

“Willing” March 29, 2018, Holy Thursday Sermon
Matthew 8:1-4

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The Lord heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds (147:3); Bless the Lord O my soul, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction (103:2,3,4).

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There is a rainbow of healing stories in the Gospel according to St Matthew. This powerful expression of Christ’s nature has been more and more lost in our time. We seldom color Jesus’ natural healing power with the “Roy G Biv” intensity that Matthew understood of it to be. Our present-day theology too often presents Jesus with the grayish colors of a great moral teacher, a social reformer and the soft, silent, politically-incensed suffering servant.

We have forgotten in our zeal to be contemporary and relevant that “savior” means “healer”: one who delivers us from our sickness. God’s kingdom that

Christ came to give the world is interested in a radical change in human relations and the stewardship of the planet that far exceeds our partisan political struggles. For that reason, Jesus was not caught up with the struggle between Rome and Jerusalem, for his vision was beyond the temporary nature of human kingdoms.

This was both Judas' and Peter's problem with him. When are you going to restore the rule for us Jews? God, even then, had already passed judgment on all of the political systems of the human race. Reward or punishment is a coming reality for injustice and unrighteousness, before God's judgment seat.

Yet Jesus invited those who felt their need, their fragmentation to turn away from pounding each other and seek something more, something better, his healing. The leper was cured, but more than this.

He came to Jesus in faith, “If you are willing, you can make me whole.” Reaching out and touching him, something unheard of especially for the highly contagious disease, Jesus made him completely whole. It was an example for us—reaching out and touching someone we would never think of offering grace to. And then he told the cured man, “Now go and do what Moses taught, go show the priest that God has made you acceptable for worship, to enter into God’s life, God’s joy.”

The power that Jesus brings to transform the lives of human beings is not given to make us winners and others losers. We are given that power because God is willing, and God heals us. God heals our enemies, our adversaries, God heals those who hate and despise us and don’t understand or want us around. God heals us to unite us together as the body of Christ, the temple of the future, the house of

prayer for all people, the healing center of the nations, where we celebrate together that God has made us whole. Are you willing to join Jesus in this mission? Then let the let the healing continue, and may it even increase. Amen.