

*Again he entered the synagogue. There was a man there who had a withered hand. And they watched to see whether he would heal him on the sabbath so that they might accuse him.*

*Mark 3:1-2*

Today we begin a new message series called “Heal.” In the above passage from the gospel of Mark, Jesus goes into the synagogue on a Sabbath, and there's a man there with a withered hand. And so, the religious leaders are watching to see whether Jesus will heal the man on the Sabbath — not because they want to say, “Oh, can he do this? That would be amazing!” — no, they want to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong.

Every time Jesus initiated a healing, he did it on a Sabbath. Why? Because he wanted to show that this is what the gospel is really all about. That this is why he came, that healing is a huge part. It is front and center of why Jesus came. Let's pray that we will learn more about that over the course of this series.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage. God, we thank you that your Son did come to heal, that he is the divine physician, the divine healer. And God, we pray that, through the course of this series, we would be open to learning more about the role of healing in the gospel, and our role as being Christians who bring healing to our broken world; that we would be open to any healing you want to bring into our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*And he said to the man who had a withered hand, "Come here." And he said to them, "Is it lawful on the sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" But they were silent.*

*Mark 3:3-4*

We're looking again at the gospel of Mark, where Jesus goes into the synagogue and the religious leaders are looking to see if he'll heal this man with a withered hand — so they can bring an accusation against Jesus for doing it on the Sabbath. Jesus knows this, and so he questions the religious authorities and the religious leaders, "What's the Sabbath really all about? What's the point of it? Isn't it to do good? Isn't it to bring healing? How is this misaligned with why God, the Father, gave the Sabbath?" But they were silent.

They were silent because the religious leaders, at least these ones, the ones here in the synagogue, didn't care about healing and didn't care about this man whose hand was withered. They cared about getting Jesus. They cared about their laws and being right rather than bringing healing. But Jesus says healing is above the law in the sense of trying to live out the law just right. We have to be careful and understand that healing is really important to Jesus. Let's pray for the grace to see how important it is.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for your Son. God, we thank you for his boldness that when he knows something's a problem, he doesn't run away from it. He runs right into it. God, we thank you that healing is a priority to your Son. Help us to see the ways in which we can be healed through this series and bring healing to others. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*And he looked around at them with anger, and grieved at their hardness of heart.*

*Mark 3:5a*

We're continuing with this passage from the third chapter of Mark's gospel in which Jesus heals a man with a withered hand. But before he does that, there's this back-and-forth between Jesus and the religious leaders. So he asked them, "Hey, is it right to heal on the Sabbath? Is it right or wrong? Tell me what you think." But they're silent.

The next verse tells us that Jesus grieves at the religious leaders because they are more concerned about being right than bringing healing to a man with a withered hand. And that distresses him. It saddens him. It grieves him. He's grieved at their hardness of heart.

And this is a reminder to us that when it comes to healing, we can develop a hardness of heart. We can either develop a hardness of heart for healing for ourselves or for others in a defeatist sense and say, "Hey, it's just never going to happen. God doesn't care." Or we might develop a hardness of heart in that we don't care about other people's pain, and we just go on with our own lives. Let's pray against that.

*Heavenly Father, please help us to avoid a hardness of heart when it comes to healing. Give us supple and soft hearts, so that we align our hearts with your heart. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*And he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched out his hand and was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately held counsel with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.*

*Mark 3:5-6*

As we've been reading in these passages from the gospel of Mark, Jesus sees this man with a withered hand. He asks the religious leaders if it's okay to heal him or not, but they say nothing. He's grieved at their hardness of heart. They don't care, but Jesus cares. And he heals the man. He brings God's healing to a broken world. And what's the response of the Pharisees and other religious leaders? They go to the Herodians to figure out how they can destroy Jesus.

It doesn't make sense, but it does. Because we're in a broken world, we need healing. That's the whole reason. If we weren't in a broken world, there wouldn't be broken relationships, broken bodies, broken whatever. There wouldn't be things broken in our world if we didn't live in a broken world. But because we live in a broken world, we need healing. And because we live in a broken world, healing will be opposed. We think of healing as kind, and it is, but healing also takes toughness as Jesus showed here. He was tough. He was tough on the religious leaders just as he was kind to the man with the withered hand.

Healing takes kindness, but it takes toughness as well because healing will be opposed. And it'll take toughness and perseverance to really see healing in our broken world. And this passage from Mark reminds us of that. So, let's pray for the grace to be tough.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage. We thank you for your Son, who is our healer. Help us to be tough, help us to be tough to persevere, to bring healing in our own lives and healing in the lives of others. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*You know the word [that] he sent to the Israelites as he proclaimed peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all, what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.*

*Acts 10:36-38*

We are looking at healing in our broken world, and this was core to Jesus' mission. In the above passage from Acts of the Apostles, Peter is summarizing Jesus' work and ministry to a guy named Cornelius. He says, you know about Jesus and that he went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil. It was core to Jesus' ministry to heal others.

Notice, too, how Peter says this about Jesus: He went about by the power of the Holy Spirit. Oftentimes, we hear about Jesus' healings and we assume well, he was Jesus, right? He could just do it. But Acts is telling us here, no, it wasn't just because Jesus by his identity as the only begotten Son of God, it was by the power of the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit who's available to us.

Again, this is core to what Jesus did. The same ability to heal others is given to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, so we want to be open to what God wants to do with us through the course of this series, and see how healing is core to our lives as Christians. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for these words from the Apostle Peter. Help us to align with your will; help us to be open to the healing in our own lives and to be instruments of healing to others by the power of the Holy Spirit. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Jesus said, "As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received, without cost you are to give."*

*Matthew 10:7-8*

We're moving toward the end of this first week of our series on healing. And today we are looking at some words Jesus said to the Apostles. Again, a part of our goal for this series is just awakening to some of the things Jesus said and dealing with it. And this is one of them. Jesus is saying to the Apostles, but he's saying to all Christians, "Hey, as you go, cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons."

This is all about the ministry of healing. Cure the sick, that's healing; raise the dead, that's kind of healing. Cleanse lepers, that's definitely healing. Drive out demons, that's our spiritual and emotional healing. And Jesus is saying, "Go do all of those things." And maybe you don't know what to do with that. Jesus said a lot about bringing healing to our broken world. And if that doesn't always make sense to us, we just need to pause and know that he is God and we are not.

