

HOLY TRINITY ANGLICAN CHURCH  
Service of Morning Prayer  
Sixth Sunday of Easter - May 22, 2022  
Led By Meredith Brophy - Licensed Lay Reader

Celebrant: We acknowledge our presence on the ancestral lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe nation.

All: **In a spirit of reconciliation, may we always seek to respect the history, spirituality, and culture of Indigenous Peoples and uphold our continuing responsibility as treaty people.**

Celebrant: O Lord, open our lips

All: **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Celebrant: In your resurrection, O Christ,

All: **let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.**

Celebrant: Blessed are you, God of our salvation, to you be praise and glory for ever. As once you ransomed your people from Egypt and led them to freedom in the promised land, so now you have delivered us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the loving reign of the risen Christ. May we, the first fruits of your new creation, rejoice in this new day you have made and praise you for your mighty acts. 247

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All: **Blessed be God for ever.**

Reader: Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah

All: **that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

All: **let all the peoples praise you.**

Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,

All: **for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah**

Let the peoples praise you, O God;

All: **let all the peoples praise you.**

The earth has yielded its increase;

All: **God, our God, has blessed us.**

May God continue to bless us;

All: **let all the ends of the earth revere him.**

Reader: A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (Ch. 16 Vs 9-15)

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. On

the Sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Reader: Death is swallowed up in victory.

All: **Where, O death, is your sting?**

Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

All: **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

The trumpet will sound and the dead shall be raised.

All: **Where, O death, is your sting?**

We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed.

All: **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

**Where, O death, is your sting?**

Celebrant: The Song of Zechariah (Luke 1.68-79)

All: **Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free. You have raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of your servant David. Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us, to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.**

**This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship you without fear, holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

**And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way, to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.**

Celebrant: Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever.** Amen.

Holy Gospel Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (5:1-9)

All: **Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Celebrant: After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."

Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk."

At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

The Gospel of Christ.

All: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Homily

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

This homily is inspired by an article at "Interrupting the Silence.com"

Thirty-eight years is a long time to sit on your mat. Every day is the same. Waiting. Watching. Hoping. Not much changes. Sitting on his mat has become a way of life for the man in today's gospel. His life is stagnant. He's unable to see that his life comes from within him. He's convinced that life will bubble up outside of him, over there, in that magic pool of water. So he sits on his mat waiting, watching, and hoping that things will change.

There was a belief that this pool of water called Beth-zatha had healing properties, and that it could change one's life. It was said that every now and then an angel would stir the water, the water would begin to bubble, and the first one in the water would be healed. The man in today's gospel won't get up off his mat until he sees the first bubble. He is living an "if only" life.

"If only the water would bubble up, then I would get up off my mat, get into the pool, and be fixed. If only I could get to the water, then my life will be better. As soon as I get into the water my problems will be fixed."

The pool of Beth-zatha is an illusion. It convinces us that our life is nothing more than our circumstances. It deceives us into believing that life is to be found outside ourselves. It tricks us into living an "if only" life. Most of us know what that is like. We say to ourselves or maybe even out loud to another, "If only this or that would happen, everything will be better. I'll be happy. My problems will go away. I'll be satisfied. All will be well."

The pool of Beth-zatha has a strong attraction for us. Children often say, "As soon as I get big, grow up, am an adult ...." It continues throughout our life. "If only ...."

If only I could get a better job;

If only I had more time, more money, a better house;

If only he would change the way he acts;

If only she would apologize;

If only I could feel better or get through this time in my life;

If only I could lose ten pounds, get in shape.

"If only..." You can fill in the blank with most anything. The problem is there will always be another pool of Beth-zatha. Meanwhile life has been put on hold. The pause button has been pushed. We sit on our mat, self-imprisoned by the circumstances of our life.

The imprisonment is so great that when Jesus asks the man, "Do you want to be made well?" the man doesn't even say, "Yes." Instead he offers circumstances and excuses. "I have no one to put me in the water. When the water bubbles others get there first. They take shortcuts."

I'm not suggesting that the circumstances of our lives are irrelevant or have no effect. That's just not true. They do affect us. But we're more than the circumstances of our life. Life is not to be found outside our various situations or circumstances, but within them. To believe something other than this is to live constantly looking for the next pool of Beth-zatha.

Jesus does not help the man get into the water. He comes to him on his mat, the same mat and situation the man so wants to escape, and speaks words of life and resurrection. "Get up off your mat!" To quote Jesus a bit more accurately, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." The man does not leave his mat behind. It goes with him. His circumstances are real. The difference is he now carries them. They no longer carry him.

Jesus doesn't change our outer circumstances. He changes us. He calls us into a new way of being, seeing, acting, speaking, thinking. When we stand and rise to that new life we discover the circumstances have somehow changed. That doesn't necessarily make life easy or mean we no longer have to deal with the circumstances of life. It makes our circumstances more manageable, and we engage them from a different viewpoint. The pool of Beth-zatha is drained of its power over us. There is freedom where before, there were restrictions. Inertia gives way to creativity. Once stagnant waters now bubble with new life. The life Jesus offers does not happen "as soon as ..." or "if only..." It happens in this place, at this time, in these circumstances.

Are you sitting on your mat? Are you looking for a pool of Beth-zatha?

"Stand up, take your mat and walk."

Amen

**All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father. and he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

Reader: Let us offer our intercessions, petitions and thanksgivings, saying, 'Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.' May we live as those who believe in the triumph of the cross.

**All: Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Reader: May all people receive the good news of Christ's victory. In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for Shane, our Bishop; Anne, our Metropolitan; Linda, our Primate; as well as Diocesan staff and senior staff at Ascension House. We pray for the Parish of Prescott-North Glengarry, and all who minister there. We pray for the Anglican Church Women (ACW) and their groups and members throughout our Diocese

**All: Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Reader: May those born to new life in the waters of baptism know the power of Christ's resurrection.

**All: Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Reader: May those who suffer pain and anguish find healing and peace in the compassion of Christ. We pray especially for those in our community who have asked for our petitions,

especially Howard, Irene, Zachariah, Marjorie, Sarah, Roy, Scott, Jeanette, Cheryl and all those we hold in our hearts.

All: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Reader: May we be united in Christ's undying love with all who have passed through the gates of death.

All: **Redeemer of Israel, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Faithful God, make our hearts bold with love for one another. Pour out your Spirit upon all people, so that we may live your justice and sing in praise the new song of your marvellous victory.

All: **Amen**

Celebrant: Rejoicing in God's new creation and gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us,

All: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

Celebrant: Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.

All: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

Celebrant: May the risen Christ grant us the joys of eternal life.

All: **Amen**

**Worship follows the Holy Eucharist in the Book of Alternative Services.**

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