

Sermon Title: **“Second Chance”**

Bible: **Isaiah 55:1-9 & Luke 13:1-9**

When: on the 3rd Sunday in Lent, March 23, 2025

Where: about 25 people (plus YouTube Live 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. Our Second Chance**

First of all, thank you so much for all of your mercy and grace regarding my Korean-accented English. I assume that my English has been improving week by week, right? I am still practicing my English with my English tutor, like learning a tongue twister. But, it is all because of your forgiveness, listening ears, and open minds. Believe it or not, I am not a good speaker in Korean. Somewhat I am more confident to give the message in English rather than in Korean now. You give me a second chance again and again to preach in English. Therefore, I am sure that our congregation is the best one in our community! We are the number one United Methodist Church in Gilroy!

We are kind, we are generous, we are merciful, and we are graceful. However, sometimes, we can face a moment where we lose our patience, even in the church. Maybe, in our heads, we know that we should understand and forgive each other, but in our minds and bodies, we cannot always understand and accept each other, and we might not want to forgive others. Don't you have those moments in your life, and in your life in the church? If you have not

met those moments yet, unfortunately, you will face that type of moment at some point, because we are all weak, and not perfect. Those moments are parts of our faith journey, and they can be the moments for us to grow in faith and love, and to experience God's abundant mercy and grace. And how many times can you understand and forgive others? And how many times can our Lord understand and forgive others, and you and me?

## **2. God's Eyes and Mind**

In the Gospel of Luke that we read today, there is a very interesting parable about a fig tree. The fig tree did not produce any fruit. So the master of the vineyard did not want to waste good soil and decided to cut it down. But the farmworker asked for a second chance. And the master accepted that offer, because to give a second chance was what the master really wanted. The farmworker caught on to the master's intention. I believe that what the master intended was not to see the fig tree cut down, but to see it bear fruit. The farmworker knew how to read the master's mind through the master's eyes.

As we read the book of Isaiah, God's thoughts and God's ways are not like our thoughts and our ways. We might not fully understand and accept God's love, grace, and mercy. Occasionally, we can experience, witness, and taste a little part of God's love, grace, and mercy. And we can see others through God's eyes. I know that it is not easy to see others through God's eyes, but it is possible, because we are all God's children, because God loves us, and because we love God. When we love someone, we can see others and the world with the eyes of our loved one.



I would like to show a famous sculpture, the “Pietà” by Michelangelo. It captures the moment when Jesus was taken down from the cross, and was given to his mother Mary. Pietà means the pity or sorrow of Mother Mary. But there are a couple of criticisms about this sculpture. Mary is bigger than Jesus. It seems like the focus is not upon Jesus, but upon Mary.

Maybe, Mary is bigger to create a stable triangle composition. The other criticism is that Mary is too young here. Jesus died on the cross when he was thirty-three years old. But here, Mother Mary looks way younger than her son Jesus. These two criticisms make sense, right?

But if we see this sculpture from above with the help of technology, like seeing it with God’s eyes, it provides us with another meaning. With our human being eyes, we see the pity or sorrow of Mother Mary. But how about seeing this with God’s eyes? Can you feel the pity or the sorrow of the Father God toward his son? Can you feel the



suffering and pain of God who saw his Son Jesus on the cross and his death?

And I would like to share a painting, which is from Jesus’ eyes on the cross. You might be familiar with many paintings or artworks in which Jesus is located in the center. This painting's title is “What Our Lord Saw from the Cross” by James Tissot

(1850). Were you there? “Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble. [Was I] there when they crucified my Lord?” If I were one of the disciples, could I be there? If we were the disciples at that time, could we be there?

### **3. God’s Second Chance**

I confess that I need God’s grace and mercy. And I also confess that we need God’s grace and mercy. Our Lord is not only my God, but also OUR God. Can we see others with God’s eyes? As God forgives us, can we forgive others? Can we understand and accept others with God’s love and grace? About two thousand years ago, our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross. And God still gives us a second chance again and again, and probably will for two thousand years more years. With our small amount of patience, and with our narrow perspectives, we might not forgive and accept others. But with God’s love and grace and with God’s eyes, we are able to forgive and give a second chance one more time. As the prophet Isaiah shouted out, let us come to the waters. The waters of grace and mercy are God’s gift, offered to us without price. We cannot put a price tag on God’s love and grace. During this Lenten season, let us rejoice and share God’s overflowing love and grace all together.

### **Closing Prayer**

O Lord, we come to the waters, the waters of grace and love. As you forgive us, please guide us to forgive others. As you accept us, please lead us to accept others. We need your love and grace, as we are thirsty and hungry. Please come and feed us. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.