Let's pray that God will help us to listen to his Son better and awaken us to what this means for us as his followers and for our own lives.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the words of your Son; help us to know what they mean for us. Some people will just say, "Look, we're supposed to go do this. We're to be curing and cleansing and driving out demons." But God, help us to be open to what you want to do in our lives with these words. Help us to align our will with your will. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed [him], crying out, “Son of David, have pity on us!” When he entered the house, the blind men approached him and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” “Yes, Lord,” they said to him. Then he touched their eyes and said, “Let it be done for you according to your faith.”*

*Matthew 9:27-29*

We're wrapping up the first week of our series called "Heal." And again, this week's been about opening up our hearts and learning a little bit more, but then opening up our hearts so we can be healed ourselves, and bring healing to others; and also, just wrestling with this issue of healing.

The above verse from Matthew's gospel shows another part to healing that we need to be thinking about in this first week of our series. This is the other part of healing and it has to do with faith. We can't fully understand the mystery of faith; we put faith in a God that we can't completely understand. But when it comes to healing, faith is absolutely essential. As Jesus says to the blind men, "Let it be done for you according to your faith."

Now, unfortunately, sometimes people can blame others for not being healed and say things like, "Oh, it's because there's a problem with your faith." And that's not fair either. We have to acknowledge that faith is a part of it, and it's a bit mysterious when it comes to healing. We don't always know why one person gets healed and another person doesn't. But we do know God's desire is to heal. And we do know that faith is in the mix with that. We're going to be praying, through the course of this series, how to understand that better or at least grow in our faith. Let's pray now for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that our faith does matter. God, we pray that through the course of this series we would put more faith and trust in you — especially when it comes to healing for ourselves or healing for the people whom we love the most. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*The Lord God formed man out of the clay of the ground and blew into nostrils the breath of life, and so man became a living being. Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the Lord god made various trees that were delightful to look at and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*

*Genesis 2:7-9*

This is the second week of our series called “Heal.” And, again, the reason we need healing is because we’re in a broken world. This week we’re looking at Genesis, which tells us about that and all the damage that has been done.

Genesis is telling us that when God created the world, he created it all good. And later in the story, evil is introduced to the world. And it’s so important for us to understand this story because that’s the story we are in. We’ve been created to live in a world of total love, kindness, and goodness. That’s how God created us. But that’s not the world we live in; just recognizing our story helps us to understand our need for healing. Let’s pray for the grace to understand that.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that you created the world good. You created us good. And you have made us for a place of perfect love, and we will have that one day in heaven. But, God, help us to recognize that we live in a broken world and that part of bringing your kingdom to this world is bringing healing to a broken world. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

*Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the animals that the Lord God had made. The serpent asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?”*

*Genesis 3:1*

So, we've seen that everything's created good — but there is an enemy, and the enemy is the serpent. This translation of Genesis says the most cunning; other translations say, the most subtle of all the animals. And that's true about evil. Evil is often subtle. When the serpent asks if God really said that the woman could not eat from any tree in the garden, he starts to have human beings distrust God. And so, evil enters in when we don't trust God.

Let's pray for the grace to understand that we can place our faith in God, and to ward off any subtleness that takes away our trust and faith in God, especially when it comes to healing.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for these words from Genesis that help us understand our story. Help us to spot the subtlety of evil, and to reject it. And help us to align our will with your will, especially when it comes to healing, through the course of this series. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*The woman answered the serpent: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, ‘You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.’” But the serpent said to the woman: “You certainly will not die! No, God knows well that the moment you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods who know what is good and what is evil.”*

*Genesis 3:2-5*

We are continuing to look at this passage from Genesis 3 about the Fall. The above passage is about the subtlety of the evil one, and the subtlety of the evil one gets Eve to agree a bit with him. The instruction from God was, you shall not eat the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden. But Eve kind of adds on that God said you shouldn't even touch it. God never said don't touch it. He just said, don't eat it.

And so now we see how, Eve, the woman, is agreeing with the evil one. And this is the subtlety. When it comes to the hurts and the wounds in our lives, we can subtly start to agree with the evil one: “Hey, God doesn't care about my hurt. God doesn't care about my wounds. God just wants me to accept hurts and wounds, and just learn to deal with it and live with it.” No, God is always bringing healing. And it's not always physical healing. Sometimes it's spiritual, sometimes emotional, but God is our healer. Let's pray for the grace to not buy into some of the lies about healing through the course of this series.

*Heavenly Father, again, we thank you for the words of Genesis that help us to be on guard against evil. Help us to not buy into the lies that you don't care about our healing, that you don't care about our hurts. Help us to know, Lord, that you are for us and want to bring good into our lives, especially our healing. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*The woman saw that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eyes, and desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of the fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.*

*Genesis 3:6-7*

We see in the above verses from Genesis the disastrous consequences of the Fall in this original sin. And these are consequences we live with today. As Father Benedict Groeschel wrote, "It's not so much the original sin is the original wound," because we didn't have a choice. But as a result of sin, we're no longer comfortable in our own skin, and we see this from Adam and Eve. They realized they were naked, so they sewed loincloths for themselves.

One of the things that needs to be healed is in our own hearts and in our own souls because we have been born into this sin-stained world. And so, we need to learn to be healed, to be more comfortable with ourselves. Let's pray for the grace for that healing.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the words from Genesis that let us know about our human condition. And that, as a result of sin, we are not comfortable in our own skin. Heal us of that. Dear Lord, heal our hearts, heal our souls, so that we may be more comfortable with who you've created us to be. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid."*

*Genesis 3:8-10*

We are looking at the Fall, and what it teaches us about our need for healing. And Genesis tells us that Adam and Eve hid from God, and then God goes looking for Adam, and he says, "Where are you?" Because God doesn't know where he is? No, of course he knows where Adam is. It's more like, where are you in relation to me?

Before the Fall, man had this easy relationship with God, and the breeze of the evening — at the nicest part of the day, God and man would just hang out together. But now Adam runs from God. As a result of sin, we are alienated from God, and this needs to be healed, our relationship with God needs healing. Let's pray for the grace to bring healing into our relationship with God.

*Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we need our relationship with you healed; that it's not what you want it to be; that you want this easy relationship with us. God, heal our relationship with you that we may more easily come into your presence. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? The man replied, “The woman whom you put here with me — she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it.”*

*Genesis 3:11-12*

We're in the second week of our series called "Heal," and we've been looking at Chapter 3 from Genesis, which is the Fall. As we see in the above passage, the Fall brings about a threefold alienation: We are alienated from ourselves, we are alienated from God, and we're alienated from one another. The Fall wounds all three of those relationships — it wounds the relationship with ourselves or our integration of a healthy soul, it wounds our relationship with God, and it wounds our relationship with others.

We live in a broken world where there's need of healing. And so, we want to pray for healing through this series. Are there some relationships that you need healed? Is there somebody with whom you need to reconcile? Is there pain from some relationship in which you need healing? Let's pray for the grace that they would be healed through the course of this series.

*Heavenly Father, we acknowledge we have broken relationships, relationships in need of healing. And so, God, we pray for whatever relationship is on our mind right now. It's a strained relationship, a completely broken or dysfunctional relationship. God, we pray for you to bring the healing only you can bring. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.*

*Isaiah 53:5*

We're talking about healing, and how the Fall shows our need for healing in our relationship with God, healing in our relationships with others, healing in our own hearts and souls. The above verse from Isaiah reminds us that this is why Jesus came. While we live in a broken world, it's Jesus' wounds on the cross and death on the cross that give us the power to be healed. Let's pray for the grace to accept that gift.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that you sent your Son to heal us, that by his wounds we are healed. God, we don't want to be ungrateful for that gift. We don't want to not think about that gift because we acknowledge our need to be healed. We ask that the blood of Jesus cover us and heal us today. And whatever healing we need at this moment, whether it be our hearts, our souls, or physical healing, God, we accept that. Help us to be healed in your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Jesus took Peter, James and John, his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”*

*Matthew 17:1-4*

We're in the third week of our series called "Heal." And this week, we'll be thinking about how to listen to Jesus. To help us reflect on that, we're considering the Transfiguration, as described in the above verses from Matthew's gospel in which Jesus' divinity shows through his humanity.

And this is why we listen to Jesus — because he knows what it's like to be a human being. He's taken on our flesh, and he's also the son of God. He can speak with authority. So, when it comes to our healing, we want to listen to Jesus because he understands our human nature, and he's also divine. He can draw us up into divine things, which brings about our healing. Let's pray for the grace to listen to Jesus.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for this encounter, this experience that has been told to us by the apostles, in which your divinity was shown forth. God, help us to listen to your Son. Help us to listen to your Son that we might be healed. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*He was still speaking when behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."*

*Matthew 17:5*

We're looking again at healing and listening to Jesus. The scene described in the above verse is the Transfiguration, and Peter was speaking. This is the second time that the Father has said that he is well pleased with Jesus. The first time was at the baptism of the Lord.

Now, God says, in front of Peter, James, and John, "Listen to him." And that's a message from God the Father not just for Peter, James, and John, but for all of us to listen to his Son. When it comes to our healing, we want to listen to what Jesus is teaching us. He is the divine physician. He is our healer, so he has the prescription for our hearts and our pain. Let's pray for the grace to listen to Jesus.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for these words. And God, we pray that we will listen to your Son. Right now, we make a moment of space: Jesus, speak to our hearts. Speak to our hearts the words we need for healing. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*It was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured.  
We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted,  
But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity.  
He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we are healed.*

*Isaiah 53:4-5*

We're continuing to look at healing and at listening to Jesus. And the above passage is what Isaiah says about Jesus, what he foretells hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Jesus can speak to us about the healing of our wounds because he's been wounded. He is a wounded healer. And so, when Jesus tells us about how to be healed — of physical pain, of spiritual pain, of emotional pain — he doesn't speak out of not having had any experience. He speaks from authority because he was beaten and wounded for us.

He is our wounded healer and, by his wounds, we are healed. Let's pray for the grace to listen to Jesus because he knows intimately what it's like to suffer, and to be in pain, and he can tell us how to get out of it.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that you sent your Son to heal us. God help us to appreciate that gift of your Son, of laying down his life for us, and help us to appreciate it by simply listening to him. Help us to listen to your Son, how he wants to lead us to a place of healing through the course of this series. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*He said: If you listen closely to the voice of the LORD, your God, and do what is right in his eyes: if you heed his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases with which I afflicted the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.*

*Exodus 15:26*

The above verse is from Exodus and this is the first time that God says who he is to us. The Lord is our healer, but we have to listen to him. And how do we listen to God? We listen through scripture, reading God's word, and we're going to look at some verses later this week that show us what God tells us about healing.

But listening to God also means having some quiet, leaving some space in our hearts. Again, through this series, we want to be paying attention: What does Jesus want to heal in us right now? Is it physical pain? Is it something in our hearts? Does he want to heal us of our sins? What is it we want Jesus to heal? Let's take a moment to listen to him and listen to what he wants to heal and how he wants to do it.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for these words from Exodus. Please help us to listen to your Son, to listen to what he wants to heal, what wound he wants to heal in us —whether it is internal, or physical, or spiritual — and how he wants to heal it. God, help us to draw closer to your Son because we know that every healing is about drawing closer to you. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*Bless the LORD, my soul; all my being, bless his holy name!  
Bless the LORD, my soul; and do not forget all his gifts,  
Who pardons all your sins, and heals all your ills.*

*Psalm 103:1-3*

We are continuing to look at healing and listening to God and what he wants to heal in us. In the above passage from Psalm 103, we bless the Lord and we praise God because he wants to heal our ills. And it is in praising God that we receive healing. Praising God brings healing into our hearts and our souls. Let's do that right now.

*Heavenly Father, we praise you. We bless you with our souls. And God, as we bless you and praise you, we can experience your healing of our souls. God, we praise you that you want to heal our bodies, and God, we accept that. We thank you for your goodness, and we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone in good spirits? He should sing praise.*

*James 5:13*

We are continuing to talk about listening to what God has to say about healing, and listening to Jesus. And some of that is very personal to us all. Healing is about having a personal relationship, a personal encounter with Jesus. Jesus wants to heal us so that we would come to know him better. As written in the above verse from James, there are some general things we can do to bring about healing into our lives, such as prayer and praising God.

