

Script Worship Resources - [In or Out](#)

Pentecost 22, Year B,

24th October, 2021

Hebrews 7:23-28 CEV / Mark 10:46-52 CEV

Prelude (Video) [*Holy Ground*](#)

music by Geron Davis, played by Annie Center,
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Welcoming/Call to Worship

Sing aloud with gladness:
God is gathering the people!
From the farthest parts of the earth we come:
All who struggle; all who labor with new life!
Those who are weeping, God will console;
Those who get lost find a clear path home.
Let us worship the God who gathers us!

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love. A reminder this morning that we will be having our fall General Assembly meeting after in-person/streaming worship on November 14th. We will also be having a canned food collection for our Thanksgiving basket effort. Please plan to join us in person or via Zoom to help us chart our course forward. More details are available on our website at olympicchurch.org.

As we gather today, let's reflect on how our faith journeys have impacted our lives, as we listen to the following hymn, *When Jesus the Healer Passed Through Galilee*

Reflection Video [*When Jesus the Healer Passed Through Galilee*](#)

(with lyrics)

piano accompaniment,
and voice posted to YouTube by Weekly Service Music,
written by Peter D. Smith,
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Invocation

Ever-calling God,
We give thanks that you have gathered us into your church
and graced us with your faithful presence.
We ponder our history, ancient and still developing,
and marvel at the many expressions of your church.
Grant us the vision to be a part of a new reformation for the Church
that will bring ever more joy and justice to the world.
Continue to gather us, the diverse lot of us,
into Jesus' vision and dream
that your faithful people may be one in you. Amen

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In our reading from the Hebrews, we see the contrast between Jesus and the human priests. As we hear these words, let's reflect on how we see Jesus, and how that affects our faith.

Epistle Reading Hebrews 7:23-28 CEV

There have been a lot of other priests, and all of them have died.

But Jesus will never die, and so he will be a priest forever!

He is forever able to save[a] the people he leads to God, because he always lives to speak to God for them.

Jesus is the high priest we need. He is holy and innocent and faultless, and not at all like us sinners. Jesus is honored above all beings in heaven,

and he is better than any other high priest. Jesus doesn't need to offer sacrifices each day for his own sins and then for the sins of the people. He offered a sacrifice once for all, when he gave himself.

The Law appoints priests who have weaknesses. But God's promise, which came later than the Law, appoints his Son. And he is the perfect high priest forever.

Scripture Video

Hebrews 7:23-28

[*Christ The Merciful High Priest*](#)

Lectionary bible reading

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

Let's continue to keep Robert and Cathy Oberg in our prayers.

We also remember those among our youth who are looking for employment, may they be blessed in their endeavors.

Also keep Myrna and her neighbors in prayer as they are going through lockdown due to a case of COVID at their facility.

We also lift up those struggling with illness and loneliness, as we continue to find our way through our new reality.

Pastoral Prayer

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

Ever faithful Lord, Ever giving Son, Ever present Spirit, For the many gifts you grant us and the opportunity to enjoy these things; For your daily provision and for the constant signs of your healing love; For the hope amidst despair and the light which always shines; For all these things, 'thank you' is just so inadequate but it's all we have: ... to show our gratitude in word, in thought and in action.

So thank you, Lord and may our thanks move beyond words to transform us into thankful folk, faithful folk, seeing folk, folk who see need and see the need to act, folk who love to live and live to love, folk who serve you by serving others.

Help us to be amongst those who include the excluded and bring in those who are marginalised, that when the opportunities come our way to be healers of division and hurt, to be peacemakers and restorers, we won't be found wanting.

Loving, personal Father, We bring before you those people and issues that are closest to us and that occupy our minds at this time ... *(personal and local intercessions could follow)*

Mighty, wonderful Father, we bring before you people and issues from around our world,

including those we'll never know personally but who remain our sisters and brothers in you ... *(national and global intercessions could follow)*

Transforming, healing Father, help us to make the light shine in dark places, to make peace known in violent places, and to bring hope to despondent places. Our prayers, spoken and silent are brought to you now (along with these gifts that we freely give and dedicate to the work of your Kingdom) in the name of your Son, Jesus, the healer, includer and redeemer, Forever Amen.

