

JESUS OF NAZARETH
NEW WINE SKIN CALLING
MATTHEW 9:9-17
4-26-20

All = bold sections – read together

Leader = regular font – leader reads (choose or rotate leaders)

Sung together = italics

NOTE: Please have a white candle ready to light again.

Reflect

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet.
-Frederick Buechner

Welcome

Good Morning! We are one week closer to meeting in person again! Let's continue to make the most of the current situation. I don't know about you but I have noticed a significant increase in people's restlessness and emotional angst this past week. While this is not problematic in itself, it does create the perfect condition for bitterness and meanness to take root and grow in our lives. The words from **Hebrews 12:15** are appropriate for such a time as this.

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

May we pull up any "root of bitterness" that may be growing in our hearts so that we might not "fail to obtain the grace of God" and be the one that "causes trouble." So, take a moment to be aware of where you are at physically, emotionally and spiritually right now. How full or empty are your tanks?

Let's begin our time apart together with prayer:

Heavenly Father, many of us are getting tired; some emotionally; some physically; some spiritually and some a combination of all three. Help us right now by your Spirit to turn to you with hearts and hands open to receive your grace... your authoritative healing grace... your quieting our restless souls grace... your refocusing on you grace... your nurturing and embracing grace... your renewing and restorative grace... your comforting grace... your worship worthy grace so that we might praise you and love you more deeply and fully today. In Jesus name, Amen!

Candle Lighting – Light the candle again this week as a reminder of the Easter Good News!

Call to Christ: Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Song: Is He Worthy -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-c6pl6CaiD0>

Do you feel the world is broken? (We do)

Do you feel the shadows deepen? (We do)

But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through? (We do)



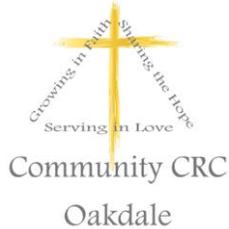
Do you wish that you could see it all made new? (We do)
Is all creation groaning? (It is) Is a new creation coming? (It is)
Is the glory of the Lord to be the light within our midst? (It is)
Is it good that we remind ourselves of this? (It is)
Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave,
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave.
Is He worthy? Is He worthy of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy of this? He is.
Does the Father truly love us? (He does)
Does the Spirit move among us? (He does)
And does Jesus, our Messiah, hold forever those He loves? (He does)
Does our God intend to dwell again with us? (He does)
Is anyone worthy? Is anyone whole?
Is anyone able to break the seal and open the scroll?
The Lion of Judah who conquered the grave
He is David's root and the Lamb who died to ransom the slave
From every people and tribe (People and tribe)
Every nation and tongue (Every nation and tongue)
He has made us a kingdom and priests to God
To reign with the Son
Is He worthy? Is He worthy of all blessing and honor and glory?
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
Is He worthy of this?
He is! He is!
Is He worthy? Is He worthy?
He is! He is!
He is worthy! He is worthy! He is!

Psalm of Praise: Psalm 118

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever! Let Israel say, "His steadfast love endures forever." Let the house of Aaron say, "His steadfast love endures forever." Let those who fear the LORD say, "His steadfast love endures forever."

Out of my distress I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me free. The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side as my helper; I shall look in triumph on those who hate me. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes.

All nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! They surrounded me like bees; they went out



like a fire among thorns; in the name of the LORD I cut them off! I was pushed hard, so that I was falling, but the LORD helped me.

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. Glad songs of salvation are in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD does valiantly, the right hand of the LORD exalts, the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!" I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. The LORD has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.

Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD. The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Song: Forever -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6xxWGWpaUQ>

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King. His love endures forever!

For He is good, He is above all things. His love endures forever!

Sing praise, sing praise!

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm, His love endures forever!

For the life that's been reborn. His love endures forever!

Sing praise, sing praise!

Forever, God is faithful. Forever, God is strong!

Forever, God is with us. Forever!

From the rising to the setting sun, His love endures forever!

And by the grace of God, we will carry on. His love endures forever!

Sing praise, sing praise!

Forever, God is faithful. Forever, God is strong!

Forever, God is with us. Forever!

Sing praise, sing praise

Forever, God is faithful. Forever, God is strong

Forever, God is with us. Forever, yes You are!

Forever, You are faithful. Forever, You are strong!

Forever, You are with us. Forever, forever!

Song: God With Us -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udJiT-LMnIs>

You've come to bring peace, to be love, to be nearer to us.

You've come, to bring life, to be light, to shine brighter in us.

Oh, Emmanuel God with us!



*Our Deliverer. You are Savior.
In Your presence we find our strength, over everything.
Our redemption, God with us.
You are God with us!*

*You've come to be hope to this world.
For Your honor and name, You've come to take sin
To bear shame and to conquer the grave.
Emmanuel, God With Us.*

*Our Deliverer. You are Savior.
In Your presence we find our strength, over everything.
Our redemption, God with us.
You are God with us!*

*You are here. You are holy.
We are standing in Your glory.*

*Our Deliverer. You are Savior.
In Your presence we find our strength, over everything.
Our redemption, God with us.
You are God with us!*

Offering

We remember that giving is an act of faith, a practice of hope and an expression of love.