When we are suffering, of course, we go to a doctor; and, of course, we ask for medical help if it's physical, or we can go and ask for other help if we need counseling. But James tells us prayer should be part of the way in which we deal with our suffering and deal with our pain so that we can be healed. And then, when we're in good spirits or when we receive healing, we want to praise God for it. When we feel God's healing, we want to praise God; we want to sing praise to him, knowing that he is our healer. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, help us to take these words to heart, that whenever we're suffering or hurting, that we turn to you in prayer. That's such a simple thing to say, but it can be really tough to do. Help us turn to you in prayer when we feel our hurts and our wounds. And God, when you come into our lives and heal us, help us to praise you for that goodness. We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

*Is anyone among you sick?<sup>\*</sup> He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should pray over him and anoint [him] with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven.*

*James 5:14-15*

We're concluding today our week of talking about listening to Jesus so that he can heal us. And we can listen in our quiet time, but the above verses from the book of James also give us some direction on how to be healed.

This passage from scripture is one of the basic foundations for the anointing of the sick. (We'll be doing that in a couple weeks at Nativity. There'll be an opportunity after Mass to do that, so stay tuned.) But it's also a reminder that when we have any wounds, we can call people together in community to pray for us. We can be praying as a family over someone who is sick. We can be praying in our small groups when someone is sick or hurting. Again, the power of prayer to heal us is something we need to embrace. Certainly, we seek medical care and we seek professional help, but we want to make sure that prayer is part of our efforts to seek healing — because in prayer, we invite Jesus; we invite the Lord into our healing. Let's pray for the grace to do that right now.

*Heavenly Father, we bring before you any of the wounds we have. We bring our physical wounds. We bring our heart wounds, our emotional wounds. God, we place them before you. God, we pray for healing right now in our hearts, in our bodies, in our souls. And God, help us to not be afraid to come together as a community and pray for those who are sick and to receive the prayer of others when they want to pray for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

We are in the fourth week of our series on healing, and this week we're talking about internal healing, healing our hearts and our souls, emotional healing. And also healing relationships as we're gonna see that happens in the story of the woman at the well. And I think actually, you know, the internal healing happens first, and then the relational healing happens.

So here's what we're told. "Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar." You know, "the pit of land that Jacob had given to his son, Joseph, Jacob's well was there. Jesus tired from his journey, sat down there at the well. It was about noon. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink.' His disciples had gone into the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?' All right, so a lot's going on here because Jesus is crossing all kinds of boundaries.

First of all, men did not talk to women in public. Men didn't even talk to their own wives in public. And the well would've been a public place, was kind of like the water cooler. And also, he's crossing this line because she's a Samaritan and he's a Jew, so that's what she says to him. Also, here's the thing. She comes to get water at noon. Now, women were responsible for getting the water from the well, but they wouldn't go at noon. That's the hottest part of the day. So why is this woman at the well, the Samaritan woman, going at noon? She's going to avoid anybody else. So again, we see, again, this relational wounds, that she's cut off from community, and we're gonna see how Jesus heals her through this interaction. And he heals so much in this interaction.

So let's just pray for the grace for God, that Jesus to come and heal our hearts, and to know that Jesus can do so much more work. He can cross so many different lines, you know, if he wants to. So let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for this story, for this passage and this encounter that Jesus has with a woman at the well. And that things that seem impossible, like all the barriers that Jesus broke here, all the hurt that we know is in this woman, God, that Your son can still bring healing. And so, God, we pray that You would open up our minds and our hearts to what is possible in our lives. We pray this in Your name, Jesus' name, amen.

*The woman said to him, "Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his great flocks?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

*John 4:11 -14*

We are looking again at the woman at the well from John 4. And we see a kind of irony here in the above exchange between the woman and Jesus. She says to him, "What do you think, you're as good as Jacob?"

Of course, Jesus is so much greater than Jacob. But the woman does not yet understand who Jesus is. And then Jesus talks about this living water. And he's talking about the Holy Spirit, and that welling up in us. This is a great image of what Jesus wants to give us, that he wants to bring the Holy Spirit into our hearts, to bring healing into our lives that would well up in our hearts and souls. Let's pray for the grace to receive that.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that your Son wants to give us the Holy Spirit, wants to give us springs of water in our hearts that can bring healing to our hearts. Help us to receive your Son and the living water he wants to give us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw the water."*

*John 4:15*

We're looking at Jesus and the woman at the well, and Jesus talks about giving living water, not just drawing water from the well. Jesus promises this living water. He's talking about the Holy Spirit, but the woman's thinking about real, physical water. And she's, like, "I want this water because I don't want to have to keep coming to this well." And now, she starts to open up her heart to Jesus because, again, it's obvious she's coming to this well at the hottest part of the day because she's avoiding people.

So now she's thinking, "Oh, my gosh, this is a way out. All right, Jesus, give me this living water so now I can avoid people, and I don't have to come at noon." And we're going to see how Jesus turns the story tomorrow. But this is the reality. We're often like the woman at the well. We want to avoid pain. We want to avoid looking at our hurts and instead just look in other directions.

It's natural, it makes sense; but as we're going to see, Jesus won't let the woman do this. We want Jesus to give us living water, but we know that sometimes we have to look at our wounds. We have to go through some painful experiences sometimes to actually experience the healing Jesus wants to give us. Let's pray for the grace to do that.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for this passage, this encounter Jesus had. And while we understand the woman trying to avoid people, we know, God, that's not what your will is for us. Your will is to build us back in a relationship with people and to make connections. God, help us to go through pain if we need to, to rebuild relationships. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may not be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw the water." Jesus said to her, "Go call your husband and come back."*

*The woman answered and said to him, "I do not have a husband."*

*John 4:15-16a*

We're looking at the woman at the well and how Jesus brings emotional healing to her heart, how Jesus truly heals her heart. He also heals relationships, which we're going to see at the end of the story.

In the above passage from John 4, Jesus goes right to the woman's wound. He says, "All right, go call your husband and then come back for the water." Jesus hits a sore spot here; he hits a wound in the woman's heart — but he knows what he is doing. He wants the woman to look at her wound. As we will see tomorrow, the wound is that she's been rejected by five men. She's had five husbands. And that wouldn't have been her fault in that culture. Men could divorce women, but women could not divorce men. And so, Jesus is entering into this wound she has so that he can heal her, but first he is bringing her to the pain.

