

The Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost
The Reverend John H. Brock

October 16, 2005
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

Isaiah 43:8-13; Psalm 124
2 Timothy 4:5-11; Luke 4:14-21

Grace to you and peace from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen

Linda came into my office. We had just recently suffered the loss of our son and she came seeking to console me. With all sincerity and honesty she said, "How are you?" "It is so sad," she said. Then, without breaking nearly a stride she broke into tears. "You don't deserve this!", she said. A few more questions, and I came to discover that she too had suffered the loss of a child. She came into my office seeking to console me, but instead needed to be healed. Healed of her own grief.

I stood in an intensive care room next to Dick, a big burley, retired bricklayer, arms like tree trunks, the guy who always told me off colored jokes, and made sure that he swore when he was around. We stood looking at his wife who lay there, wires and tubes connected to her, surrounded by their children. We stood talking. Talking about anything, but her. The nurse came in, checked her out, put a stethoscope on her chest, and in the midst of our conversation said, "Oh, that's it." She just left us. Gruff and rough Dick began to cry. "She walked in here! Why can't she walk out of here?" He had come there hoping for healing of his wife, but needed healing from his own pain.

She called me up wanting to see me, and could I do so immediately, and I said yes. She came in and sat down in my office. "Why is this happening to me? Why do I have cancer? My parents died of cancer. I already survived one bout of cancer, why is God doing this to me?" She came with questions, but needed to be healed of her anger.

We are, each of us, healed in many ways. Not always physically. We pray and our prayers are answered, although not always in the manner in which we want them to be, because we live in this imperfect world. We live in this world where infants die, where spouses get cancer, where we lose our job, our children are arrested, our joints racked with pain no longer respond to our brains and lose the ability to communicate with each other so we slowly cease our communication and sink into the silent world of Alzheimer.

There are addictions of all kinds: alcohol, illegal drugs, cigarettes, pornography, gambling, abuse of all kinds. They exist and they propagate and we ask God for healing. We pray for the pain to go away, for the ability to simply stand up and walk. We ask to be able to breathe without wheezing. Yet in all that happens to us, we know that we have been promised in the waters of our baptism, and enforced in the bread and wine of the meal, that God is with us always. God is with us in the good. God is with us in the not so very good at all.

So I invite you this morning to come forward, be reminded of God's goodness, be reminded of God's presence. Hear the words of blessing, feel the warmth of hands, come forward and be healed, perhaps not of body, but be healed of heart and of spirit.

Amen.

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