

- 1 Samuel 16:1-13
- Ephesians 5:8-14
- John 9:1-41
- Psalm 23

I need to tell you, this is really strange. This is a very strange experience. I'm speaking to a camera and an empty church. It's odd not to have you here. We were practicing, Father Bill and I, for this experience so that we could bring you the fullness of worship as we can with all these ways that we can't be together. And Father Bill said that we should put cardboard cutouts of all of you in here so that we could see your smiling faces. And I really wish we could do that because we long to see you and we miss you. And we are with you in heart and spirit, even though our bodies are socially distant from one another.

Today, this morning, I have a very, very simple word for you. It's not fancy at all, and it's meant to help each one of us manage whatever it is that we're dealing with in our own household, in our own home, in our own lives and our community to deal with all the feelings and the frustrations and the physical issues that we're having.

It's a simple word, but it is a word from God because we're Christian and we believe in the gospel. And the gospel speaks to dismal times. The gospel has a word for when things are upside down and right side wrong. The word is good news for all of us, especially when nothing looks the same anymore. So what is the word that God wants us to hear this morning?

I was so grateful for our accountant, Kathy Brooks, she sent around the meme during the week and it was lovely. It was funny. It is said, "Love like Jesus, wash your hands like Pontius Pilate." And the reason I loved it, I was like, okay, great. Now I know who I'm supposed to be. I'm supposed to love like Jesus. But wait, no, wait. I'm supposed to be like Pontius Pilate and wash my hands. And I realize, oh, my gosh, that's what we're all going through. We don't know how to be. Who are we supposed to be like? How are we supposed to act? What is right? What is wrong? What am I supposed to do today?

It changes. What are supposed to do this morning is different based on what I find out the rest of the day. And then in the evening, it looks all different. Plans that we make in the morning, unravel in the evening. And we're all kind of like, how are we supposed to do this? I don't know. What I don't know, I don't know.

But there are things that you and I do know. You and I do know without a doubt that God can and will overcome all things, including our suffering, our sickness, our illnesses and even death. We know that. We know that God will not abandon us. No matter what we're going through or what we are experiencing, God will be with us in all things. We know and we believe that no matter what we do or don't do, God forgives us through Jesus Christ, whether we fail, whether we fall, whether we're afraid, whether we do something that is wrong and

whether we give up. God says to us, I will never give up on you. We know that. We know that we were blind but we can now see.

And maybe that blind man is exactly how we're supposed to be during this weird, bizarre pandemic crisis, because the blind man was honest about what he knew and what he didn't know, he was being attacked by those Pharisees asking multiple questions. How do you know what happened? Who did this to you? And ironically, they were asking who was doing this when they forgot that this man was blind. And Jesus approached the blind man while he was blind, told him to go and wash in the pool, and when the blind man could finally see he never saw Jesus. He just knew what he knew. He was blind, but now. He could see. And maybe that's enough for you and me. We are like that blind man. We know what we know.

So I'm going to invite you today on the Sabbath day, on a day set apart for us to remember our God and to make holy. I'm going to invite you to find some personal time. You can do it with others. You can do it with yourself. But find some time today. And I want you to sit with God. And I want you to say out loud to God all those things that you do not know. Don't be afraid to include all of those frightening, anxious questions you and I have. And after you tell God what you do not know, I want you to tell God what you do know. And I want you to recount your own history with the God who has taken care of you from the day you were born. And as you do both things. You will remember. That, though, you do not know. You can see.

And though you may be blind, God is leading the way. And though you may feel very alone, you will never be abandoned because God is walking with us, even through the valley of the shadow of death. So the word for today, it's a simple word. You know what you know, and what you don't know, God will show us the way.

Amen.

[End of Recording]