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

You can give by sending your offering to the church (P.O. Box 217, Oakdale Ca 95361) or consider giving online through your bank. Our deacons can help you with this if necessary.

Youth Celebration

Youth: share one thing that you have learned from this pandemic about God or you as a Christian.

Adults: what might we learn about “child like faith” from our youth during these times?

May we continue to deepen our simple (not naïve) child like faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer: The following short prayer, (known as a “collect”) is from the Book of Common Prayer used by the Anglican Church. A collect is a prayer that is meant to summarize the collective prayer of the congregation, fostering unity and corporate awareness. It is a prayer that was written roughly 1400 years ago and prayed by countless saints over the centuries. As we are about to engage with God’s written Word, may this prayer help prepare our hearts and minds to receive God’s truth and grace that we might be shaped more into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.

Almighty God, give us the increase of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you have promised, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



Scripture Reading: Please read Matthew 9:9-17

Gospel Message: I Desire Mercy

Meet Panteleimon. He lived around 300 AD in the town of Nicomedia in Asia Minor (now northern Turkey by the Black Sea) during the reign of King Maximian. King Maximian hated Christians and burned 20,000 of them in a church on Christmas day, sentenced many others to various kinds of deaths after horrendous torturing. His mother was a Christian and began teaching him the ways of Jesus Christ but she died when he was young. His father was not a Christian but believed in all the pagan gods of the region and the king. His passion from an early age was medicine and healing. After grammar school, his dad sent him to medical school to study under a famous royal court physician who served the king.

There also live in Nicomedia, a priest in hiding named Hermolaus who often saw Panteleimon walk by through a small window in his house. He reached out to him and the kind hearted Panteleimon responded and began listening to what Hermolaus said about Jesus Christ, the Great Physician. Growing from the seeds his mother planted, Panteleimon became a follower of Jesus Christ. One day on his way home from the court he came upon a child who had been bitten by a poisonous snake and was nearly dead. Filled with compassion, Panteleimon prayed to Jesus to heal him. At once the child arose and was well and the nearby snake died on the spot. This fully convinced Panteleimon that Jesus really was Savior and Lord. After this, Panteleimon was baptized by Hermolaus and began using his gift to mercifully heal all those who came to him. He even went into the prison and healed those Christians who were being tortured. He never received money, only asking them to look to Jesus and not him for their healing.

Not long afterwards, he healed a man that was going blind to full restoration of sight after none of the court physicians were able to cure him. These same doctors went to the king and informed him that Panteleimon was healing people and turning them to Jesus Christ, away from their gods. When the king heard of this, he called for the man who had been blind and after confessing that he was healed in the name of Jesus, was beheaded by the king. Then the king called Panteleimon in to the palace. He also had a paralytic brought to the palace. The king was convinced his court physicians would be able to heal him by praying to their pagan gods. But no healing came. The king was also sure that Panteleimon would not be able to heal him by praying to Jesus Christ. Panteleimon prayed to Jesus Christ and healed the man in front of the king. However, this enraged the king who ordered him to turn away from Jesus or die. He chose death.

The king then ordered a series of extreme tortures that were meant to kill him but he miraculously survived them all. Next, the king called in Hermolaus and two of his Christian friends that confessed Christ to the king. He had them tortured and killed. He then took Panteleimon to be beheaded and tied him to an olive tree. He was bound to the tree and was praying when the executioner swung the ax at his neck. The iron ax bent like wax and left him unmarked. When he finished praying, he told the executioners they could now finish what they came to do and he was killed. Upon his death, the olive



tree he was tied to became covered with fruit. The fruit of Panteleimon was his great mercy towards the sick and suffering and healing them in the name of Jesus.

Who are some people that you have known that were/are merciful? Share a few stories of mercy.

Jesus had just called Matthew, the tax collector to follow him. Now, this was remarkable on at least two levels. First, he was a tax collector and tax collectors were hated by the Jews because they were collaborators with the Romans and often illegally took extra money for themselves from the Jews. Second, disciples chose their Rabbi (or teacher) and not the other way around. Thus, Matthew is drawing attention to what it means to be called by Jesus. Specifically, the call to be a disciple of Jesus is a call of mercy and grace initiated by Jesus that draws Matthew to Jesus in order to follow Jesus. Notice: called by Jesus; called to Jesus; called to follow Jesus. This is every Christians pattern of call to be a disciple of Jesus, including us. In response, Matthew throws a dinner party at his house, inviting Jesus, his tax collector friends and other folks who are simply labeled “sinners.” Everything is good...until the Pharisees show up asking the disciples why Jesus is hanging out with what they consider the unclean and untouchables. Jesus interrupts and answers the Pharisees himself saying, “Go, learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’”

This saying is a direct quotation of Hosea 6:6 that Jesus again quotes in Matthew 12. It is an important verse to Jesus and therefore it is an important verse for us, particularly those of us who lean toward elder brother identity (remember your Sunday preparation devotional from Thursday?) Please read Hosea 6:4-7 paying particular attention to verses 4 and 7. What is God’s complaint against Israel? How might this help us understand what Jesus is saying?