And Jesus is asking her to let him go there with her. Jesus will do that to us for our eternal wounds. We have hurts and wounds in our hearts. And a lot of times we're trying to protect our hearts and Jesus says, let me come in. He'll call out the wound. And we have to open up our hearts to let our healer set us free. Let's pray for the grace to do that.

*Jesus, we confess that often that we have wounds in our hearts. We have hurts in our hearts, and we want to protect them. But Jesus, we thank you that you'll sometimes bring us to our wounds — not because you want to hurt us, but because you want to heal us. You invite us to let you in. So, Jesus, whatever wounds are in our hearts right now, we invite you in. Come into our hearts; help us to deal with the pain there so that you can set us free and heal us. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*Jesus answered her, "You are right in saying, 'I do not have a husband.' For you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. I know the Messiah is coming, the one called the Christ; when he comes, he will tell us everything." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one with whom you are speaking."*

*John 4:17b-19; 25-26*

We're looking at the healing God wants to bring in our hearts and in our relationships. And we're looking at the woman at the well. Jesus tells the woman, "Go and get your husband." She says, "I don't have a husband." In the above verses, Jesus picks up the conversation. Jesus challenges the woman and says, "Yeah, I know you don't have a husband. You've had five. And now you're with someone else who's not your husband." Again, this would have been understandable. A woman in that culture needed a man to get money and to survive. That was the nature of it.

Jesus then affirms this woman and tells her something: He knows who she is. He knows her history, but yet he accepts her. And when he accepts her, she opens up even more. She says, "I can see you're a prophet. I can see you're somebody from God." And then Jesus reveals, "No, I'm not just a prophet. I am the Christ. I am the Messiah."

The woman at the well feels his love and acceptance in spite of her wounds, in spite of being rejected by others. Often, we believe negative things about ourselves. We are rejected by others as this woman was, or we hear words of rejection, and we internalize them, and we begin to think that's the truth about who we are. But that's not who we are. We are who God says we are. We are accepted. We are loved. We are the beloved. And Jesus might bring us to our rejection — not to hurt us, but to heal us. Let's pray for the grace to allow Jesus into those wounds we have in our hearts from rejection.

*Heavenly Father, like the woman at the well, we've been rejected at times, and we have wounds in our hearts from those rejections. God, we know that's not the truth about us. The truth is that we are accepted by you. We are loved by you. Help us to understand that constitutes the core truth of our being of who we are. You allow that truth to come in to heal our hearts. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “Come see a man who told me everything I have done. Could he possibly be the Christ?”*

*John 4:28-29*

Happy Saint Patrick's Day!

We are looking at our healing and looking at the woman at the well from Chapter 4 of John's gospel. Jesus accepts her, and then there is an amazing life change. An amazing healing takes place in this woman in just a few moments after an encounter with Jesus.

The same woman who went to the well at the hottest part of the day so she could avoid everyone now goes to the people in the town to introduce them to the person of Jesus Christ. That's how powerful Jesus' love and acceptance is in our lives. Let's pray for the grace that we would feel Jesus' love and acceptance so that we not only can be healed in our hearts, but that we also can heal broken relationships.

*Heavenly Father, thank you again for this passage about the woman at the well and help us to receive your acceptance. God, out of flowing from our hearts being healed may we rebuild our relationships. May we heal broken relationships and reconcile them so that, like the woman at the well, we can bring people into a relationship with your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony. So when the Samaritans came to him they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word.*

*John 4:39-41*

*We're wrapping up the story of the woman at the well in John 4. We've been skipping through it, so you might want to take a few moments this week to reread it yourself.*

*What the above verses describe is the ripple effect God wants to have with healing. Sometimes with healing, we think it's just about us or it's just about a person we love. But look at the ripple effect from the testimony of the woman at the well.*

*This Samaritan woman has an encounter with Jesus. He heals her heart. He heals her other rejection by accepting her. She goes back to the townspeople, and she tells them about Jesus. And now, more and more people come to believe in him and come to faith.*

*Again, healing is not just about us — it's about the other people God wants to impact and bring into a relationship with his Son. Let's pray for the grace that the healing that's taking place in our community, through this series, will have a ripple effect out into Baltimore County, out into Maryland, out into the whole world.*

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that your Son comes to heal our hearts. Help us to heal our hearts; help heal our relationships. May it become a ripple effect that brings more and more people into relationship with your Son. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”*

*John 9:1-2*

*We are in the fifth week of our series called “Heal.” We will be looking at physical healing as well as doing our part when it comes to healing; often in the healing stories, Jesus asked people to do something to participate in healing.*

*In the above passage from John, we see that the disciples assume this man is blind as a result of someone having sinned. And, in a certain way, they're right — because all blindness and all physical ailments are a result of sin, a result of the Fall. But Jesus will correct the disciples in the sense that the man's blindness was not a punishment.*

*This isn't a punishment to the man because of something his parents did or because of something he did. It's a result of the Fall, of living in a fallen world. And so, it's just a reminder of us that we live in this fallen world, and we will experience pain and hurt and wounds. However, it's not for us to judge others or judge ourselves, but rather to come to the Lord for healing. Let's pray for the grace to not judge others when they're hurt or to judge ourselves or allow that to get in the way of coming to the Lord.*

*Heavenly Father, help us to come to you when we see our wounds — not to be ashamed of them, not to deny them, not to feel like it's something we've done to ourselves and we deserve. Lord, help us to come to you and be healed. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him."*

*John 9:3*

*As we move into springtime, we're continuing our series on healing. And so, yesterday, we talked about the man born blind. And the disciples asked, "Who sinned: his parents or him?" When we see wounds and hurts, one of the biggest mistakes is to think, "Okay, that's God's will. God wants someone blind. God wants someone deaf. God wants people to suffer."*

*No. As Jesus says in the above verse, in every wound and pain, what God wants is his glory to be revealed or his works to be revealed. And so, when we come to our pain and our suffering and our wounds, when we see the wounds of others, that's an opportunity for the work of God to be made visible. We want to see all wounds as opportunities for God to show forth his work and his power. Let's pray for the grace to see it that way.*

*Heavenly Father, when we see wounds, please help us not just to accept them, but to see them as an opportunity for you to work in us, whether they're our own personal wounds or the wounds we see in others. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" (which means Sent), So he went and washed and came back able to see.*

*John 9:6*

We are continuing our series on healing and we're looking at the man born blind. Jesus says that it wasn't the man's fault or because he or his parents had sinned; that's not why he was born blind. He was born blind so that the works of God might be shown through him.

