

Doctor My Eyes

Word in Song IV: Part 1 “Doctor My Eyes”

Rev. Cameron D St. Michael – July 11, 2021

7th Sunday After Pentecost

Readings: Isaiah 38:1-20

Reflection: Psalm 13

Greeting: O sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless his name. Tell of his salvation from day to day! Praise the Lord! (*Psalm 96*)

Prayer: God our protector, you are with us wherever we go. You know our hearts and our innermost thoughts. Help us to see your presence everywhere we go. Give to us a right heart so that we may love as you love and give as you give. Help us to share your peace with the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection: Psalm 13

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, “I have prevailed”; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (Psalm 13 NRSV)*

We read the words of Psalm 13 and we hear a cry. A cry for salvation. But we also hear of putting our trust in God. That God’s love will let us rejoice because God is always with us. How do you turn to God in your time of need? In what ways do you experience God’s steadfast love? How do you share your hope in the Lord with others?

Prayer: O God, help us to seek you in unexpected places. May you open our eyes, not only to what is happening around us, but also to your love and your mercy. May we be blessed to see you wherever we are. Strengthen us in our faith and put hope in our hearts. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us Lord. Let your spirit guide us in your righteous peace. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Sermon:

Our scripture reading for today comes from the Common English Bible. Our reading for today comes from Isaiah chapter 38 verses 1 through 20.

At about that time Hezekiah became deathly sick. The prophet Isaiah, Amoz's son, came to him and said: "The Lord God says this: Put your affairs in order because you are about to die. You won't survive this." Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord: "Please, Lord, remember how I've walked before you in truth and sincerity. I've done what you consider to be good." Then Hezekiah cried and cried. Then the Lord's word came to Isaiah: "Go and say to Hezekiah: The Lord, the God of your ancestor David, says this: I have heard your prayer and have seen your tears. I will add fifteen years to your life. I will rescue you and this city from the power of the Assyrian king. I will defend this city. This will be your sign from the Lord that he will do what he promised: once the shadow cast by the sun descends on the steps of Ahaz, I will make it back up ten steps." And the sun went back ten of the steps that it had already descended. A composition by Judah's King Hezekiah when he was sick and then recovered from his sickness: I thought, I must depart in the prime of my life; I have been relegated to the gates of the underworld for the rest of my life. I thought, I won't see the Lord. The Lord is in the land of the living. I won't look upon humans again or be with the inhabitants of the world. My lifetime is plucked up and taken from me like a shepherd's tent. My life is shriveled like woven cloth; God cuts me off from the loom. Between daybreak and nightfall you carry out your verdict against me. I cried out until morning: "Like a lion God crushes all my bones. Between daybreak and nightfall you carry out your verdict against me. Like a swallow I chirp; I moan like a dove. My eyes have grown weary looking to heaven. Lord, I'm overwhelmed; support me!" What can I say? God has spoken to me; he himself has acted. I will wander my whole life with a bitter spirit. The Lord Most High is the one who gives life to every heart, who gives life to the spirit! Look, he indeed exchanged my bitterness for wholeness. You yourself have spared my whole being from the pit of destruction, because you have cast all my sins behind your back. The underworld can't thank you, nor can death praise you; those who go down to the pit can't hope for your faithfulness. The living, the living can thank you, as I do today. Parents will tell children about your faithfulness. The Lord has truly saved me, and we will make music at the Lord's house all the days of our lives. (Isaiah 38:1-20 CEB+)

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

For the next few weeks, I'm coming back to a series that I have enjoyed in the past. I decided to visit it once again, and it is called "Word in Song" and features music that I connect to scripture. This is my fourth time coming back to this series, and I think I keep coming back because there's always more music that I connect to scripture and being able to share my connection to that is always fun. The scripture reading for today is from Isaiah and is the song that King Hezekiah wrote after thinking he was going to die. Our music selection is Doctor My Eyes by Jackson Browne. In the reading, Hezekiah had become seriously ill and is informed that he is going to die from his illness. Hezekiah prays and is then saved. The song he writes begins with a lament. Everything that he was worried about all the things he felt as he came closer to the end. One of the lines that I was reminded of and one of the reasons that I ended

up with this reading was the line “My eyes have grown weary looking to heaven. Lord, I’m overwhelmed; support me!” I connected this to the music today. “I have done all that I could, to see the evil and the good without hiding. You must help me if you can.” I was also reminded of the lament that Hezekiah makes and the prayer he offers up to God. “Doctor, my eyes, tell me what you see. I hear their cries, just say if it’s too late for me.” I was reminded of Hezekiah crying out to God, wondering if indeed his time was near.

One of the things we might notice is that Hezekiah takes a turn into joy. Though Hezekiah was worried and thought everything was over, he comes to joy when his prayers are answered. This isn’t reflected in the music, but the joy of Hezekiah does feel like a response to the doubts we hear. It is interesting to see those doubts and fears in Hezekiah’s initial response, feeling that everything was over and done. He doesn’t try to hide how he felt but is open about how the Lord turned his sadness into joy. The joy from knowing he has more time. The joy that comes from trusting in God.

