

August 20, 2017

On the Mend: Healing What Ails Us “Healing Power”

Mark 10:35-45

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At first glance, it seems like we had this same scripture not long ago. And we did, to some degree. This is the second time in this series on healing that we have heard that those who want to be first and great, must serve/be a servant!

So, it’s easy to get fixated there, yet there is something new and different than what we heard last time. And it is, what James and John are saying, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” In other words, Jesus, we want you to be Santa Claus! Here’s my list. Here’s what I want, get it for me.”

Being a servant is neither overly hard, nor overly easy. In importance it is near the top of the list, for it is something that is central to the Christian faith and the following of Jesus, so we have all heard it before, and I assume reflected on it, committed ourselves to it, to some degree. So, for most of us, it is same old, same old– take care of others.

Yet, the opening verses for today may indeed be something you have not heard at church – treating God, as if we can read God our shopping list, and so we can get anything and everything we want. Yet, God is not a genie, does not live in a bottle, and does not promise to give you and me whatever we ask.

Here’s the kicker – we use words for the Divine and God’s Son which are familiar, that’s only natural – Father, Mother, Brother, which are casual - Friend. And that is all fine and good, for we need that sometimes. Yet, the problem with the

familiar and casual is we can forget our place and thus don't mind our manners.

What is our place when it comes to God? What does minding our manners look like when we are before the God of heaven and earth? Maybe it means, expanding our breadth and depth when it comes to viewing and being in relationship with God - Friend, Mommy, Daddy are fine.

But God, also goes by the name Lord/Sovereign. Our scripture for this morning, talks about how some people lord over others. Being a lord means taking things into your own hands, calling all the shots, and making decisions that impact the lives of others. Yet, the problem is that we can and sometime do lord ourselves over others, and sometime, we also act as if we are lord over the Lord (with a capital "L").

So, before each of us, says, "No, not me." Let's take an honest look at how often we take things into our own hands, rather than leave them in the hands of God. Why, do we do that? I think it is because we are either concerned God will do nothing, or do the wrong thing. We can't wait for God's timing. We are uncomfortable that God will not do for us, what we think is best for us, and with in the time frame we determine. And thus, we get in there, and manipulate the situation for our own benefit according to our own timeline.

It comes back to trust, any way you call it. Doesn't it always seem to come back to trust!

Some of us have or have had hernias, because we carrying too much weight on our own. Some of us have bulging or ruptured discs because we insist on heave hoeing the world on our back, and thus taking on more than we ourselves can adequately and

safely lift. Our bodies, our minds, and our spirits were not designed to function in these extreme ways. But, this is what happens when we forget that the end result does not just lie with us.

Let me just say, that throughout this series I have never understood the word “healing”, apart from the concepts of wholeness and wellness, as I believe the Bible proclaims. What I mean by that; is that we can still have a physical illness and be whole and well. And that is a good thing, because some of us will or have ended up with chronic illnesses that will not go away, that medicine has not figured out how to cure, or get under control, or even keep at bay. Some of us, currently have or will get terminal illnesses that will bring to an end our earthly life. This is the reality of our world, this side of heaven. Yet, let us not be mistaken, we can be healed amidst a remaining illness.

So, then, what releases healing power? What brings about wholeness and wellness? Our scripture for this morning reminds us that it starts with humility.

These days, I hold a “begging bowl” during my set aside time for daily prayer. It is a way to signal to God and to myself, that I do not have what I need to become healthy and whole. I come needing my bowl to be filled, and I come needing sustenance. Yet, during that time of prayer, I do not say a thing. I wait to be filled with God’s presence and love – for that is what brings about healing; the power and love of God filling the space we create for God, by taking time with the Divine, by not treating prayer like a drive thru fast food chain. It’s about developing a relationship that has depth, that is not merely at a surface level. That is more than just sitting on Santa’s lap with a list, once a year.

Listening, trusting, and serving - not ordering and taking over, is what will make us "great" according to God – being a servant of God, not acting like God's boss, being a servant of the Lord, not acting like an earthly lord. Humility and being of service, rather than just worrying about being served is what brings healing, wellness, our wholeness and the world's.

I remember Santa coming to my house every year. I would ask other kids in school and in the neighborhood, what happened when Santa came to their house, to which they all responded, "Santa doesn't come to my house." One time during a Santa visit, I said to my Mom, "Santa looks a lot like Daddy, Mommy." I don't think I got a response, and I think that was because, Daddy was Santa. Every Christmas my father, a manager at IBM, would take the company to the Royer Greaves School for the Blind, at which we played Santa at the annual company Christmas party they threw for the kids.

As a way for college students to explore careers/vocations, Eastern College provided us with internships. This way, I could figure out not whether I wanted just to teach or not, but rather who and what would I like to teach.

I came home during break and my Dad asked how school was going, and I said to him, "I was doing an internship with the gym teacher at the Royer Greaves School for the Blind. My Dad just smiled. And then it hit me, this is where he had once served. I had forgotten he was Santa Claus there too as well as at home..

What mattered most to my Dad was being of service to others. Throughout our adult lives he would ask my brother and I, "where have you been serving"? And, if you relayed to him something you were doing in your job, he would always say the

same thing, “but, you get paid for that.” Yes, my Daddy was Santa, but even more important, my Dad had humility, and was a servant.

Our Lord asks us, “What do you want me to do for you.” Sometimes we answer, “Let me sit on your right or left, or on your lap Santa.” To which the Lord replies, “You don’t know what you are asking, you have to drink from the cup, I drink. Be the slave of all.” Serve and give your life to liberate many people.

God, (who we sometimes think, as the guy with the long white beard), “Help us put the list down, and desire to only be your servant, in the service to others, and their liberation. Amen.”