

Sermon Luketide; Luke 10. 1-9; 18 Oct 2020

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Today we are remembering St Luke who probably never met Jesus but accompanied St Paul on his missionary journeys. Luke was a physician, a doctor but he wouldn't have used things like these.

This is my stethoscope – do you know when that was invented – Laennec 1816

And this is an ophthalmoscope – do you know what you use this for looking in people's eyes – and I wonder if you can you guess when that was invented – Helmholtz in 1851

And this is a CT scanner – some of you might even have had a scan in one of these machines which uses X-rays – do you know when they were developed? Well done if you guessed the 1970's – they still weren't very common when I started training as a doctor.

But St Luke wouldn't have had all these instruments. He would have had to listen to people and then look very carefully and examine the patient before making a diagnosis. Modern day doctors still have to listen and examine patients, when they are able to see people in person, but Luke wouldn't have this kind of equipment or all the modern days tests that we now have. Listening and noticing was vital.

And this was probably what made him such a good person to collect and record the stories of Jesus which are recorded in Luke's gospel and also the stories of the apostles including Peter and Paul in the Book of Acts. He had to listen and notice – skills that are important for being a good writer as well as for being a good healer. We don't know much about whether Luke, whether or not he carried on being a doctor or concentrated on writing. But Paul refers to him as the physician. Luke working alongside Paul may well have been involved in healing the sick just like the disciples who were sent out by Jesus in our Bible reading.

We tend to think about healing as healing the sick as curing people, don't we? But sometimes people don't get better – something we are sadly all too aware of at the moment in the midst of a pandemic that has affected millions of people around the globe.

But healing, God's healing, is not just about making people better, although of course we do pray for people to be better.

Healing includes the healing of relationships, of mending friendships that are broken, that might be with your friends, your family or neighbours. Or it might be the healing of relationships between groups of people, even between nations. Think about the conflicts and wars that have gone on for many years.

We need healing of our relationship between us and the natural world. A couple of weeks ago we celebrated harvest and thought about God's creation. We gave thanks for all the gifts that God has given us, but we also remember all the things we have done to damage the environment, that has led to global warming and the pollution of the oceans. We need to say sorry for the damage humans have done and to ask for a mending of the relationship between humans and creation, that we would learn not to exploit the world's resources and become better at taking care of the earth.

But most importantly healing also includes mending the broken relationship between us and God. When we do things wrong, when we sin there is a break down in our relationship. But God loves us more than we can ever imagine, God loves us as his children and wants us to be his friends, to have a relationship, not to be distant. When we ask for forgiveness and say sorry, God forgives us and we can be healed, we are made whole, the friendship is mended. God is able to heal, sometimes over a long time, all the pains and hurts within us

Usually, when we are in church, we have the opportunity in this service to be anointed with oil as a sign that we are loved and forgiven by God – that we are made whole. And most Sundays the wholeness and healing prayer team are there to pray for and with people as well, something that we have not been able to do since lock down, although we still meet as a group regularly and if you would like us to pray for you or someone you know please do get in touch with me or Rosemary Matthews – we would love to pray for you. So, this Sunday we may not be able to be anointed with oil or to have people pray alongside and for us but we are able to light a candle, just as some of us do in church.

And in a few minutes time as Hannah leads us in our prayers and I would encourage you to use the time to open yourself to God's healing touch and if you have a candle to hand, to light it as a sign of your prayer for healing for yourself, or others or the world. Because we know that our God is a great big God, who cares, heals and restores.

So, receive Christ's forgiveness, his healing, and his love

May the father of Our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the riches of his grace, his wholeness, and his peace.