serve you in this world. Now we go in peace and confidence, ready to be your people in all places and at all times. Praise be to you, Might God of love and mercy! AMEN.*