

Let us pray,

Lord, remind us that you desire healing. Be with us as we look to you for healing, and awaken in us your mercy and your care.

Amen.

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“Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those that are sick. Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”

Jesus desires healing.

Jesus wants this world to be healed.

He wants us to be freed from the depths of sin and disease and suffering.

Jesus wants what is best for us.

But unfortunately, we still live in a world that is consumed and covered in sin.

It almost feels like sinning is easier than following God.

And in many cases it is.

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Those who have moved toward healing know the process of health is one that requires a lot of strength and resiliency and perseverance.

This past week, my wife was officially diagnosed with an autoimmune disease and my Father-in-Law was diagnosed with multiple types of cancer.

My Mother-in-Law has suspected breast cancer.

And to top it all off, my parent's dog died.

In my own life recently, there is a lot of desire for healing.

Just like so many people, we are experiencing the depths of sin and its consequences.

My family is looking for healing, looking for answers, and asking why?

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So many questions were raised.

Why is this happening to me?

What did I do to deserve this?

What am I going to do with my life now?

How can someone who does horrible things, go on in good health, and I have to deal with cancer.

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For those of you who are suffering with cancer, or had cancer or know someone who has cancer, I am sure you can relate to these laments.

It seems like our first reaction is to find out what we did to deserve this fate.

But it has nothing to do with deserving and not deserving.

We live in a world that is imperfect, and sometimes bad things just happen.

But I know that that answer of “bad things just happen” is even harder to accept.

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We want to be able to say yes I deserve this fate, or no I don't deserve this fate.

But as Jesus said in our Gospel today, he does not desire sacrifice, but mercy.

It is true that the Christian life requires some sacrifice, but that is different than God desiring sacrifice.

God desires all of us to be healthy and to love one another and to care and support one another.

But we have free will and when God desires something from us, that doesn't always mean that we will follow.

And when we don't follow, we cause ripple effects that don't just effect the defiance in that moment, but ripple outward and cause unforeseen consequences that maybe we wont ever know about.

This isn't meant to judge or make us feel like we are evil.

It is just the reality that sin has significant consequences.

Not just for ourselves but for those around us, and those that we will never meet.

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Sometimes we forget that we are not in a bubble.

That our actions don't just affect us, but affect creation.

So how we live our lives, how we navigate the good and the bad times, matters.

And what Jesus is reminding us, is that when we find ourselves and our loved ones and humanity and all of creation in times of needing healing, in all of the aspects of what that means, that we embody the characteristics of Christ.

Meaning, we seek healing and reconciliation and recovery and forgiveness and mercy,

Rather than entering into the temptation of blame, judgement, and unnecessary sacrifice.

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I am reminded of the centurion and his beloved slave who was sick.

Jesus could have scolded the centurion for having a slave.

Jesus could have scolded the centurion for the atrocities that the Roman soldiers have done to the people of the Roman Empire.

Jesus could have said no, you don't deserve to have your slave healed.

There was a lot that this Centurion needed to repent for.

But instead, Jesus praises the Centurion for his faith.

Because the Centurion believed that Jesus was here to heal, and believed that he could heal.

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The reality is, is that the world is not divided between good and bad people.

The world is united by the fact, that all of us fall short of the glory of God.

All of us have reason for shame.

All of us have reason to be condemned and judged.

But the good news is that Jesus has come not for condemnation, but for healing and for mercy.

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So when bad things happen, and we ask questions like my Father in Law and his family have been asking.

Why me, Why not some of the bad people in this world.

It really isn't about good and bad.

Its about a sick and broken world, that is in need of healing.

God doesn't always heal our physical ailments, but God does heal our souls and our hearts if we let God.

And to be honest with you, having a healed soul and heart, is more often than not, more important than a healed body.

Because when our soul and our mind and our heart, are realigned toward the God who desires mercy and healing.

We start to embody healing, in all of its forms.

When life gives us a reason to blame, may we be reminded that Jesus didn't blame us for crucifying him, instead, he forgave and willingly sacrificed in order to bring healing to a sick world.

May we learn how to embody this mentality.

May we remember that Jesus came to heal.

Amen.