In our gospel lesson this morning, we hear the story of a blind man giving up everything to be healed by and to follow Jesus. As we listen to these words from Mark, let's think about our own faith journeys, and the strength of our own convictions.

Gospel Lesson Mark 10:46-52 CEV

Jesus and his disciples went to Jericho. And as they were leaving, they were followed by a large crowd. A blind beggar by the name of Bartimaeus son of Timaeus was sitting beside the road.

When he heard that it was Jesus from Nazareth, he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, [a] have pity on me!"

Many people told the man to stop, but he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have pity on me!"

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him over!" They called out to the blind man and said, "Don't be afraid! Come on! He is calling for you."

The man threw off his coat as he jumped up and ran to Jesus.

Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man answered, "Master, I want to see!"

Jesus told him, "You may go. Your eyes are healed because of your faith."

Right away the man could see, and he went down the road with Jesus.

Scripture Video Mark 10:46-52 [Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus](#)

Lectionary bible reading

When we think about blindness, what comes to mind? I think we would imagine our ability to see things clearly, or accurately, is in some way impeded. I think we can agree that there are many different forms and levels of blindness. Some people are born completely blind, while others develop blindness for different reasons during their life. This change in ability, or perception, has generated a lot of commonly used expressions in our vernacular: “Blind as a bat, turning a blind eye, being blind-sided, driving blind,” just to name a few. All of these expressions relate not being able to see, or perceive accurately, often to negative results.

Our scripture from Mark this morning is all about blindness. In fact, it's the last part of a travel narrative of Jesus and his disciples that started with another story of blindness and healing. This section began with Jesus healing the blind man at Bethsaida and concludes with this story around Jericho. Both stories involve healing the physical blindness of beggars along the road, and the argument could be made that the stories in the interim concern another form of blindness, spiritual blindness.

As I've mentioned previously, in those intervening stories, Jesus highlights again and again that the disciples just aren't getting it. They have the knowledge and the ability to see Christ's reality, but their perception, how they interpret the reality around them, is askew. Jesus tells them three times the kind of messiah he is, the suffering servant of Isaiah who is sacrificed by a corrupt world, yet they continue to have their delusions of grandeur. They can't get past the images of glory and power that they envision their participation will garner them. Even when Jesus tells them the upside-down order of things in the kingdom that draws near, they still fight to preserve the exclusiveness of their positions, seeking privilege for themselves, and trying to exclude others to maintain their positions. For them, they still see through the world's lens, where there are those who are in, and correspondingly, those who are out.

Even in our story today, when Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus, his followers rebuke him and try to shut him up. They don't have time to deal with this outcast along the side of the road. He's not part of their parade, he doesn't deserve their attention. So Jesus stops and instructs his followers to call out to him, yet again reminding them that it is the least who are the greatest in the pecking order of God's realm. And then these fickle followers completely change their tune, cheerfully encouraging the man to come forward who they just pretty much told to shut up and leave them alone. Jesus asks Bartimaeus the same question that he asks James and John, “What do you want me to do for you?” He leaps up, discarding his cloak, and cries, “Rabbi, I want to see.” While it seems like a minor detail, his casting aside his cloak is a big deal. Being a blind outcast, his cloak was immensely important. It was his blanket and bed, his pillow, and most importantly, it caught the money thrown at him that may have missed his outstretched hand. He was so confident in his faith

in Jesus being the saving messiah that he literally discarded his most crucial, valuable possession to seek him out.

His response draws into sharp focus the contrast between the disciples' faith perspective and that of the kin-dom. On one hand you have the presumptive faithful, those who have been with and taught by Jesus all along. They would be the ones you would assume have all the right answers. Yet when asked the question of what they want from Jesus, their concern is their status, where they fit in the hierarchy. They seek seats of honor as part of the "in crowd," and are making sure those places are not threatened by keeping out those they feel don't fit in, those that just are good enough. On the other hand, you have the presumed reprobate and outcast, from the group that is considered unclean and tainted, cursed because of their perceived unrighteousness and sin. Instead of seeking status and power, this man cries out for God's mercy. He seeks justice and grace instead of self-aggrandizement. Instead of being part of the "in crowd," his faith is forged in loss, exclusion and helplessness. His response is obviously the opposite of those most would consider the "faithful."

