

Order of Worship for June 30, 2024

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *"Today Your Mercy Calls Us"* - Hymn #915

Confession and Absolution p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: I will extol you, O LORD, for You have drawn me up

C: and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

P: O LORD my God, I cried to You for help,

C: and You have healed me.

P: O LORD, You have brought up my soul from Sheol;

C: You restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

P: Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints,

C: and give thanks to His holy name.

P: For His anger is but for a moment,

C: and His favor is for a lifetime.

P: Weeping may tarry for the night,

C: but joy comes with the morning.

P: As for me, I said in my prosperity,

C: "I shall never be moved."

P: By Your favor, O LORD,

C: You made my mountain stand strong;

P: You hid Your face;

C: I was dismayed.

P: To You, O LORD, I cry,

C: and to the Lord I plead for mercy:

P: "What profit is there in my death,

C: if I go down to the pit?

P: Will the dust praise You?

C: Will it tell of Your faithfulness?

P: Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me!

C: O LORD, be my helper!"

P: You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;

C: You have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,

P: that my glory may sing Your praise and not be silent.

C: O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever!

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Kyrie: (*Lord Have Mercy*) p. 204

Gloria in Excelsis: (*Glory to God in the Highest*) pg. 204

Salutation:

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray...; Almighty God, You cleanse our hearts and put a new Spirit within us. Grant that we may follow Christ through the waters of Baptism that we may be washed clean from all our sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-14

R: Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master and in high favor, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. Now the Syrians on one of their raids had carried off a little girl from the land of Israel, and she worked in the service of Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his lord, "Thus and so spoke the girl from the land of Israel." And the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten changes of clothing. And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you Naaman my servant, that you may cure him of his leprosy." And when the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Only consider, and see how he is seeking a quarrel with me."

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come now to me, that he may know that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house. And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean." But Naaman was angry and went away, saying, "Behold, I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call upon the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. But his servants came near and said to him, "My father, it is a great word the prophet has spoken to you; will you not do it? Has he actually said to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and dipped

himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

R: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: pg. 205

Holy Gospel: Luke 4: 24- 30

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the fourth chapter:

C: Glory to You, O Lord

P: And [Jesus] said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and drove Him out of the town and brought Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw Him down the cliff. But passing through their midst, He went away.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: *"Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old"* - **Hymn #846**

Sermon: *"Washed Clean – Naaman"* **2 Kings 5:1-14**

When we look at how the world works, it seems pretty simple. The world lives by the rule of the survival of the fittest. The world works because might makes right. The world follows the Golden Rule – the one with the most gold makes the rules. It can seem as though the rich and powerful can throw their money and might around and get what they want in ways that common people can't. It happens today, and it happened in the past. Fortunately for us, that's not how God works.

That's how Naaman thought the world worked. A general of one of the most powerful empires of the day, he had been defeated not by an opposing general, but by a debilitating disease. Leprosy. A skin disease which, if left unchecked, would ultimately kill him, and would make him an outcast if it became public knowledge. And after trying everything he could to get cured himself, Naaman is finally desperate enough to listen to a slave girl and go to her nation, and a prophet of her God, and find a cure there.

Naaman couldn't leave Syria without the king's permission, and he also needed an official letter of introduction to Joram, king of Israel. After all, Syria and Israel were enemies, (and the arrival of the commander of the Syrian army could be greatly misunderstood. Both Naaman and his king assumed that the prophet would do whatever his king commanded him to do and that both the king and the prophet would expect to receive expensive gifts in return. That's how they thought the world worked. That's how their world works. But it's not how God works.

Naaman comes laden with unheard of riches, (the equivalent of \$4.5 million of gold, and \$260,000 of silver) to buy healing, first going to the king, then to the prophet Elisha. But Naaman is unable to buy the favor or healing from God. The king cannot do anything to help Naaman, and even sees this as merely a pretense to justify war. So he passes the buck to the prophet Elisha.

Elisha knew that Naaman had to be humbled before he could be healed. Accustomed to the protocol of the palace, this esteemed leader expected to be recognized publicly and his lavish gifts accepted with exaggerated appreciation, because that's the way kings did things. But Elisha didn't even come out of his house to welcome Naaman and his entourage. Instead, he merely sends a messenger, who tells him that he need do nothing more to be healed than to wash seven times in the River Jordan.

But that doesn't make sense to Naaman. Tellingly, a man who has proven himself in the crucible of war, who had done whatever was necessary to climb his country's political hierarchy, is outraged at the notion that something so mundane, so easy could bring him what he desperately yearns for. Naaman assumes that healing will require him to prove his strength and overcome a difficult challenge. Even more, he's outraged that it involves bathing in the Jordan River, not one of the more beautiful rivers of his homeland. He thinks he's been disrespected, and gets angry. The basic cause of his anger was pride. He had already decided in his own mind just how the prophet would heal him, but God didn't work that way.

It turns out that love has a price, just not what Naaman thought. The price is not measured in gold or silver or ten changes of clothing. The price is measured in the humility of having to go bathe not in the great rivers of Syria or buying a great spa treatment, but bathing in the dirty, unimportant Jordan. The price is measured in something coming not because of an order backed by the threat of an invading army, but a gift freely given. To quote D. L. Moody, "He lost his

temper; then he lost his pride; then he lost his leprosy; that is generally the order in which proud rebellious sinners are converted.”