Matthew is showing that the way of Jesus is a way of mercy and love towards those we might think don’t deserve mercy and love. And that’s the point. Mercy doesn’t simply go to those who we think deserve it. That is merited mercy and not biblical mercy. Biblical mercy extends to those we don’t think deserve it; sinners of all kinds and flavors. Jesus had mercy for the lost, that is why he could sit and sup with them. The Pharisees did not and is why they would not. All their obedience to the law was missing the most important, love as expressed through mercy towards others. Are there people today that some Christians might see as the Pharisees saw the tax collectors and sinners? Who do you think might be thought of this way? How have you received mercy from God, others?

Mercy does not thrive in a legalistic environment where there is judgement, division and hostility. Why? Because a legalistic environment is a law-based environment and not a love-based environment. This is the environment that the Pharisees were operating in. Matthew is pointing to Jesus as God’s supreme act of mercy that re-positions us within God’s love-based environment. Jesus is the new cloth and the new wine, doing something that is quite unbelievable – suffering and dying with common criminals in order to conquer sin and being raised again to resurrection life (**life after life after death**) to conquer death. Jesus extends mercy and forgiveness to all who will receive it by grace through faith in him. Luke summarizes this well in Acts 13:36-41 where he tells the story of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch, exhorting the people at the encouragement of the synagogue priest about Jesus Christ:



David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, ³⁷ but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. ³⁸ Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man Jesus, forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹ and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses.

⁴⁰ Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about:

*⁴¹ "Look, you scoffers,
be astounded and perish;
for I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you."*

The "could not be freed by the law of Moses" was the old way and "everyone who believes is freed" is the new way in Christ Jesus! Furthermore, it is possible to read into this image that the new cloth and the new wineskin is the Church of Jesus Christ today. It is the Church that is to exhibit the way of mercy, the way of love over the way of the law. Not that the law is unimportant. It is. But it must operate in its place as subservient to the greatest commandment, love. Love, then law. Mercy, then sacrifice. Good News, then good works! When Jesus is the foundation of our lives as his disciples, then mercy becomes a primary characteristic of the disciple and of the Church. How is our diaconal team helping us be more merciful as a church today? Think both inwardly and outwardly, locally and globally. What are some ways we can show mercy in our daily lives?

Oh! BTW, the name Panteleimon means "all merciful"! Jesus is our Panteleimon so that we might be Panteleimons to others!

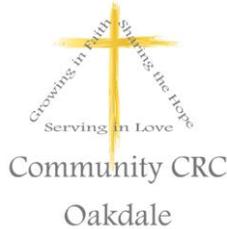
[Bonus: Read the next scene from Matthew 9:18-26 that we covered a couple of months ago. Talk about how this powerfully displays what Jesus was teaching them about mercy. Note that mercy creates opportunities to give witness to the love and grace of Jesus to others.]

Let's Pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for your miraculous mercy that saves sinners like me. Thank you for Jesus Christ, the all merciful one who loves us and gave his life for us that we might live lives of mercy today. May we be conformed more to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, at home, at school, at work, in our neighborhoods and at play. We ask this for your glory and our joy. Amen.

Communion Meditation

Professing: (Apostles Creed)

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose and ascended to heaven
Where he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.**



Proclaiming (1 Corinthians 11:23b-25) – Paraphrased

On the night of his betrayal, Jesus took bread and he broke it saying, “this is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” Likewise, after the meal he took the cup of wine and pouring it out said, “this wine is my blood, a new covenant of grace poured out for the forgiveness of sins.”

Discuss how communion is connected with mercy. Think broadly too by reflecting on “extending the table” from the church to the home to public places!

As we sing our last song, focus on the word “mercy” and its connection to Jesus and us.

Song: Mighty To Save -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GVnyBp_CudA

Well, everyone needs compassion; a love that's never failing.

Let mercy fall on me.

Everyone needs forgiveness; the kindness of a Savior;

The hope of nations.

Savior! He can move the mountains.

My God is Mighty to save! He is Mighty to save!

Forever! Author of salvation. He rose and conquered the grave!

Jesus conquered the grave!

So take me as You find me; all my fears and failures.

Fill my life again.

I give my life to follow; everything I believe in;

And now I surrender.

Savior! He can move the mountains.

My God is Mighty to save! He is Mighty to save!

Forever! Author of salvation. He rose and conquered the grave!

Jesus conquered the grave!

Shine your light and let the whole world see!

We're singing for the glory of the risen King!

Jesus!

Savior! He can move the mountains.

My God is Mighty to save! He is Mighty to save!

Forever! Author of salvation. He rose and conquered the grave!

Jesus conquered the grave!

Sending as Disciples of Jesus: Matthew 28:18-20 (Paraphrased)

The opposite of mercy is meanness. Being mean is not a problem for bullies only – we each struggle to various degrees with it. One way to “shine your light” is to act mercifully towards others; to want them to flourish as image bearers of Jesus. May we counter meanness with mercy through the Holy Spirit living in us as disciples of Jesus Christ.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. Therefore, as we are sent into the world by him, let us make disciples of all, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that Jesus has commanded us. And let us remember and treasure that Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age. Amen!