Which begs the question, who are the true faithful? Are they those following along the road with Jesus, the selected and self-appointed "in crowd," who sees their job to act as a buffer, excluding those who are not "worthy?" Or is it the afflicted, those who reach out to Jesus with genuine need, completely assured in their faith that he will be the solution to whatever is the cause of their affliction? The ones who leave praising Christ to all who will listen, even when they are told to keep it to themselves. The ones who just can't keep quiet.

Today's story also has a symbolic element. The disciples have been with Jesus on his mission as his popularity and the crowds have grown. They've been riding this wave with him. Yet as he makes his final leg and arrives at Jerusalem and the tide turns, they scatter and go underground, or even outright deny him. Then we have Bartameaus, who is unique in the healing stories in the fact that he chooses to follow along with Jesus instead of just walking off, choosing to journey with him on his last leg to public humiliation and crucifixion.

What kind of faith vision do we have? Are we like the disciples, looking through the world's lens, seeking to be in the "in crowd," part of the right clique, and looking for rewards for ourselves down the line? Or are we seeing things clearly through kin-dom lenses, humbly, spending our time with the "out crowd," or better yet, working to get rid of the whole notion of "in" and "out." Is our focus on just the easy and beneficial parts of our faith journey: the fellowship and socializing, the food and fun? Or do we embrace the difficult and hard parts as well: the sacrifice, the comforting of the lost and outcast? We may feel comfortable with many of the individual parts of our Christian faith, but when we put it all together and see the call and risk of discipleship sometimes we, too, like the disciples may find ourselves feeling overwhelmed and losing our focus.

But that's what this journey we've chosen is all about. With the good also comes the cost that must be counted. Like the disciples, we love to look at the world through our own, rose-colored glasses, only seeing the good from our perspective of being part of Jesus' crowd, the faithful followers. But like those early followers, when we make this clique an exclusive club, the implication is that there will be those that are excluded. When we have an "in crowd" and outcasts, it rarely goes well for those on the outside. Unfortunately, those who have often been defined as being on the outside, on the fringes, usually become the scapegoats for those who need someone to blame for all that is wrong with their lives and their culture.

We need to have open eyes that see clearly the call of faith we have responded to. A faith that brings in the outcast, that seeks to heal the broken and downtrodden. A call that often leads not to an easy stroll but a challenging hike, often over uncomfortable terrain. One that never finds us on the side of exclusion, of stereotyping, or scapegoating. After all, we follow a risen savior who is the ultimate scapegoat, the ultimate outcast sacrificed to satisfy the hate of his own culture.

We're called to seek justice and show the same grace we have been given. In a culture increasingly dominated by voices of hate, of division, of us versus them, may we be the voice to stand against those who encourage hate and the violence it creates. I pray we always remember our calling to stand beside and lift up the "least of these" among us, those who suffer solely because of who they are. May we always seek to be on the outside looking in, never on the inside keeping others out. And may God give us the strength to cast aside those cloaks that we cling to for comfort and security, so we can leap up in faith to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Amen.

Call to Serve.

Our ancestors in faith and church-building show us the way to share the gifts God has given us with the whole community. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God with heartfelt gratitude, commitment and praise.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we listen to the following interlude played by Annie, let's think about how we handle the uncomfortable parts of our own discipleship, and what we might do in the coming weeks to overcome barriers to truly giving our all to follow Christ.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

[Knowing You](#)

music by Graham Kendrick,
played by Annie Center,
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The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Transform our lives, O God, and let these gifts change the world into which we send them. Take them and multiply them to be a blessing of justice and peace in the world you love! and we who have much do not keep it entirely for ourselves.

Blessing/Assurance

May the peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week, shining God's light into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.

Postlude

[HE](#)

music by Jack Richards and Richard Mullen,
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