

## **Word in Song: Kyrie**

Rev. Cameron D St. Michael – April 26 2026

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

**Readings:** Exodus 33:12-23; James 2:8-13; Mark 10:46-52 NRSVUE

**Reflection:** Psalm 123

**Call to Worship:** Lord, listen and have mercy on me! Lord, be my helper! You changed my mourning into dancing. You took off my funeral clothes and dressed me up in joy. All so that my whole being might sing praises to you and never stop. Lord, my God, I will give thanks to you forever. (Psalm 30)

**Prayer:** Everlasting God, through Jesus Christ you overcame death and opened to us the door of eternal life. You have felt our pain and our sorrow and seen fit to give us hope. Renew and refresh us in your Holy Spirit as we seek the mercy that you have shown us in Christ. Let us celebrate the joy that we find in your steadfast love and faithfulness. Let the light of our Lord's resurrection lift our hearts on this day. Guide us and lead us in worship together so that we may praise your name. Lift up our hearts that we may sing of your miraculous salvation. May your love bless us this day so that we may love one another more deeply. Help us to celebrate the empty tomb as a sign of your great love for us. May we be freed from slavery to sin and death and arise into a life of righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 123

*<sup>1</sup> To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! <sup>2</sup> As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until he has mercy upon us. <sup>3</sup> Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. <sup>4</sup> Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.*  
(Psalm 123 NRSVUE\*)

We read the words of Psalm 123 and hear of seeking God's mercy. That we are called to seek the Lord wherever we are. That when we are weary of the world, we turn to be refreshed and renewed by God's Holy Spirit. That his mercy is enough to sustain us. Who can you show mercy to this week? Who can you be lifting up in your joyful prayers in the week ahead? What can you do to help out a neighbor in need? How can we prepare our hearts and our lives to be ready for all things with Christ?

**Prayer:** O God, our shepherd, our gate, our lamb: In the resurrection of your Son you have brought us into your pasture. Guide us to your clear streams, and tame the wolf at our gate. We thank you for all you have already done and the great love that has been shown to us. We lift up our joys and our concerns, bringing all things before you. We share with you the worries that we have spoken aloud. We share the celebrations that we have lifted up together. Help us to also share the silent pleadings from within. May we experience your grace in our laughter and our tears as you guide us through the unknown. May you strengthen us in sorrow and in

rejoicing, knowing you are with us. Help us to remember the promise we share as we seek your great mercy on this day. And may you guide us in love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Alleluia.

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 readings for today come from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition Bible. Our first reading is from Exodus chapter 33, verses 12 through 23.

*<sup>12</sup> Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, 'Bring up this people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.' <sup>13</sup> Now if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider, too, that this nation is your people." <sup>14</sup> He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." <sup>15</sup> And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not bring us up from here. <sup>16</sup> For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth." <sup>17</sup> The Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have asked, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." <sup>18</sup> Moses said, "Please show me your glory." <sup>19</sup> And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord,' and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. <sup>20</sup> But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one shall see me and live." <sup>21</sup> And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, <sup>22</sup> and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; <sup>23</sup> then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:12-23 NRSVUE\*)*

Our second reading is from James chapter 2, verses 8 through 13.

*<sup>8</sup> If you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. <sup>9</sup> But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. <sup>11</sup> For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. <sup>12</sup> So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. <sup>13</sup> For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:8-13 NRSVUE\*)*

Our final reading is from Mark chapter 10, verses 46 through 52.

*<sup>46</sup> They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. <sup>47</sup> When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have*

mercy on me!”<sup>48</sup> Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”<sup>49</sup> Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.”<sup>50</sup> So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.<sup>51</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.”<sup>52</sup> Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. (Mark 10:46-52 NRSVUE\*)

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

The special music for today is “Kyrie” by Mr.Mister, performed by Pastor Cam. These are the lyrics as sung.

*Kyrie eleison, Kyrie eleison, Kyrie*

*The wind blows hard against this mountain side, Across the sea into my soul. It reaches into where I cannot hide, Setting my feet upon the road. My heart is old, it holds my memories. My body burns a gemlike flame. Somewhere between the soul and soft machine Is where I find myself again.*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel. Kyrie eleison, through the darkness of the night. Kyrie eleison, where I'm going, will you follow? Kyrie eleison, on a highway in the light.*

*When I was young I thought of growing old, Of what my life would mean to me. Would I have followed down my chosen road Or only wished what I could be.*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel. Kyrie eleison, through the darkness of the night. Kyrie eleison, where I'm going, will you follow? Kyrie eleison, on a highway in the light. Whoaaa, Whoaaa. Whoaaa, Whoaaa.*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel. Kyrie eleison, through the darkness of the night. Kyrie eleison, where I'm going, will you follow? Kyrie eleison, on a highway in the light*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel. Kyrie eleison, through the darkness of the night. Kyrie eleison, where I'm going, will you follow? Kyrie eleison, on a highway in the light*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel. Kyrie eleison, through the darkness of the night. Kyrie eleison, where I'm going, will you follow? Kyrie eleison, on a highway in the light*

*Kyrie eleison, down the road that I must travel.*

I once again return to the Word in Song series. This week we get a song that I grew up with. Originally, I did not know the actual words of the song. Part of that was that I was not just a kid and for all I knew he was singing “carrying a laser.” I just thought it sounded cool. I had no idea what Kyrie meant. It had a really cool synthesizer, so I was on board. But the song took on new meaning when I was old enough to understand what they were singing about. And it transformed the song for me in a way that rarely happens. It was changed from a song I really liked to a song that I could deeply relate to.

