

Introductory remarks

About 143 years ago in yr 1876, a Deaf Episcopal missionary traveled from OHIO, through Mich, Indiana, Illinois, and eventually here! this building! inviting the Deaf in towns and cities along the way to gather, to experience the holy scriptures in their own language. Eventually, after AUSTIN MANN became a priest, he was able to lift up not only the scriptures, but also the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, marriage ~~~ lift them off the page and convey them face-to-face, eye-to-eye, heart-to-heart ~ pushing books aside to interact with people, the way Jesus did.

Today, I'm inviting you to pray with your eyes open, to worship with all your mind, heart, soul and strength. I'm inviting you to put down your bulletin and fuse your body & soul. [TEACH 5 ASL signs:]

1. [Amen. \(episc!!!\)](#)
2. [And also with you. > same.](#)
3. [Thanks be to God. > Thanks, God. \(have to look at who you're talking to.\)](#)
4. ["we lift them up." For the Prayers of the People, the response is: "we lift them up." ... not signing every word. just a motion of gathering and lifting our prayers.](#)
5. [peace \(And also with you.\)](#)

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embellishing Psalm 19, v14: May the words of my mouth, the signs on my hands, the expressions of my face... the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to YOU, O LORD, who makes us strong and proves us precious. Amen. *please be seated...*

Today Luke tells us: "On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee." ... the region between Samaria and Galilee Jesus was on the border, at a border town.

Now was he in the center of the town, in the marketplace? No. He was just about to enter. He was on the outskirts, the far edge of the town.

...On the way to Jerusalem. He was heading closer and closer to confrontation & conflict, closer and closer to pain and death, but do you think Jesus was wrapped up

in himself, do you think he kept his eyes shut? No, on the border, on the outskirts, on the margins Jesus keeps his eyes, his ears, his heart open.

And those LEPERS, those people who had been pushed out, Jesus sees them. He doesn't run away. He doesn't block them out.

Scholars BRUCE MALINA & RICHARD ROHRBAUGH have written a social science commentary on the gospels, examining stories from the perspective of social relationships, economics, politics, for example. Those scholars say that LEPROSY referred to *various diseases* of the skin. They cite rules from the Old Hebrew scriptures: especially the rule-book LEVITICUS, saying what:

- Lepers should be put out of the camp (or town).
- They should wear torn clothes,
- let their hair hang loose and
- yell out “unclean, unclean” why? to warn anyone coming near.

If their disease healed, they were required to show themselves to a priest Jewish religious leader, go through a series of ritual washings, and then observe a seven day period of probation before they could be certified “clean” and return to the community.

But these poor lepers in the story today have heard the rumors! That man Jesus has the power! They call him “MASTER, Lord,... have mercy on us.” basically: Help! they say... and he responds... He pushes them into the healing process....

Is this a snap healing? NO. They have to start moving before they are healed. Part of the story is about them initiating the process of being accepted back and reintegrated in the community. Jesus encourages them. As they take those next steps, they are healed.

And although Jesus specifically instructed them to go to the priests, 1 overjoyed at his healing turns back – runs back to thank Jesus....

Why only one? Jesus asks. I suspect it's because that one was **doubly excluded**.

... Leper **AND** Samaritan.

Now I have to say, Deaf folks are wary of healing stories. (explain why...)

But they can identify with being excluded.

- Helen Keller: blindness separates you from objects. deafness separates from people.
- A story of being at work when something catches your eye outside your window... (fire alarm! And no one told you. Everyone else is outside & they left you there.)
- dumped at boarding school without being told what was happening, why parents were leaving now...
- family not knowing and not learning how to communicate...
- the word NEVERMIND (how Deaf people get left out of conversations. Not worth explaining. Forget it.)
- One friend said: Cross I bear is NOT Deafness. We've figured out ways to cope. NO. the cross I bear is that hearing people forget again and again.

And even when you're using SIGNS, It's also a question of how to use them...

ASL vs signed English ~

the DOUBLE EXCLUSION of Deaf people

first from hearing communities

then judgment within the Deaf community, Deaf people excluding other Deaf people

.... DOUBLE EXCLUSION

DOUBLE EXCLUSION. I think that's why the Samaritan turned back...

All 10 went off to do what Jesus said, but only ONE got the MOST of the experience. The one who was most excluded was also most grateful, most full of thanksgiving

In the Greek there is a progression of healing words:

- On their way, they were cleansed.
- He noticed he was healed
- Your faith has made you well ~ Saved you.

In the same way these different words add depth to the healing experience, the various signs for “saved” demonstrate different meanings or perspectives on the meaning of salvation.

Like final verse of our epistle reading from 2nd Timothy: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

[Do your best! Show-up in God’s presence unashamed, trusting HE approves you, and that YOU can tell it straight” and directly communicate God’s ↓Word ^{of} truth.]

We St. Thomas Deaf Church have come back today to give thanks to the cathedral. ALL OF US are coming back to give thanks at the altar.

Every Sunday in Eucharist GREAT THANKSGIVING, we come back to Jesus, dragging ourselves [and others, I hope] in from the edges, full of thanksgiving.

we gather reintegrated and come to the table.

We are the few who return to give thanks and in thanking, we are made whole.