Because that is a major factor in Hezekiah’s story. When things are not going well, Hezekiah puts his trust in God to heal him, to be his physician. His prayer is that God will help him. This is a really difficult thing sometimes. Because we often want to make our prayers really specific. But instead, sometimes we just need to ask for help. Especially we really don’t know if there’s anything that we can do. When everything is in God’s hands, we lift up a prayer. And that’s sort of what the music for today is for me. When I hear it, I don’t hear a song about asking a doctor for medical help. I hear a song about spiritual healing. The cry out to the doctor is all about moral issues and not a physical defect. It is like a prayer for help in making sense of what is happening. A prayer for help in looking at the world and understanding our own lives. It is the idea that with everything that we’ve seen that we need comfort. And that’s what we see with Hezekiah in seeking that comfort from God. He’s been informed that this is the end of the road. That he’s seen it all and this is where his journey finishes.

A big part of today’s reading is Hezekiah celebrating his prayer being answered. He knows God has heard him and has answered him. God has exchanged his bitterness, for wholeness. He feels that the Lord has truly saved him. All because he prayed. Sometimes life gives us situations where we really don’t have any control over what’s going to happen next. And sometimes the best we can do is pray for comfort, pray for guidance, pray for help of some sort. Of any sort. And I think a big part of that is just being able to recognize that our prayer does matter. We have to make sure that we don’t let our prayers become hollow. We have to recognize that we can let our prayers become stale because we treat them like a requirement instead of a love. Like a chore instead of a joy. We might pray with our mouths but not with our hearts. What we hear today is a heartfelt prayer seeking healing. We hear a prayer that fully trusts that God is there, and that God can hear us. We hear of praying when we don’t know what we need but just praying for help. Prayer that knows God is listening. Knowing that even when things are difficult, especially when things are difficult, that we recognize that Christ is there with us to help us. We just have to set our faith and our hope in the Lord.

We can be shaken by the world. We can be shaken by what we see. What we experience. What we feel. And we need to be able to rely upon the fact that God is there to help us get through. It's important that we learn to turn to God with a plea and not a demand. We don't always know what we need. We don't always know how to pray. When we see Hezekiah pray, he asks that God remember him in his time of need. Sometimes things happen that we don't understand. That go beyond our ability to understand. It's then that we need to be able to ask for healing. Sometimes we deal with an awful lot. Sometimes we see suffering that we never thought we would see. We see hurt that we never imagined. We experience loss that we cannot put into words. "Doctor, my eyes have seen the years, and the slow parade of fears without crying. Now I want to understand." And if not understand, cope. I've learned that sometimes it is best to turn to Christ and ask for healing. But not to demand a specific kind of healing, but to be able to trust that we will get the healing that we need. Healing happens in different ways for different people in different situations. The healing we need may not be the healing we have in mind. But we put our trust in God, that God will lead us to where we need to be. God is there to strengthen us. God is there to build us up and lift us up. God is there to help us to heal us like a doctor.

Hezekiah would surely see God as his doctor, providing healing. The one giving him saving grace. Hezekiah lifted up prayer and that prayer was heard, and that prayer was answered. And you know, that's an awful lot. And I think we need to be able to recognize that prayer matters, and healing happens in different ways. God will always give us the healing we need. It may not be the healing we expect. To prepare ourselves, it's best that we pray for God's guidance and help, knowing that God already knows our hearts and knows what needs to be. Because God will always be there for us. Christ is always there to help. And that's something that we can depend on. No matter what ails us, no matter what troubles us, God is there. And through prayer, we may always rest in the comfort and the presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer of Confession and Pardon: God of grace and glory, we thank you that you judge us not by the perfection of our actions, but by our readiness to live boldly by faith. Help us, as individuals and as a congregation, to trust you and follow where you lead, that in Christ your name may be glorified in all the earth. May we find forgiveness in your love. Amen.

Offering: If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

Lord's Prayer

Dismissal with Blessing: May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Current Series – Take Care

Our series is *Take Care* and each week we will look at different aspects of self-care and the ways God helps us to take care of ourselves.

July 11th – *Doctor My Eyes* – Isaiah 38:1-20

July 18th – *On the Turning Away* – Ezekiel 18:21-32

July 25th – *Hold My Hand* – Matthew 14:22-36

August 1st – *Follow Me* – Luke 5:1-11,27-32

August 8th – *Turn, Turn, Turn* – Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

Prayer List

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup	Ambulance Crew	Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey
Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells
Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart	Michael & Makenzie Reynolds	Ronnie Winstead
Annie McMorris	Dwight Parsons	Trinity Powers	Lauren Stewart
Charlie Henderson	Rosalee Chancellor	Phyllis Gable	Sage Martin
Dalton McFarland	Terri Kemper	Darrell Quick	Shelley Murphy
Jeff Davidson	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family
Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite
Donna Graham	Kevin Drum	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Kim Hennes
Ruth Ann Finley	Randy Paul	Family of Patricia Taggart	

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