It was easy to relate this particular song to scripture readings because the phrase “Kyrie eleison” itself is a prayer. It is Greek and it means “Lord have mercy.” It is a very old prayer in the church. It made this an interesting song to cover because it is not often that you have ancient Greek finding its way into pop music. Especially when it turns that song into a prayer. It can help if we translate the Greek so that we can hear what the prayer is in the refrain of the song. Because if we translate “Kyrie eleison” into “Lord have mercy,” we get a clearer picture. “Lord have mercy down the road that I must travel. Lord have mercy through the darkness of the night. Lord have mercy where I’m going, will you follow? Lord have mercy on a highway in the night.”

That question, “Lord have mercy where I’m going, will you follow?” reminded me of our reading from Exodus. Because Moses says, “if I have found favor in your sight, please show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight.” Moses is worried that he is going to take this road that he must travel without God’s mercy with him. He wants to know how it will be that the people will know that he has found favor in God’s sight. God tells him that he will let his goodness pass before him. That he will proclaim his name. God says that he’ll show grace to who he’ll show grace, and he’ll show mercy to whom he will show mercy. This is in response to Moses plea that he wants to know that God will be walking with him. This song reflects exactly that feeling for me. Because it is a prayer asking, if I have to go this way, will God travel this road with me? Moses gets that kind of assurance because God says he will do this thing for Moses. He will get the assurance he needs.

It’s also something that we hear in James. But in James, we hear about the role that mercy has in our lives. That when we make this prayer for mercy, when we sing out saying, “Lord have mercy” we have to think about our own lives. Which we also see in our music for today. Have I made the right choices in my life? James tells us that we will know truly if we follow God when we can love our neighbor as ourselves. That if we can do it without showing partiality, that we will know the Lord is with us. Because we have to show mercy if we expect to be shown mercy. Because mercy triumphs over judgment. Which is why we ask, Lord have mercy. Have mercy on me. But if I want that mercy, I have to be willing to show mercy to others. Because I can only show my neighbor love if I can show them mercy as well.

Finally, we have our reading from Mark. This is one of the occasions where we get a variation of this same calling out. In some places in scripture, it is just, Lord have mercy. In our reading from Mark it is, “Son of David, have mercy on me.” Because Jesus, Son of David, is Lord. And this cry for mercy is a plea like we hear in today’s song. Because a blind beggar is sitting by the roadside. When he hears that Jesus is walking by he cries out, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me.” One of the reasons I picked this particular reading is because not only does he shout it out, but the people around him tell him to be quiet, so he repeats it. And he cries out even louder. “Have mercy on me.” Jesus calls him over, and he does have mercy. All of these filled me with a feeling of hope. That fullness of knowing God is with me.

That’s one of the amazing things about this song. It very quickly just becomes a prayer for every type of situation we may see in our lives. It is for every situation we may be in. That in

the search for self, we seek God's mercy. That even in the darkness of night, we seek God's mercy. That we want to know God will be with us. We want to know that even on that highway in the night, that the Lord will have mercy. And as simple as this is, I still hear this as a deeply moving prayer. I think there's something very special about that. The simplicity of the prayer helps to make it so powerful. It highlights that it does not require fancy words to seek the Lord. Kyrie eleison. Whatever phase of life we are in, Kyrie eleison. When I was a child and I was worried I might be doing things the wrong way, Kyrie eleison. When I was a young man, not sure if I was heading in the right direction, Kyrie eleison. Now as a father in middle age I hope I'm doing right by my children, Kyrie eleison. I have a feeling when I'm old and looking back on my life, my prayer will still be Kyrie eleison.

I think there's something special about the way that this simple prayer is transformed into a song that reached the top of the charts and made it all over the radio. Because something else that it tells me is that this feeling of needing guidance is a universal feeling, something we all seek. That we all seek mercy and love. And so, as we hear the word in song, even in such a forward manner, I hope that it gives us another way to think about God and the way that we can keep God's mercy close to our hearts. And that however we sing out or speak our prayers, that they are meaningful and God hears them. So, I pray that we are all able to experience that depth of love and grace. And that we too can remember and we can pray Kyrie eleison down the road that I must travel. 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 Next Series – Easter Spirit**

Our series is all about how we let the resurrection transform our lives. We will have a focus this year on the Spirit. Each week will look at another aspect of the Spirit and how it transforms how we live. This series will take us through Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. How can we let the resurrection of Jesus continue to transform our lives all the year round? We celebrate the resurrection of Christ as we rejoice in the Spirit.

5/3: Spirit and Glory            5/10: Spirit of Truth            5/17: Spirit Approaches

5/24: Spirit is Here    5/31: Spirit of Goodness

### **Neoga Grace UMC**

752 Walnut  
PO Box 610  
Neoga, IL 62447  
(217)895-2809  
Worship 10:30am

### **Toledo UMC**

Madison & Ohio St  
PO Box 267  
Toledo, IL 62468  
Worship 8:15am

### **Etna UMC**

2799 Etna Rd  
Mattoon, IL 61938  
Worship 9:30a

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