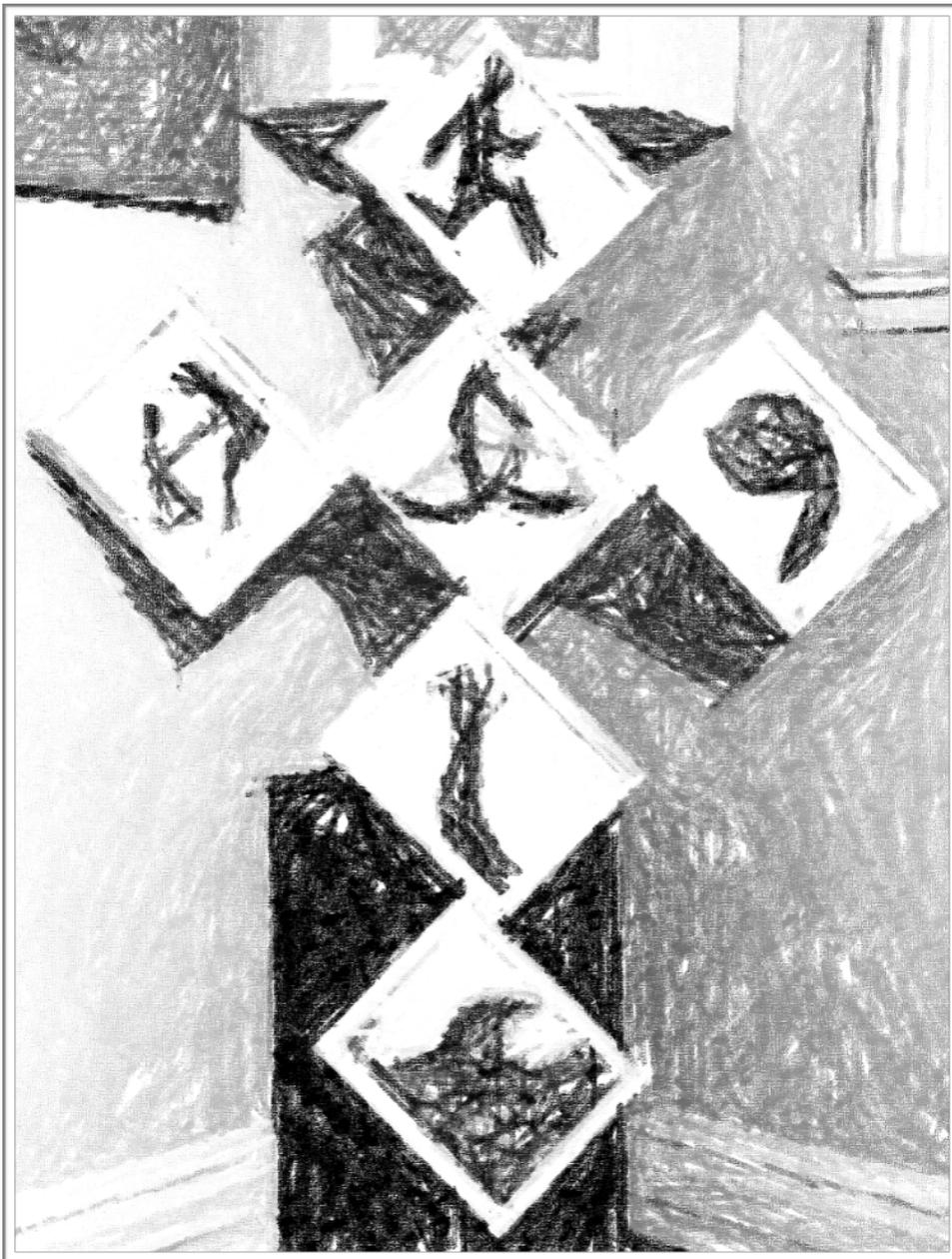


“Healed and Healing”

Matthew 10:1-8

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This past Friday when Calvin's new tent for outdoor worship was put up I think it was Bruce who joked, *"After all these years, we got a big top, we've finally accepted the fact that we're a circus."* 😊 Now I'm not sure if that makes me *The Greatest Showman*, and, *"this is the greatest show"* or if I'm *"Bozo, the world's most famous the Clown,"* 😊. What I do know is that how this all came about, this all came together, this is happening because Christ's commission to his disciples flows through them and to us. This commission, these instructions show us exactly what we are to do as an Easter people. Make life and lots of it. Indeed, everything he asks of his disciples that last week was about becoming the healers who take the lower seat, wash feet, break bread with friends and traitors alike, show radical hospitality, stay and pray with those who are suffering, do not answer violence with violence, take care of each other, all because we know that resurrection is coming!¹

Those are the very things his disciples saw him do. They're the very things we've been growing into over the past month and a half during our Holy Vessels Lenten Season of Healing. We have confessed our own roles, the church's complicity at times, in the brokenness of the world and in the brokenness of individuals. We have acknowledged our need to restore, repair, and renew the Holy Vessels we are so that we might be able to create and imagine new possibilities, new solutions, for the healing that is required to heal others and make the world more just, more whole.²

Yes, this was what Calvin did, how we worshipped, quite frankly, because its exactly what we all needed. There's not one of us, if we're honest with ourselves let alone each other, who hasn't struggled through this Pandemic. We are nearly 400 days into this Pandemic and we're all sick of saying that we're sick and tired of being sick and tired! And I'm telling you, if anyone says, they're just fine, that this last year hasn't had a negative impact on them or their loved ones, either they're lying to themselves and to you or you need to check for a pulse.

