

Accused of Healing
A Healing Service Meditation offered by Rev. W. Dale Osborne
January 29, 2012, Binkley Baptist Church
Texts Used: Psalm 6: 1-7; Mark 3: 1-10

Is anyone among you sad? Is anyone among you ailing of limb or joint? Are any among you downhearted from inward turmoil and heavy grief? Is there one in this sanctuary whose life has not been touched by physical pain, mental anguish or emotional distress? If you are here, then may God bless you and keep you. May God strengthen you and heal you and make you whole in the way that is best for your earthly state.

How many among us have shared the need for healing? I daresay that the need for healing is a bond that brings us together like the paste or gluestick on a kindergarten project. The need to be healed and the desire to provide care for those who are sick and hurting is as prevalent in our world of modern medicine as it was in the days when Jesus entered the synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus' ministry on earth was layered with stories of healing and hope and touch. Humanity's struggle for healing and wholeness, humanity's quest for balance and integrity of mind, body and spirit is as ancient as Eden.

In today's passage from the book of psalms, we are struck by the dire state the poet finds himself or herself in. The psalmist is obviously overwrought from struggling with a long period of devastation and physical pain. "Be gracious to me O God for I am languishing; Heal me Lord for my bones are shaking with terror." Most of us can relate to the status of the poet in this psalm. We might not proclaim to God that we are "languishing" but we might say from time to time that our soul is weary and depleted. After experiencing a long bout of some illness or after caring for someone who is struggling to breathe in their hospital bed, any of us might feel the pain of this psalmist ourselves. The poet also describes both a physical and an emotional or spiritual pain that is causing him to suffer greatly. Not only are his bones shaking with terror, but his soul as well is struck with terror. Physical pain, especially the long term kind associated with someone's ailing back or feet, is often coupled with depression and feelings of hopelessness. My bones and my soul have shaken with terror from time to time, how about yours?

The psalmist goes on to express his reaction to his overwhelming state of affairs. We find that he is human just like us when he says to God, "I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eyes waste away with grief." Let me tell you brothers and sisters, I have seen those tears. I have seen the grief associated with great anguish and perceived hopelessness that results in more tears and wailing than an ocean can hold. Some of you

have seen or experience these tears yourself. You have either seen the tears in someone you love or cried them due to the sorrow you've experienced. These pillow soaking tears are shared equally by the patient and the caregiver in my recollections. The tears of the psalmist cry out for healing. The person within the psalm does not want to accuse God of forgetting him. He wants to rejoice that God is with him.

Our story from Mark's gospel offers up Jesus as a compassionate and honest healer. In the synagogue, on the Sabbath day, Jesus has the audacity to heal someone who is struggling with a withered hand. Two groups of people are in the synagogue carefully watching Jesus with a desire to accuse him of breaking a Sabbath law. Regardless of their conspiring ways, Jesus invites the man with the injured hand to come forward and receive a blessing of healing. When Jesus departs from the synagogue he heads for the Sea of Galilee with a great multitude following him. Everyone wants to touch him. Many have felt healing and many more want that same healing for themselves. Jesus must have felt overwhelmed and tired from his care-giving and he needed a place to avoid the crush of the gathering crowd. A boat on the water provided a place of rest for this holy man accused of healing. Jesus' desire to heal on any day and his need to retire from the outpouring of care and concern he had exhibited in Capernaum is not unlike those who offer healing and care-giving today. A bit of respite care for the caregiver is good medicine for both the caregiver and the friend or family member who lies sick in bed from mental or physical illness. That is why I love to tell the stories of Binkley members and friends who are willing to offer care and respite care when a person is ill. All of us can rightly seek to be accused of healing. All of us have the right to step forward and seek help for the bone shaking terrors that afflict us. All of us have the right to offer a prayer for someone in need of healing and compassion. None of us should have to be alone in our pain. May God have mercy and compassion on all of us who seek healing wherever we sit or stand today. May God draw us closer together to receive and dry the tears of our loved ones. Thanks be to God.