

SERMON for June 7, 2026

Christ Episcopal Church, Columbia, Maryland

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Today, let's talk about 2 worlds. The first is the familiar world of man, and it's a bit of a doozy when you think about it. In order to get anything of value in man's world, you must "sacrifice" something else that you value. Work overtime to have enough money for a vacation. Give up success in a career to spend time with family. Surrender personal happiness to pursue the greater good. Secondly, in man's world, status matters. The better you meet the standards of whatever group you wish to belong to, the easier and more pleasant things go for you. If you don't meet the standards, you face judgment. There's a constant stream of rules and consequences and a neverending need to keep your life between the lines. Love in this world, as Hosea tells us, is like dew. It's there for a bit, feels great, and then evaporates. There's also sickness, and, the ultimate thing that "makes for a bad day": death. It's the world of the Pharisees, the world of the lost sheep of Israel, and, the world of most of us, most days.

Jesus came to show us the way from man's world to the world of God. Jesus, God made flesh, came to be the bridge between the two worlds. In the Gospel of John, Jesus makes this clear:

"I came that they might have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10)

"I am the way, the truth and the life." (John 14:6)

And "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11).

What is this life filled with joy that Jesus speaks of? This life is only possible in God's world, which Jesus shows us how to reach in today's Gospel. In God's world, as the father tells

the oldest son in the parable of the prodigal son, everything of value is yours. You never lack anything; thus the concept of sacrifice is inconceivable. The only status and laws in God's world that matter are God's law. And that law is singular: the absolute, unchanging, eternal love that is within and around you at all times. Because we are all encompassed in this love, there is harmony between us and complete trust in the care and provision of God. In God's world, faith and trust brings health and wholeness.

Do you want to be made well? Do you want to live in God's world?

Jesus both teaches and demonstrates two keys to this kingdom today: mercy and faith.

When the Pharisees complain about Jesus not respecting the Jewish rules, he side-handedly identifies their worldview as "sick" and points them back home with the words "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Man's laws demand sacrifice. Mercy replaces sacrifice with the everpresent, eternal love of God.

And then, in verse 19, he demonstrates this mercy. He completely ignores the religious leader's and society's list of rules and regulations to shower mercy on both the leader of the synagogue and the bleeding woman. The synagogue leader rolls up at the end of Matthew's literal "come to Jesus" party. According to the world of man Jesus "should" give an elaborate apology to Matthew and his guests. He "should" call out the grieving dad for breaking social norms and raining on their parade. Instead, Jesus chooses mercy—God's love in place of sacrifice. He simply gets up, leaves the party, taking half the party with him.

When the woman unclean from bleeding touches his robes, Jesus "should" reprimand her for touching him and making him unclean. He "should" refocus her attention on the "more important" mission of saving a young girl's life. He "should" teach her that she must be shoved aside to make room for a more important cause. Yet again, he

chooses mercy. He simply showers love on her. In God's world, there is enough to go around. "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." (Matthew 9:22).

And there's the second directive: faith. In God's world, faith in our own worth, our own health and eternal well-being is paramount. Jesus sees the daughter of the synagogue leader as healed and whole. He had faith in God's reality. And so can we.

The crowd at the synagogue leader's house laughed at Jesus. Similarly, the world of man may laugh at us for traversing that bridge to God's world. When we offer mercy and grace, even when the world says it is undeserving, they will call us naive. When we see goodness and love in the hearts of all, they will call us foolish. When we have deep faith and see ultimate life and wholeness when the world sees sickness and death, they will call us Pollyannas.

Let them. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[a] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8: 38-39)

It is that love that connects us all to our Abba father and to one another. The only thing separating us from the world Jesus lived and walked in is our belief that the separation exists.

If we only touch the edge of Jesus' garment, we can make that leap. Jesus gave us the Holy Spirit to guide us from this world to the world of God and will lead us every step of the way if we allow Him to.

God doesn't want your sacrifices. As Psalm 50 tells us, He already has "the whole world and all that is in it." Praise God for that. What does He want? Surprisingly, your gratitude and your willingness to ask Him for help. He wants a deep, true relationship

with you. Like Abraham, God asks us to not waver when trusting His promises and give glory to Him.

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.” states Jesus in John chapter 17. (John 17:16) We will continue to walk in this world and be surrounded by the illusion of the laws, the sacrifices, the judgments, the condemnation, sickness and death. But, if we allow Jesus to show us His World, we can both be in the kingdom and help others to take the journey with us.

The question, as Jesus asks so many of those he heals is: “Do you want to be made well?” Do you want to live in the Kingdom of God? Like Matthew, who was fully immersed in this world with his job as a tax collector, we must get up from the point of view we are sitting in and follow Jesus. We must be willing to see that we lack nothing and see the light of God in people whom we used to judge and put out of our hearts. And we must be willing to have faith in a God who wants to bring us back to life, to heal us of all our sicknesses, physical, emotional, and mental.

And so, “Let us know, let us press us on to know the Lord, His appearing is as sure as the dawn.” (Hosea 6:3).