I know for us as Calvin's Worship Team, it's been one of, if not the, most difficult years of our more than 150 combined years of ministry. Think about it. First of all, truth be told, each and every one on of us are immuno-compromised, are at risk, are susceptible to COVID except for I think DeWayne, and possibly our students. And if you dig just a little into DeWayne, you find out that he's one of the primary care takers for Denny and Brenda who've been in and out of the hospital this past year. If I were a betting man, I'd say that just about everyone's story puts them in the *"at risk"* category. Point is all of us and or our families have been persistently at risk, consistently concerned, unceasingly worried for way too long. So yeah, it's been a tough year. It's like we've been paddling up stream, against the current all year long. It's not that the current has been strong, in fact it's been pretty mild, but the current has been non-stop. It's just that we haven't had a break for more than a year. There's been no time to put our feet up, sit back, relax and just float downstream with the current.

Now full disclosure, we could have floated downstream, but that's not our call. Our call has been to constantly fine tune this new way of being a church because we love Calvin, because we love you, because can only imagine how difficult this must be for you. We're continuously creating and innovating because it seems like every week we have a new guideline, a new regulation, a new something to worry about, adapt to, or outright turn up side down on it's head. Truth is, we've created and innovated more than 20 ministries, but only 7 or so of them have come to fruition. All the others either never got any traction or things beyond our control changed and they became irrelevant. You see, we're just like you. We're sick and tired of saying that we're sick and tired of being sick and tired. We're broken. We need to become whole. We need to be healed so we can be a part of God's healing and we don't have the bandwidth to do that in a Pandemic.

It is for precisely times like these that God sent God's one and only begotten son. I can say beyond any reasonable doubt, that if it were not for the steadfast faith of these fine women and men, you might have to check at least one of 🇺🇸 into a hospital. We'd really prefer one of those Malibu hospitals, 😊 you know like the ones they send celebrities to overlooking the ocean, 😊 but lame jest aside, I think you get the point.

For the three years before that first Easter Jesus was teaching, healing, touching and transforming lives. His presence in the midst of suffering and brokenness had offered hope and healing to everyone who came to him in faith. And yet his ways had also challenged the power of privilege. As we have seen in our Lenten journey, his actions had crossed boundaries of stigma. Stigma's that were so strong, so engrained, so widely



accepted as the norm that we are, more than 2,000 years later, still trying to break those stigma's. When healing was needed, Jesus left no one outside of his compassion. And this threatened to upset the hierarchy of things. Touching the **"untouchables,"** mixing with folk outside or below his status, raising up the faith of **"outsiders and nobodies"** got Jesus in what the late / great John Lewis called **'Good Trouble.'** Hmmm, never thought of this before, it's **"Good Trouble"** just like it's **"Good Friday."** Too bad it's political. If it wasn't it'd be a great mantra. Nonetheless, **"The last shall be first"** was not sitting well with the **"firsts"** of society, government, and religion. His popularity was evident the day he and his disciples set foot in Jerusalem for the Passover Festival, what we celebrate as a parade on Palm Sunday. Those in seats of power who wanted to keep the peace—even an unjust, unholy, unfair, unseeing peace—were all talking about **"the problem."** The crowds where Jesus was teaching in Jerusalem were infiltrated by leaders seeking to catch him in controversy. Time and again, Jesus answered with truth and faith, leaving the naysayers speechless.

I'll said it again, it is for precisely times like these that God sent God's one and only begotten son. God sent God's son to transform our deepest, darkest, most life challenging brokenness, into wholeness, into healing, into the most beautiful creations of love in action.

"If our greatest need had been information,

God would have sent us a kindergarten teacher.

If our greatest need had been technology (or figuring it out),

😊 God would have sent us a child or grandchild. 😊

If our greatest need had been money,

😊 God would have sent us a piggy bank. 😊

If our greatest need had been mindless pleasure,

😊 God would have sent us Netflix. 😊

But our greatest need was forgiveness.

So, God sent us a Savior!"³

God sent us forgiveness so that our broken relationship with God and broken relationships with each other may become holy and whole, so that we may be healed in those relationships, and so that whether it is for the least of these, or injustice, or all of creation, we can do our part in the healing adventure God in store for us.

Friends, We are all **Vessels, Holy and Whole. Broken, needing the One. Open, body and soul. Healing Spirit Come!**

Amen?!

¹ Walter T. Wilson. *"Healing in the Gospel of Matthew."* (Fortress Press, 2014) chapter 10.

² www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels

³ adapted from Chuck Swindoll, *The Grace Awakening*

