

Sermon, February 8, 2009  
5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Epiphany

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St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church  
Marion, MA

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### Heal the Broken-Hearted

God wants to make us well.  
God wants to make us whole.  
It is God's intent to heal the broken-hearted.

Why don't we always feel that our God loves us, and comes to us as the Great Physician, healing our broken hearts, setting us free to rejoice, giving us delight in life?

We hold a false, self-centered faith, and then we hold the true God guilty for failing to live up to our false beliefs.

I have a little show and tell story that might help us understand.  
What if our psychological and spiritual dispositions were visible to others?  
What might we look like?

Perhaps something like this.

We falsely believe that God created the heavens, the earth, and us primarily for our personal & private comfort, pleasure and satisfaction, rather than to help us mature into creatures fit for eternal life and love. We begin life with the fatally flawed premise of personal, spiritual autonomy and independence from God and other people.

(Wrap black shroud around head and shoulders.)

We falsely believe that God should grant us freedom from adversity, rather than companionship, courage, and help in the face of adversity.

( Take up metal bar as if to fend off an enemy.)

We falsely believe that God should spare us from pain: From the pain of seeing our own shortcomings; from the pain of other's free, but ill-conceived choices; from the pain of this world's brokenness; from the painful consequences of our

own ill-conceived choices. And so we look for anesthetic, something to take away, or at least numb or distract us from the pain.

(Take up shoulder bag and show bottle of bourbon.)

We falsely believe that God should grant that all our wishes and desires should come to pass, rather than seeing God's perfect redeeming will bringing all life through redemption to God's intended fullness. We believe that we should take control of our circumstances to be sure that life bends to our will.

(Take up sledge hammer, menacingly.)

And then—do you recognize anyone like this?—we feel

Alone

Unloved

Incapable of intimacy

Untrusting

Broken-hearted

Dissatisfied

Emotionally bound up

Unable to experience tears or laughter

And God says to us:

You were not designed for autonomy and independence, but to live with faithful trust and reliance on the Spirit that brought all things into being.

Come to me...

Like a plant,

Commit yourself & give yourself over to God.

Be rooted in the good soil of God's sure love

Be nourished with the living water Christ promises

Reach up through the uncertainties of life with tender leaves toward the sunshine of God's life-giving spirit.

(One by one, release the defenses to folks in the pews, asking if they might help me not to have to carry the load.)

And God will heal our broken hearts and make us whole.