Even after his servants talk him into taking Elisha’s cure, the disease-free Naaman insists on expressing his gratitude according to the logic of power: by lavishing some of his wealth on Elisha, who steadfastly refuses to accept such compensation but does let Naaman take some dirt to build an altar to the true God. In his second request, Naaman showed unusual insight, for he realized that the king would expect him to continue his official acts as the commander of the army. This included accompanying the king into the temple of Rimmon, the Syrian equivalent of Baal. Naaman was willing to perform this ritual outwardly, but he wanted Elisha to know that his heart would not be in it.

Naaman is only mentioned once in the New Testament. When Jesus preaches at his hometown synagogue in Nazareth, he reminds them that God is not just for them, but God is a God of all people. “And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:27 NKJV). Naaman was a Gentile and the commander of the army of an enemy nation, so it’s no wonder the congregation in Nazareth became angry with Jesus, interrupted His sermon, and carried Him out of the synagogue to throw him off of a cliff. After all, why would the God of Israel heal a man who was a Gentile and outside the covenant? He was an enemy who kidnapped little Jewish girls, and a leper who should have been isolated and left to die. But that’s not how God works.

When we look at the Hebrew of this story, though the words used unveils a profound meaning. God used a na‘arah q‘tannah (“young girl/lady”) to lead this powerful Gentile man to have skin like a na‘ar qaton (“young boy/man”). The greatest becomes like the least in these cleansing waters. Baptism, like the Jordan, is the great equalizer. No matter who we are as we enter those waters—powerful or vulnerable; rich or poor; famous or unknown—we all emerge the same: as children of God. The simple water and strong word wash away the disease of sin. We are clean, holy, and all part of the same family of our Father.

But the God who can scatter armies and bring down royalty also shows his power by meeting the impossible needs of ordinary existence. When he bathed in the Jordan, Naaman joined a socially diverse company of anonymous people helped by Elisha, like those whose stories make up 2 Kings 4: a widow saved from hunger and debt by something as basic as jars of oil; a much wealthier woman, whose son is raised from the dead; famine-stricken prophets kept from starving to death. He joined with those who would be later washed clean in the waters of the Jordan, including Jesus himself when he’s baptized by John. God’s power is revealed most clearly not in the conquests of generals and the majesty of kings, but in liberating the poor, feeding the hungry, and healing the sick.

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “God through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). When Jesus came into the world, He came to end the alienation between God and people. He did that throughout his ministry, including when he was baptized in the Jordan, but ultimately it happened through his dying on the cross for us.

With that, God reached down to us. The cross bridges the gap between God and each of us created by sin. That's why so many church steeples are topped with a cross. Not just so that the cross can be seen, but so that we remember how the God on high came down to us and crossed that gap.

The cross marks the end of separation. The end of separation because of sin, the end of separation between us. Any categories that we can think of to divide ourselves into: conservative or liberal, red state or blue state, city people or country people, rich or poor, young or old: whatever those categories are, they no longer divide us. Instead we are united into one body, the Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ extends throughout the world. The body of Christ extends out to share the picture of a time when all peoples will gather together to feast and celebrate with God. Celebrating a unity based in the God whose grace gathers together all of us. God's love can never be bought, never be earned. And yet, in spite of the cost, or even because of the cost, it is freely given. Freely given by a God who loves us and will never stop loving us.

Creed: The Sacrament of Holy Baptism, Third pg. 325

The Prayer for Mission to All People:

P: Lord, we pray that You will open our eyes to see how we can witness to so many people You have gathered here in our community from all over the world. Give us the attitude of Abraham who welcomed strangers into his tent with the words:

C: "Let a little water be brought forth, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed."

P: We thank You for Your mercy which extends to all people, for You reach out to all the world with Your Kingdom as Jesus told us:

C: "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God."

P: Help us to see that the good news of Jesus is for all people and all cultures as Peter discovered when You sent him to Cornelius:

C: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what is right."

P: Help us to be a part of how You break down the barriers that divide us through the unifying message of Jesus:

C: "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."

P: Give us the courage of the young Hebrew slave girl who pointed her sick master Naaman, general of the Syrian army, to Your prophet with the words:

C: "If only my master would see the prophet Elisha who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

P: Grant us the patience and the understanding to try to understand the many people in our community who are from different countries and cultures, so that we have the attitude of St. Paul who said:

C: "I have become all things to all peoples so that by all possible means I might save some."

I do this all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings.”

(The pastor will continue with other petitions)

P: Bless us with thankfulness for the wonderful opportunities You give us to share our faith with people from all over the world so that we can join the hymn of praise:

**C: “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”
Amen.**

Sharing Our Ministry:

Offering and Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament p. 208

Preface: p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, As Naaman washed in the Jordan, O God, and received from You his heart's desire, so You have washed us in Baptism's waters--so have You provided us with every good thing. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:

Sanctus: (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord, and Pax Domini: (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

Agnus Dei: (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution of Holy Communion:

“God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say it” - Hymn #594, “And God Said.’ Yes’”

Nunc Dimittis: (*Now let us depart*) p. 211

Prayer after Communion:

P: Christ Jesus, we thank You for this wonderful gift of forgiveness. Be with us as we go from this place, washed clean from sin, to share Your love with all people.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction: p. 212

Closing Hymn: “*Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer*” - **Hymn # 918**

Postlude