

Sermon Title: **“A Service of Healing”**

Bible: **Isaiah 40:28-31 & Mark 1:29-34**

When: on Sunday, February 4, 2024

Where: about 30 people (plus Youtube Live Streaming viewers) at Gilroy UMC

Opening Prayer

O Lord, let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock, and our Redeemer. Amen.

1. Jesus' Healing Ministry

Today's Gospel reading of Mark is the first healing story of Jesus in Mark. Simon was Peter's other name. Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a fever, and Jesus took her by the hand. The fever left her and she was healed. There was healing with Jesus' touch. It was a very powerful miracle. As the Gospel of Mark summarizes, many who were sick came to Jesus, and Jesus cured them from various diseases. Healing is very powerful. Jesus himself healed the sick and sent out his disciples to do healing ministry. What do you do when you are sick? Do you take medicines and see doctors? Do you pray for healing?

2. Mission Trip to Thailand and Cambodia

I went to Thailand and Cambodia on a mission trip with doctors in 2002. It was about twenty years ago, and at that time, both countries were undeveloped countries. Where we went was to rural areas. There were no hospitals, no doctors, and no pharmacies. With the help of local missionaries, we set up small medical stations. Many people came to see the doctors. What I did was to help them line up, see the doctors one by one, and receive the medicines. Those medicines were not special ones, but simple medicines like we can buy at CVS or Walgreens without prescriptions. What I learned was that the very first medicine in

their lives could work like a miracle. We have been exposed to a lot of different medicines, so we may need stronger and stronger medicines, but can you imagine how effective taking our very first painkiller might have been?

I still remember one moment in particular. One young girl met with the doctor. And then, she just left without receiving any medicine. I wondered why, because everyone received medicine after seeing the doctors. The doctor came to me to look for her. She had already left. The doctor knew something was wrong with her, but could not do anything for her with those limited medicines at such small and basic medical stations. I saw that the eyes of the doctor had tears in them as he was looking towards where the girl had gone.

Our healthcare system can be regarded as a miracle, compared to that situation, even though we can complain about our doctors and our healthcare system. I believe that God sent us our doctors, nurses, and health staff, and provided our healthcare system. They are our blessings and our miracles, because it is very difficult to have them and build up this healthcare system. We know that they are not perfect. Sometimes we face moments when neither we nor they can do anything more. Why did the young girl have to leave without medicine? Why did Peter's mother-in-law have to stay in bed with a fever? Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law and many sick people, but why not all people?

3. A Service of Healing

When I pray for our church members and friends, I wish to have the power of healing like Jesus! But I am not Jesus. I am neither a doctor nor a nurse. I am not a licensed professional

counselor. But what I can do is to pray for you desperately. What we can do is to be with each other and to remember each other in our prayers and thoughts.

I prepared some parts of “A Service of Healing” from our Book of Worship and an anointing oil. Before having the time of anointing oil, I would like to share our Methodist understanding of healing. All healing is of God, but this does not mean that we do not need medicine and psychotherapy. They are God’s gifts to us. Healing is not magic, but it is the great mystery of God’s love. Some marvelous healings have taken place. God does not promise that we shall be spared from suffering and pain. God does not promise that we will be cured of all illnesses. And we cannot avoid death. But what God promises is God’s sustaining presence, to be with us in our pain, sickness, injury, estrangement, and suffering. Spiritual healing is God’s work of offering persons balance, harmony, and wholeness of body, mind, spirit, and relationships through confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE OIL

This is from James 5:14-16a. “Are any among you sick?

They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.

The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.”

Let us pray. O God, the giver of health and salvation,
we give thanks to you for the gift of oil.

As your holy apostles anointed many who were sick and healed them,
so pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on this gift,
that those who in faith and repentance receive this anointing
may be made whole; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS WITH ANOINTING

I would like to come to you, as Jesus came to Peter's house, and Peter's mother-in-law. You can receive the oil on your forehead or on your hands. This oil has a gentle fragrance. If you want to pass the oil, simply fold your arms across, like a pretzel.

(Anointing musicians first, and I hope to have instrumental music during the anointing oil.)

Name, I anoint you with oil
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Let us sing the Response Song together.

PRAYER AFTER ANOINTING

Almighty God,
we pray that *our brothers, sisters, and friends*,
may be comforted in their suffering and made whole.
When they are afraid, give them courage;
when they feel weak, grant them your strength;
when they are afflicted, afford them patience;
when they are lost, offer them hope;
when they are alone, move us to their side;
when death comes, open your arms to receive *each of us*.
In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.