

March 19, 2020 - A Mini-Worship Service by Theresa Grimes

Hello Everyone! Some words of inspiration for this week:) I've expanded on how we typically do our Contemporary Worship service –

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, who created us in God's own image,
we are grateful for all that you have done for us,
for all that you are doing in us,
and for all that you will do through us.

Open our eyes to see your presence among us,
moving in powerful ways at all times
and in all places.

Open our ears to hear familiar words in new ways—
ways that will change us and challenge us
to become the people you created us to be.

Grant us the power and the courage
to come out of the darkness

and into the light of Jesus Christ,
that we may serve you by serving others.

We love you with all our heart, soul, mind,
and strength. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Healing God, we have languished in our blindness. We have chosen to hide in darkness in order to avoid reaching out and risking acceptance. We are afraid of the light, and yet we crave it. In your light, there is healing and hope, restoration and transformation.

Forgive our lack of faith and our fearfulness, O Lord. Give us courage to reach out to the light and accept its healing rays. May our lives be transformed by your mercy, for we pray this in Jesus' Name. AMEN

Please read the following:

Old Testament Lesson: 1 Sam 16:1-13

Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 5:8-14

A reading from John 9:1-41

John 9 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

A MAN BORN BLIND RECEIVES SIGHT

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **3** Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. **4** We[a] must work the works of him who sent me[b] while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." **6** When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, **7** saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. **8**

The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" **9** Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." **10** But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" **11** He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." **12** They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

THE PHARISEES INVESTIGATE THE HEALING

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14** Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. **15** Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." **16** Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. **17** So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" **20** His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; **21** but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." **22** His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus[c] to be the Messiah[d] would be put out of the synagogue. **23** Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." **25** He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." **26** They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" **27** He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" **28** Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. **29** We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." **30** The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. **31** We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. **32** Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. **33** If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." **34** They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"[e] **36** He answered, "And who is he, sir?[f] Tell me, so that I may believe in him." **37** Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." **38** He said, "Lord,[g] I believe." And he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, "I

came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” **41** Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

Offertory:

In God of light and love and peace,
we praise your name
for leading us in paths of righteousness,
that we may come into your presence,
forgiven and free.

We give you thanks for guiding us to this place:
where we may rest beside the still waters
of your grace,
where we are filled with the good gifts
of your goodness and mercy.

We worship you with all that we are,
and we bless your name for all that we will be
as we continue on our journey—
a journey that leads us to your kingdom,
where we will dwell with you forever.

Offertory Prayer:

We offer you our gifts,
that you might bless them and send them out
into the valley of the shadow of death,
and everywhere in need of your light. Amen.

Blessing:

Lord, give us such sight, that we may see the many ways of serving you by helping others. Help us bring sight to others who dwell in deep darkness. AMEN.