In the above verse, Jesus spits on the ground and makes mud or clay, and then he smears it on the blind man's eyes and says, "Go and wash." Again, here's an example of Jesus inviting the man born blind to participate in his own healing. That's true for us as well that Jesus wants to heal us, but he invites our participation. He says, go and do something. So, while certainly we are receiving God's grace when we're healed, often we have to go and do what he tells us to do. We have to act in obedience.

Maybe there's some physical healing you need. Maybe there's a spiritual healing or something in your heart or in your soul that needs to be healed. What is Jesus calling you to do? Let's pray for the grace to hear that and to obey.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that your Son came to heal us. And we thank you, God, that you take us seriously enough that you want us to participate in our own healing. Help us to obey the word of your Son, to do what he tells us to do, that we might experience your healing. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?"*

*John 9:35-36*

We are looking at healing — especially the physical kind of healing that takes place in the man born blind, but also how he participates in his own healing. It's a big story; actually, all of Chapter 9 of John's gospel is about the man born blind. So, we're skipping way ahead in the story because the man born blind is actually thrown out by the religious leaders who refuse to admit that Jesus could actually be the Messiah.

In the above verses, Jesus, now that the man has been thrown out of the temple by the religious leaders and not allowed to worship God, comes to this man who had been born blind, and asks, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" And the man who has been healed of his blindness says, "Who is he? Who is the Son of Man that I may believe in him? I want to believe in him."

This is a reminder that healing is about God wanting to heal us. God wants to heal us, but he also wants us to come to a deeper faith in him. It's about having an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. So, we're going to pray that we experience healing or we bring healing to others. But, as we're doing that, we're also bringing others into a deeper relationship or we're bringing ourselves into a deeper relationship with our Savior.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that you want to heal us. We thank you that you are our healer, that your Son is the divine physician. God, we pray that as we experience your healing or as we bring healing to others, may it bring us or bring them into a deeper relationship with you, a deeper trust in you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “I do believe, Lord,” and he worshiped him.*

*John 9:37-38*

*We are in the fifth week of our series called “Heal.” And we’re looking at our physical healing, and listening to Jesus, and doing what he tells us to do, but then also how healing brings us into a deeper faith. In the above passage from the gospel of John, we see that the man born blind moves from seeing Jesus as a man, then just a prophet, and here he worships him as the Lord.*

*Again, this is part of our healing. Our healing is complete when we worship God. God wants to do something in our hearts and in our souls if it’s an emotional pain or wound. If it’s a physical wound, God wants to do something in our bodies. But ultimately, God wants to bring us to the point where we worship him. That solidifies our healing when we worship God, and we praise him for the good things he has brought into our lives, for the healing he’s brought into our lives. Let’s pray for the grace to do that.*

*Heavenly Father, we worship you. We worship your Son, and we honor you and glorify you with all our lives. Help us to praise you when we experience your healing. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.*

*As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed.*

*Luke 17:12-14*

Through this series, we are hopefully growing in an understanding of God's word when it comes to healing and how Jesus wants to bring healing into our lives.

The above verses from Luke's gospel are a reminder to us that when it comes to the healing of our diseases or physical healing or spiritual healing, Jesus often tells us to go do something. We are not to be passive participants, but rather we need to be active participants in our healing, or we must ask others to be active participants in their healing. Here, for these lepers, Jesus says, "Hey, go show yourselves to the priests," which is also another aspect of healing, too, that it's meant to be verified by others. That's why Jesus tells them to go.

And as they were going, they were cleansed. As they obey, as soon as they start doing what Jesus told them to do, they're cleansed even before they get to the priests. And so, again, just a reminder of healing, we do what Jesus tells us to do, and sometimes just in that act, we can find healing coming into our lives. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for the example of the lepers who went and did as your Son told them to do. As we hear what you're telling us to do in our healing, whatever healing you're bringing to our lives in this week, help us to do what you've called us to do, to go where you tell us to go. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? Where are the other nine? Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you.*

*Luke 17:15-19*

Today is the Feast of the Annunciation, and we're wrapping up our fifth week of our series on healing. We are looking at the next verses in Chapter 17 of Luke's gospel about the cleansing of the lepers. Again, we see in this healing of the lepers that it involves going and doing what Jesus instructed, but it doesn't end with the healing.

The completion of the healing, the completion of what God wants to do is when the Samaritan comes back and says thank you to Jesus, and then praises and worships him. And Jesus says, "Your faith has saved you." In other words, the work Jesus wanted to do with him is now complete because he sees the man's faith and worship of him.

All of our healing and the healing of others is about coming to have an encounter with Jesus and coming to deeper faith and trust in him. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, we know that we're going to need healing over and over again in our lives. Life just beats us up. We thank you that we can come to your Son who wants to heal us. And God, when we experience your healing, help us to praise you and thank you that you may complete the work in our hearts and souls that you want to complete. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*The sisters of Lazarus sent word to Jesus, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but it is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."*

*John 11:3-4*

We are in the sixth and final week of our series called "Heal," and we're looking at a passage from John's gospel about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We see a similar theme here with the man born blind, that there is sickness and eventual death. People always think, "Well, that's the end. That's the end of the story." But Jesus reminds us here as he did with the man born blind that, no, the end is not the illness. The end is not sickness or disease; it doesn't have the final word.

The final word is that Jesus is glorified and that people come to know him. That's true of any illness or sickness or disease or injury we might have. That's not the end of the story. Sickness or disease or injury doesn't have the final word just as death doesn't have the final word. The final word is that Jesus will be glorified. Let's pray now that we see that in all our hurts and our wounds.

