

Epiphany 5 – Healing Service – 02/04/2024

Today we are going to do something new. This is what the time of transition is about, trying new things. Can I see a show of hands, how many have ever been to a healing service? By the end of the service today, you can all say that you have.

I remember my aunt and uncle taking me to one in Green Bay, Wisconsin. It was after Christmas and I was supposed to play Christmas carols. We did not get to that until later in the evening. There was a pastor laying hands on people and praying for them. Sometimes they fell backward, and people had to catch them.

Even at my age at the time, I wondered what was going on. I have no doubts that some of the people may have been healed. The Holy Spirit can definitely move people in this way. I would dare say that most of us would not be comfortable with this and wonder if it was partly a show.

This is not what I am expecting to have happen here this morning, but that is not up to me. I do believe that the Holy Spirit has been, is and will be alive and active here. The question is what do we expect when we pray for healing?

We can ask God to do anything. Often we would like to determine God's answer. When it doesn't come out the way we want it to, we can get angry, disappointed and may even think that God doesn't care. It is easy to forget that God never promised to fix everything. What God promised is to be with us.

God has not said, only ask for certain things. God does listen to all of our requests. Depending on what shape we are when we ask, will determine the options that we are able to see how God is answering

We can learn early on in our lives that we do not always get what we want. Parents do their best to give their children what they need. What is needed changes definition depending on who is defining it.

As we learn to trust God, we also learn that God gives us what we need and not always what we want. I remember a story about a man who was running an orphanage in England. They sat down to eat breakfast in the morning and had no milk. The man prayed and thanked God for the milk. They finished praying and a milk truck broke down in front of the home and they then had milk.

I believe that God always answer prayers. In the case of the milk, it was what they needed, and the man thanked God before they even had it. The man believed that God would meet their needs. It could have been in a different way. In this case it was what was needed.

When we pray for healing and are able to trust God, we are better to be able to see the answers. If we are stuck on what we want, it may take us a while to see

God's answer. For me the key is trust In the bible we learn that God gave to people what they needed, not always what they wanted.

In our Gospel lesson for today, Simon's mother in law had a fever and was in bed. They told Jesus at once. I believe that they had an expectation that Jesus could heal her. and he did. Jesus came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Immediately she began to serve them.

This was Jesus' first healing in the Gospel of Mark. By that evening word had passed and there were many people waiting to be healed. The whole city was gathered around the door. Jesus cured many and cast out demons. This was Jesus proclaiming the kingdom of God

Every one of us has times in our life that we need to be healed. I want to define healing this morning as reconnecting with God in Jesus Christ. As human beings we are broken people. We are not perfect. Thus, we connect, disconnect and then feel the need to reconnect with God.

This is not to say that healing could not happen here in this place at this time. Some of you have specific healing requests. Again, part of this healing service is to remind us that God in Jesus Christ walks with us in every part of our lives. When we are able to trust God to give us what we need, a healing has taken place. We have connected with God in Jesus Christ. As I lay hands on you today, may you also hear God saying I love you my child. Rest in that love.

Today we are being invited to reconnect with God and receive a healing. God will decide what healing we receive. Our lives become so busy and sometimes exhausting that we are called to stop. God in Jesus Christ is always standing ready to take our hand and lift us up, just as he did with the woman in today's Gospel lesson.

It is in this reconnection, this lifting us up, that brings us new life and vitality and an assurance of God's love for each one of us.

Let us pray: Gracious God, we thank you for always listening and answering our prayers. We desire to connect with at this time and place. May your Spirit help us to trust that you know what we need. Thank you for always walking with us. In Jesus' name, Amen.