

**St. Andrew's Anglican Church, Douglas GA**

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commings+ Rector

Scripture: various

***"Your Faith Has Healed You"***

Lord Jesus Christ, you gave authority to Your disciples that they might lay hands upon the sick and that they might recover. We ask you today, through this message and through coming forward – we ask you to have mercy upon us and strengthen us in body, mind and spirit, and give us faith in your power to heal. Lord, we ask for this time to be very special – that you would anoint us. Even those who do not come forward have been anointed as prayer ministers; so bless this time that we have together – this unique time – that we may be truly thankful in the days ahead – in the Name and by the power of the Blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ -we pray.

What we are about to do is entirely Scriptural; it is something that has been done for generations, and Jesus came and laid hands; as a matter of fact – Jesus told, in the beginning of His three-year ministry, He told people what people what He was going to be doing. At a very important event in Jesus' life was when He returned to His hometown of Nazareth, shortly after having been baptized in the Jordan River, by John the Baptist. Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and was asked to read during the service, which was recorded in the Gospel of Luke chapter 4. Jesus stood up and *"The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'"* (Luke 4:16-19) These words are right out of chapter 61 from the Prophet Isaiah – who foretold the work of the Messiah. In those promises we have faith and hope. There's more!

In Isaiah 42 God speaks clearly through Isaiah about His Messiah, who is coming – *"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness. 'I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. (Isaiah 42:6-8)* Jesus promised to bring the Good News to these people – not that they would no longer be among us. Jesus promised us salvation – but never said life was going to be easy as Christians. He opened THE way to heaven for us – through His cross and the empty tomb – and He gave to His followers the power to do what He has been doing for God's people. I want to take you to the Upper Room on what we call Maundy Thursday. They had just finished dinner, and Judas had left – off to do what as Jesus told him – go do what you must do. Jesus shared quite a few words with His Apostles before heading to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus told them: *"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* (John 14:12-14) You know the words 'in Jesus' Name' is not just the closing of a prayer. That portion of a prayer contains

power; not my power; not your power; but God's power. In the time when you come forward today, and a prayer of blessing is prayed on you, and anointing, and while it might be my thumb that goes into the oil and puts it on your forehead – but it is the Holy Spirit who is doing the work. It is God who is doing the work – that is why Jesus could say that if you have faith in Me and believe in Me – you will do greater things than this – because we are going to be the vessel that carries it out.

Jesus, time and time again, told people who He healed that their faith made them well. Believing in Him and seeking His healing is so powerful – and He wants you to have it. God does not want His people to suffer – and He uses all things for good – to, in some cases, show a testimony of His power and love.

A few moments ago, I shared with you from the Prophet Isaiah – that it was God's intention to heal the blind, free the prisoners and to release the oppressed. There are some deep meanings to those words – being blind is not necessarily having anything to do with your eyes; being a prisoner does not necessarily mean that you are behind bars – physical bars; being oppressed carries a whole lot of meaning for each one of us. God is talking about healing us – right where we are – setting us free from the bondage that some have been forced into – or may have created ourselves. Oppression is not necessarily a political thing. The Miriam Webster Dictionary defines 'oppression' as being an unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power; a sense of being weighed down in body or mind; an oppression of spirits.

What am I getting at? Being in need of healing may not be due to a physical ailment. How many times have I mentioned the need for healing – in body, mind and spirit? If you have a burden that is weighing you down – causing restlessness, or sleeplessness – pain – worry – and could be affecting your health – Jesus says to you today: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*" (Matthew 11:28) If your burden is physical, financial, worry, stress – or all of the above – Jesus wants to take your burden and let Him heal you by your faith. It is through faith that you receive Holy Communion: every Sunday you hear me proclaim "the gifts of God for the people of God – take them in remembrance that Christ died for you – and feed on Him in your hearts by *faith*- with thanksgiving." With that same faith in Christ – believe that His healing is a gift for you – and receive it today. Let Jesus tell you – as HE told so many "*your faith has healed you!*" (Matthew 9:22, Mark 5:34, Mark 10:53, Luke 8:48, Luke 18:42)