*Heavenly Father, we pray that in every wound, every hurt we see, whether it be in ourselves or family or loved ones, that God we would believe and trust that your glory is going to be revealed in some way. Give us faith to see that. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*When Jesus heard this he said, “This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was.*

*John 11:4-6*

The above passage, continuing the story of Lazarus in the Gospel of John, doesn't seem to make sense at first. Jesus loves Martha and her sister, Mary; he loves Lazarus. And yet, he stays in the place for two days rather than going immediately to see Lazarus, who is gravely ill. As we will see, Lazarus dies. Again, this is a reminder to us that our timing with healing is not always God's timing.

Martha and Mary and even the disciples can't make sense of what Jesus is doing here. Why isn't he rushing off to be with Lazarus? When it comes to our healing or the healing of people we love, we expect Jesus to do it right away. But his time is not always our timing, and this is why it requires faith and trust in the Lord. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, there is a way we see healing and when it's supposed to take place — when we are hurt, we want to be healed immediately; when we see someone who's sick, we want them healed immediately. God, we know you want to do that, but sometimes you wait. You're giving things time, and we don't always understand why. But right now, Lord, we profess our faith and our trust in you that your glory will be revealed eventually, even if it's in your timing and not ours. Give us faith to trust in you always. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Martha said to Jesus, "Lord if you had been here, my brother would not have died. [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."*

*John 11:21-22*

We're told that Jesus comes to see Martha and Mary after Lazarus has died, and Martha shows incredible faith and trust in Jesus; but, as we see in the above verses from John's gospel, Martha also shows her anger. She says, "Jesus, if you'd been here, he wouldn't have died." There's sort of an accusatory tone to that.

Then Martha says, "All right, but I believe, Lord. I know that whatever you ask of God, he will give you." And it's clear from the rest of the context, she's not asking him to raise Lazarus from the dead. Later, she kind of pushes back against Jesus when he says to open up the stone. But here she's just confessing her faith and trust in Jesus.

Martha is such a great reminder to us that when it comes to our faith, it's okay to be frustrated with God and to express our frustrations with God, but we don't want to live in that. Martha starts with frustration, but she ends with, "I know I trust you."

Maybe as you're looking for healing or struggling with something in your life right now, you're thinking, "Lord, why are you making me go through this? Why is this happening? But I also know that you are God. And I know that you can do whatever you want to do through this, so please help me be open to what you are doing." Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, we know life is not easy. You never promised it would be easy, and you never promised that we would have instantaneous healing. Lord, we confess our frustrations, our struggles to you. But God, we also trust that you can do whatever you want to do in these situations, and we trust that you have our best interests in mind. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.” Martha said, “I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?”*

*John 11:23-26*

As we move through these last few days of March, we'll continue looking at healing, and healing through the lens of the passage about the raising of Lazarus from the dead as told in John's gospel. When we talk about healing, our pain can feel big in the moment; but then we pull back out and see that, as Martha is told, Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Jesus defeated death. And so, we need to put all our pain, all our wounds in that context. Do we believe that Jesus is the resurrection? Do we believe that no matter what happens to us, Jesus will raise us as well? As we answer “Yes,” all our pain and our wounds are put in the knowledge of that truth. Let's pray and profess our faith in Jesus right now.

*Heavenly Father, we believe in your Son. We believe he is the resurrection and the life — that he suffered, died, and was buried, but rose again so that we may live and we may be healed. We profess our faith in you, Jesus. No matter what pain or wounds we have, your power is greater. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept.*

*John 11:32-35*

We are in the sixth and final week of our series called “Heal,” and we've been looking at the story and the passages from John's gospel about the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

We see in Martha and Mary the different ways they handle grief. Martha is angry, and shares that with Jesus. In the above verses, Mary is weeping. And as Jesus sees her grief and her pain, he weeps, too. He's deeply troubled. He's troubled in his heart and his spirit. Death and wounds and pain trouble Jesus. He's not impervious to our pain. He's not impervious to our wounds. He's not impervious to the pain of death. It bothers him. And then we're told Jesus wept again. He enters into our pain. And this is why we can follow Jesus and we can trust him with our wounds and our hurts. He cares about us. Let's pray for the grace to connect with Jesus and know that he not only heals, he also feels and knows our pain.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that your Son entered into our pain, entered into our wounds, and allowed himself to feel the weight of death and pain in this world. Help us to feel the same thing for others. God, help us not to distance ourselves, not to have hard hearts about the pain of others, but to enter into it as your Son did, so we can help them. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."*

*John 11:38-42*

We're moving toward the end of our Lenten series looking at healing, and looking at the gospel passages about the raising of Lazarus from the dead. In the above verses from John's gospel, Jesus tells the people at Lazarus' tomb to take away the stone. Jesus is going to do the impossible — but first, he asks others to do the possible. We see this over and over again in miracles. We do the possible; Jesus does the impossible. We participate in healing. We participate in the miracle that Jesus wants to do. Jesus is always inviting us to participate in this.

And then, before the miracle of raising Lazarus, Jesus says, "Father, I thank you that you hear me. I know you always hear me." He's really praying this more for the crowd. This is a reminder to us that, when it comes to our prayers for healing or asking God to move, we don't have to beg God. We can simply ask, because God always hears us. Let's pray for that grace.

*Heavenly Father, help us to roll away the stones. Help us to roll away the things that are preventing your healing from coming into our lives. God, we thank you that you do hear us. Heal our hearts, heal our bodies, heal our broken relationships, heal our minds. Deliver us, Lord. We know that you hear us. Help us to do what's possible so your Son can do the impossible. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."*

*John 11:43-44*

We have been looking at the story of Lazarus and it is completed in the above passage from John's gospel. Lazarus comes out of the tomb after having lain dead for four days. He comes out when Jesus says, "Lazarus, come out!" And then Jesus tells the people to unbind his bands and free him.

