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Episcopal Church of the Incarnation, Santa Rosa, CA
June 14, 2020
Year A, Proper 6, Revised Common Lectionary, Track 2
[Exodus 19:2-8a](#)
[Psalm 100](#)
[Romans 5:1-8](#)
[Matthew 9:35-10:8\(9-23\)](#)

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When Jesus met with the apostles before sending them out into the world, he knew that he had already taught them all that they needed to know to do the work he wanted them to do. Jesus knew their strengths and their weaknesses. He knew their fears and concerns. Jesus knew the individual skills each apostle had, and he knew that none of them were perfect. Jesus also knew that they would never fully understand what his teachings meant until the apostles tried to share those teachings with those who did not yet know the good news. And, Jesus knew one more thing, that the apostles would not be able to heal others unless they trusted in the power and authority he gave them.

I wish someone had recorded what the apostles thought when Jesus told them to go forth and cure every disease and every sickness. Did Paul say, "I don't know why you chose me; I don't know your teachings?" Did Thomas say, "Unless you show me where the power is within me, I cannot do this?" Did James and John, the sons of Zebedee, ask if they would receive glory if they healed enough people? It would not surprise me to learn that many of the apostles would not feel ready or would have worries and fears about what Jesus was calling them to do. Being a healer is scary. It is reasonable to think, "What if I don't know what to say?" "What if I do not know enough?" "What am I to do if people don't want to be healed?" And, "What if I make a mistake?"

Today, in this time and this place, we are all being asked if we are ready to be healers. Our world continues to be sickened by a chronic disease that affects our spiritual, emotional, and physical health. We have suffered from this disease for centuries. Its symptoms vary from mild to severe, and too many have died because of it. If it is left untreated, this disease will continue to advance through our communities, compromising our well-being and crippling our ability to live our best lives. It is not a virus or bacteria. It is an idea. A malevolent notion that we are not created equal and that some people are better or more deserving than others. This sense of superiority and the right to have better treatment, resources, and care than someone else may have its origin's in the first-time humans chose to disobey God in an attempt to be like God. Superiority. I am better than you. I deserve more than you. You are undeserving. You are not worthy. You are not like me. Whether we say

these words out loud or not, their very presence poison our minds and drive us further and further away from Jesus' commandments to love God and one another.

After all, how can we love God and one another if we are dehumanizing and disrespecting each other? If you believe there is a spark or breath of the divine in everyone, and if you believe that we are all children of God, it is impossible to reconcile those beliefs and adhere to a sense of superiority.

Superiority is a critical component of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, ableism, classism, and other ills that fester and spread in our world. And, superiority, as bad as it can be, becomes malignant when it is coupled with power. Superiority and power work together to create division and inequities. Superiority and power cause us to allow ill treatment of others that we would never accept for ourselves. Superiority and power teach us to see each other as enemies and not the brothers and sisters God created us to be. Our world is dying from this sickness. However, we are not yet on life support. Jesus is calling in the healers.

Our healing work may take many forms. First, we need to heal ourselves by exploring and understanding our state of wellness and readiness to serve. Understanding the benefits and costs associated with the advantages we have received that disadvantage another will help us to understand why it may be hard for us and others to let those advantages go. Learning how superiority and power are promoted in society will help us to explore ways to change systems so they are life-affirming, fair, and equitable. Our self-healing and growth are not one-offs. They need to become a part of who we are and who we will become.

Our faith community is a great place to begin to have conversations with one another and to find resources that nurture and sustain our healing. We Episcopalians can and should look to our Baptismal Covenant and the promises we make to God each time we affirm our vows. Those commitments form a foundation for healing ourselves and others. We can and should receive nourishment by reading Holy Scripture and bringing our understanding of the Word and the teachings of our Savior into our daily lives. By practicing what Jesus taught us, compassion, kindness, and the need to care for one another, we strengthen our ability to love one another and to persevere when the going gets rough.

We know that our redeemer lives and that Jesus will teach us how to do the work he calls us to do. When Jesus sends us forth to spread the good news and bring healing to our sick society, he will also tell us where to go and whom to see. Jesus will tell us what to say and what to do because he knows what will promote healing in that time and place. And just as Jesus instructed the disciples in today's Gospel, he will remind us to be peaceful and to share that peace with others. If our healing is not welcome, we are to leave and carry nothing from that encounter with us.

Brothers and sisters, we are the people of God, and when we live into Jesus' commandment to love one another, we are responding to our call like the Israelites when the people said, "Everything the Lord has spoken, we will do."

Most of us know the song that says, "They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love. They will know we are Christians by our love." It is that enduring love shared person to person that is the greatest hope of our ability to heal the world and provide equity and justice for all. In closing, I offer to you this prayer, "May we be healthy, may we know peace, may we all see the face of God in one another."