

Last Sunday I asked you to take Jesus' Sermon on the Mount
and look outwards - to what happened in Minneapolis
and what might happen in Georgia.

Today I want to stay with the Sermon on the Mount
but ask you to look inwards.

I want to focus for a few minutes on your need for healing.
Healing of your body, healing of your relationships,
healing of your past - the healing of your soul.

To some of you this might seem self-indulgent.
After all, you're fine. You have a warm home and a car that works.

And, whether you watch the news, or walk out in our courtyard
or walk down to the library,
you know that the suffering of the world is so great
that taking time to focus on your own need to be healed
seems...unjust, even immoral.

But that kind of thinking is wrong-headed for two reasons.
First, it takes a certain kind of arrogance to think
that it's only OTHER people who are broken,
only OTHER who are people in need of God's healing mercy.

We all know the inequalities of this world,
and most of us here do have more than our fair share of blessings.
But no one makes it through life unscathed,
and all of us are broken somewhere.

You NEED healing just as much as anybody,
and you DESERVE to be healed, too.

Second, Jesus is pointing us inward this mornin,
toward our own need for healing, in the Sermon on the Mount.

Last week he directed us outwards,
to the needs of the poor, the hungry, the mourning.
But today he turns us inward, to the care of our own souls.

YOU are the salt of the earth, he says.
Make sure you don't lose your saltiness.

YOU are the light of the world, he says.
Make sure your light isn't covered up.

Jesus is reminding us that if you don't take care of your own soul,
you lose the ability to make a difference in the lives of others.

So let's talk about those inner lives.
Let's talk about our own need to be healed.

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This conversation started a couple of months ago in a staff meeting.
We were talking about what the parish should be focused on
in the new year, and we landed on...healing.

God has blessed this place with health and stability,
so how can we spread this collective gift into our own lives,
and how can we share it with others?

The conversation kept going last weekend at our vestry retreat.
We shared with each other times we had experienced healing
connected with the church or with our faith.

That second conversation was really important to me,
mainly because of how honest and simple the stories were.

People talked about their healing after the death of a loved one.

Their healing after a period of feeling isolated.

Healing after feeling estranged from God.

Healing through music. Healing through silence.

Healing through communion.

I'll give you an example from my own life.

One of the really important healing journeys I've been on
has been to reconcile with the church where I grew up
and where my family still belongs.

I've talked about that a lot up here so I won't rehash everything,
but last weekend a little lightbulb went off.

See, several weeks ago I stood here and talked about this little book
by Rowan Williams called "Resurrection."

Fr. Rhett led the Going Deeper class in a study of it,
and it's become very important to me.

The book is small but it's deep, and smart, and it rewards multiple readings.
I thought that was why it affected me so much.

But I realized last weekend that its real power - for me -
was how this deep study of the cross and resurrection
by the Archbishop of Canterbury
connected my Anglican faith
with the faith of my Southern Baptist church growing up.

It took years for God to show me why this book affected me like it did:
God was using it to heal the division I had created in my head
between the church of my childhood and the church of my adulthood.

Now, in a world full of deportations and bombings and assassinations,
that kind of healing might not be all that important.

But I think it makes me a better follower of Jesus.

I think it helps me recognize the humanity I share
with people who see the world differently than I do.

And I think that kind of healing matters when I try to be a help to others,
whether as a neighbor or a friend or a pastor.

It helps me bring a little bit more of my whole self to that person,
a little bit more of my healed self,

because now my past is just a little bit more reconciled
with my present.

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So, how can Holy Trinity focus both on the healing of our own souls
and on being a place of healing for others?

Well, first, I don't think it means a bunch of new programs or initiatives.

You might see a little bit here and there - bringing back the labyrinth,
maybe an extra quiet day or two - but it isn't about doing more.

One of the things I noticed listening to the vestry

is that their stories of healing didn't weren't all that connected
to some special program or idea or speaker.

They mostly came out of the everyday life of the church.

Worshiping together. Making time for daily prayer.

Sharing meals in each other's homes. Serving our neighbors.

Sitting in silence. Studying the Bible together

My takeaway was that God most often heals people in the Church
through the everyday stuff we already do here.

So I'm focusing this year on the time-tested habits of Christians:
worship, study, prayer, service, music, and generosity.

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But there is one special thing we can each do,
and I hope you'll take this on in 2026:

you can be intentional about asking God to heal YOU,
to heal the broken places inside of you.

In the prayer book there's a closing grace from Ephesians
that's become important in my prayer life.

It says, "Glory to God, whose power, working in us,
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine."

You may not think that your pain, that your losses,
that your suffering is worth God's attention.
Or at this point you may not even think
that the broken pieces inside you are capable of being healed.

But the Holy Spirit, working in you,
in those small, frightened, angry, broken pieces of your heart,
can do so much more than you feel worthy to ask for,
or hopeful enough to imagine.

Holy Trinity Parish, YOU are the salt of the earth.
Ask God to heal you, to make you even more useful to the world
than you ever thought you could be.

YOU are a light to the world.
Let God heal you, that your light would shine even brighter,
that your light would shine forever. Amen.