Many people, when it comes to healing, think of this as "deliverance" healing. Deliverance healing means being freed from the things we struggle with day in and day out: anxiety and worry and fear from those spirits that come upon us. Jesus came to deliver and unbind us from those spirits that weigh down our hearts and our minds. Let's pray for the grace to be unbound as Lazarus was unbound.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for this incredible miracle your Son performed. And God, we pray that you would unbind us from anxiety and worry and fear. God, heal our minds and our hearts of these ills. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

*Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?  
He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; He had no  
majestic bearing to catch our eye, no beauty to draw us to him.*

*Isaiah 53:1-2*

*We're entering now into Holy Week as we celebrate this Palm Sunday. And throughout this week, we're going to look at Isaiah 53 and the passage on the suffering servant.*

*Some 6,700 years before Jesus lived, the prophet Isaiah says this about him, that he seemed like nobody. He came out of nowhere, with no majestic bearing. And this was the truth of Jesus. Even though he did attract crowds, many people, especially the people from Nazareth, thought he was a nobody: he's the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and Mary. They thought he was no one special.*

*In part, Jesus is rejected in his life on earth because he comes from, it seems, nothing. And so, we want to thank Jesus today that he was willing to be seen as nothing in this world, so that we could be healed, and we could have a relationship with his Heavenly Father.*

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for your Son who came in such humility, came like a sapling who had nothing majestic in his history or in his life seemingly to draw us to him. Thank you, Lord, that Jesus is so humble that he laid down his life for us, and became nothing for us. We praise you, Lord, for Jesus and we pray this in his name. Amen.*

*He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, knowing pain, like one from whom you turn your face, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.*

*Isaiah 53:3*

We're in Monday of Holy Week, and we are looking at the book of the prophet Isaiah, chapter 53, which is about the suffering servant. What is described in the above verse is what happens to Jesus in his suffering on the cross. People spurned and avoided him. A man of suffering, he knows pain. He knows our pain, and people turned away from him.

They spurned him as he went to the cross, and we are reminded that Jesus did that for us. He did it so that we could come back in a relationship with our Heavenly Father. Let's praise Jesus today for that.

*Jesus, we praise you today that you were spurned, that you were avoided as a man of suffering. We thank you, Jesus, that you know our pain, and we praise you, Jesus, that you allowed people to turn away from you, and hold you in no esteem, to curse you on the cross, and tell you to come down from the cross. Jesus, we thank you, because you stayed on the cross for us. Help us to grow this week in our appreciation for what you've done for us. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*Yet it was our pain that he bore, our suffering he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted.*

*Isaiah 53:4*

We're on Tuesday of Holy Week, continuing to look at Isaiah 53, and the suffering servant. As he hung on the cross, everyone thought that Jesus was being judged by God for something he had done wrong. But Isaiah reminds us in the above verse that it's our pain that Jesus bore. It was our suffering he endured; that what should have been our pain and our suffering, Jesus took on the cross.

Again, possibly the greater pain for Jesus was that he was so misunderstood. The people thought of him as stricken. They thought it was something he had done, but he was really suffering for our sin and our iniquity. Let's praise Jesus for that.

*Heavenly Father, we praise you. We praise your Son, Jesus, that he bore our sin, that he suffered for us, and that he was misunderstood for us. Jesus, when we're misunderstood, please help us to connect with you, connect that pain to you, and to know that you suffered for us, that we don't have to live in that pain of being misunderstood, that you understand our pain and our struggles. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed.*

*Isaiah 53:5*

Today is often called Spy Wednesday because it's the day when Judas went off and betrayed Jesus. We have been looking at Isaiah 53 this week and verse 5 is probably the crucial verse — especially as we've been talking about healing — for us to think about.

As it says in the above verse, “by his wounds we were healed.” This is why, as we were talking about healing through our Lenten series, it's so important for us to lean into healing because Jesus was pierced, he was wounded, that we might be healed. So, how do we thank Jesus for that incredible gift at the cross? We accept the healing he wants to bring into our hearts, we accept the healing he wants to bring into our lives. Let's pray that we would do that right now.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that you sent your Son to be crushed for our offenses, our iniquity, and that by his wounds, we are healed. Lord, as we look at Jesus on the cross, we see the wounds in his hands and his feet. We see the sword in his side, the crown of thorns on his head. Those were all wounds he took that we might be healed. Help us to appreciate that gift and to receive that gift of Jesus, who is our wounded healer. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*We had all gone astray like sheep, all following our own way; But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.*

*Isaiah 53:6*

Today is Holy Thursday and, through this week, we've been looking at Isaiah 53. As we know, if sheep are not led, they go astray. And when they go astray, they run off cliffs. They run off into places that lead to their destruction.

We've all gone astray but, to bring us back home, Jesus received "the guilt of us all." He bore the cross so that we would come back home to our Heavenly Father. Let's thank Jesus for what he has done on the cross.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for Jesus and his work on the cross, and that he is our good shepherd who calls us by name. And rather than letting us run off cliffs or run off in the wrong direction, Jesus calls us to run in your direction and to know your goodness. Thank you, Lord, that he bore our offenses, bore our guilt, so we can have a relationship with you. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*Though harshly treated, he submitted and did not open his mouth; like a lamb led to slaughter or a sheep silent before shearers, he did not open his mouth. Seized and condemned, he was taken away. Who would have thought anymore of his destiny? For he was cut off from the land of the living, struck for the sins of his people.*

*Isaiah 53:7-8*

Today is Good Friday. And on this Good Friday, we remember again Jesus' work for us on the cross. To help us through this week in understanding the depth of the pain and the suffering and the sacrifice of Jesus, we've been looking at Isaiah 53. Let the above verses help us to grow in gratitude that Jesus wants to heal us. He did it all for us.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you that Jesus was struck for our sins and that he went obediently to the cross. God, help us, at times in our lives when we are suffering for your name, to be silent like Jesus. And help us to receive this gift that Jesus gave us that we might be healed and brought back in relationship with you. We pray this in your name. Amen.*

*He was given a grave among the wicked, a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong, nor was deceit found in his mouth. Because of his anguish he shall see the light; because of his knowledge he shall be content; my servant, the just one, shall justify the many, their iniquity he shall bear.*

*Isaiah 53:9,11*

Today is Holy Saturday, and we've been looking throughout this Holy Week at Isaiah 53. We'll conclude with the above verses.

And so, Jesus was buried, and thought to be a criminal. But God said that because of him, many will be justified. Many will be justified because of what Jesus did on the cross; and we count ourselves among the many. We thank you, Jesus, that you have justified us by pouring out your blood on the cross and we pray now for the grace to receive that.

*Heavenly Father, we receive the work of your Son, we receive that he justifies us and puts us back in the right relationship with you. We want to be counted among the many. Thank you, Jesus, for bearing our iniquity that we might live forever in eternity with you. We pray this in your name. Amen.*