**Springfield Presbyterian Church**

**June 27th, 2021**

1. Bold Statements

Let me start this sermonette by saying something controversial: I despise the healing texts in the Bible.

Well. Let me restate that: I avoid them the best I can. I like to dwell in the places I consider safe, like the Psalms – where there is this ebb and flow to life in the beauty and the challenges. I find comfort in the majestic stories of Abraham and Moses and the ways in which God did these powerful and mighty and visual acts. I love watching Jesus and his disciples, and the personalities within, and how it points to the realness of what it looks like to be the body of Christ.

The reason I don’t like the healing texts have more to do with my questions, fears, and frustrations, then it really has to do with God’s power to heal. I think I, as well as greater Western culture, have this skewed view of healing and what that must mean and if we aren’t healed, what that also implies.

And I will admit that it comes from my own experience, particularly as a trauma chaplain at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. I’ve watched young people die, I’ve seen people suffer, and I’ve seen people lose the faith that grounded them from these challenging situations.

And I will also admit that this frustration of the healing texts comes from my own life experience in getting diagnosed with a progressive genetic disease. I remember the sheer surrealness of the moment, sitting in the doctor’s office at Johns Hopkins with my cousin by my side. I felt like the words were fuzzy, but he said in explaining this condition that “it is part of me, but not all of me, and I don’t need to be defined by this disease.” I looked to my cousin, then back at the doctor, sincerely feeling like I didn’t sign up for this.

When I read these texts, I push back. Where’s Jesus’s cloak to touch and get healed? Where is God to follow me into the hard spaces where healing needs to happen? And God, you say, “Don’t fear, just believe” but when I do, the storyline isn’t the same as it is in our Scripture. God, dear God, what am I suppose to do with these words?

1. Oh, humanity.

First, I recognize that I’m human and so are you. These are

words that should bless us as well as challenge us. It isn’t suppose to be easy – it is an opportunity to rediscover healing and find God doing that healing work in the here and now.

 I wish healing looked like these miraculous acts, but I often have to delve deeper and reflect a little more. The truth is, as hard as the moments are that I’ve mentioned earlier, there is often healing somewhere in the midst of all of it.

 Sometimes healing looks like our faith being challenged and then strengthening that faith by asking the hard questions and inviting God along. Sometimes healing looks like vaccines, like new medicines and treatments, seeing that God is working in the science of it all. Sometimes healing looks like getting a diagnosis, grieving, and then saying, “Okay God, what’s next? Lead me where to go” and finding hope on the journey.

 And sometimes we are blessed to see those miraculous moments that we hear in the text. The child who survived when every treatment when it seemed ineffective, the new parents who never thought a baby was possible for them, or the adult who found their healing in ways unexpected. Indeed, the Word that we hear is true – miracles do happen, maybe not in the way we would have thought or maybe in ways that completely throw us for a loop. God is alive and awake in the world if we are here to dive deeper.

1. The Power of the Healer

We are blessed to be called beloved by the great healer, Jesus

Christ, whose acts of healing make us and take us on a ride where we ask hard questions of our faith. My questions to you, particularly this week, is prefaced by this – I don’t think I’m alone in how I feel and the continuing expansion of how I understand healing.

 So the questions at hand – In your life, where have you seen healing? Where have you not seen healing, and how do you wrestle with that in your faith? Can you share with a friend, with someone you trust, and dive a bit deeper to see and explore and redefine healing into something that strengthens your faith?

 May you be blessed as you ask the difficult questions and may your faith grow through them. Amen.