

MUMC At-Home Worship: August 8, 2021

Dear friends, it has been a tremendous joy to worship with you using the at-home guides all throughout these last months! With the transition back to in-person worship, we have seen the desire for at-home worship guides decrease and have made the decision not to offer new at-home guides after August 22. If you plan to continue worshipping from home, I encourage you to reuse old at-home guides, which we would be happy to send to you or can be found on our website! We will also discontinue use of the Sermon-By-Phone line at the same time. Sermons can still be watched on our website and heard on our podcast, and I can assist you in accessing either. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Now ... let's worship! ~ Pastor Dillon

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Opening Prayer

Holy God, our guide and guardian: you have led us away from the busy world into the quiet of your presence. Grant that our time in this space might comfort our souls as it renews our spirits, that we may worship you in word and deed all the days of our lives. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn *This Is My Father's World* United Methodist Hymnal #144

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world, the birds their carols raise,
The morning light, the lily white, declare their Maker's praise.
This is my Father's world: he shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world. O let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world: why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King; let the heavens ring! God reigns; let earth be glad!

"This Is My Father's World" Words by Maltbie D. Babcock, 1901; music is a traditional English melody adapted by Franklin L. Sheppard, 1915; and both are in the public domain.

Scripture Lesson

Mark 5:1-20 (CEB)

Jesus and his disciples came to the other side of the lake, to the region of the Gerasenes. As soon as Jesus got out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out of the tombs. This man lived among the tombs, and no one was ever strong enough to restrain him, even with a chain. He had been secured many times with leg irons and chains, but he broke the chains and smashed the leg irons. No one was tough enough to control him. Night and day in the tombs and the hills, he would howl and cut himself with stones. When he saw Jesus from far away, he ran and knelt before him, shouting, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!"

He said this because Jesus had already commanded him, "Unclean spirit, come out of the man!"

Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

He responded, "Legion is my name, because we are many." They pleaded with Jesus not to send them out of that region.

A large herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside. "Send us into the pigs!" they begged. "Let us go into the pigs!" Jesus gave them permission, so the unclean spirits left the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd of about two thousand pigs rushed down the cliff into the lake and drowned.

Those who tended the pigs ran away and told the story in the city and in the countryside. People came to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and saw the man who used to be demon-possessed. They saw the very man who had been filled with many demons sitting there fully dressed and completely sane, and they were filled with awe. Those who had actually seen what had happened to the demon-possessed man told the others about the pigs. Then they pleaded with Jesus to leave their region.

While he was climbing into the boat, the one who had been demon-possessed pleaded with Jesus to let him come along as one of his disciples. But Jesus wouldn't allow it. "Go home to your own people," Jesus said, "and tell them what the Lord has done for you and how he has shown you mercy." The man went away and began to proclaim in the Ten Cities all that Jesus had done for him, and everyone was amazed.

Reflect:

1. This passage highlights the possessed man's separation from his community in several ways, including that he lived among the tombs (namely, with the dead rather than the living). Does it change this story in any significant way for you to read it as primarily a healing of the man's separation from society rather than of his possession? What are some other examples, from scripture or your own

experience, of some times the gospel has brought individuals back into relationship in community?

2. There is considerable resistance to Jesus' ministry in this passage, particularly from those who "pleaded with Jesus to leave their region." Why do you imagine they were so opposed to Jesus remaining among them? Do you imagine that Jesus' ministry would meet similar resistance today and, if so, in what ways?
3. The healed man wants to follow Jesus but is told to instead remain where he is. Why do you imagine Jesus would send the man home instead of letting him come along as one of the disciples? Can you think of some times when our most faithful response to Jesus might be to stay put instead of going to a different place?

Hymn *Here I Am, Lord* United Methodist Hymnal #593

I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?
[Refrain]

I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?
[Refrain]

"Here I Am, Lord" words and music by Dan Schutte, 1981, music adapted by Carlton R. Young, 1988. © 1981, 1983, 1989 Daniel L. Schutte and NALR.

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer.

Lord's Prayer

Hymn *God of Love and God of Power* United Methodist Hymnal #578

God of love and God of power,
grant us in this burning hour
grace to ask these gifts of thee,
daring hearts and spirits free.
God of love and God of power,
thou hast called us for this hour.

We are not the first to be
banished by our fears from thee;
give us courage, let us hear
heaven's trumpets ringing clear.
God of love and God of power,
thou hast called us for this hour.

All our lives belong to thee,
thou our final loyalty;
slaves are we whene'er we share
that devotion anywhere.
God of love and God of power,
thou hast called us for this hour.

God of love and God of power,
make us worthy of this hour;
offering lives if it's thy will,
keeping free our spirits still.
God of love and God of power,
thou hast called us for this hour.

“God of Love and God of Power” words by Harry Emerson Fosdick, ca. 1939; music by Joachim Neander, 1680; and both are in the public domain.

Closing Prayer: Almighty God, you heal the broken and restore the separated to relationship. Teach us to live into this work as we plant ourselves ever deeper in the places where we live, choosing to build community rather than chase after it. In the name of Christ, who welcomes all, we pray. Amen.

(Blow out the candle)