

**Trinity Church Wall Street 11:15am Holy Eucharist – Trinity Sunday
The Rev. Kristin Miles Transcript**

“From Rupture To Repair”

“All of life, our relationships and physical and emotional natures move on a pendulum from rupture to repair.” Today’s readings are a testament to how our greed, self absorption, and ambition can keep us away from the suffering of others, and therefore the Kingdom of God. The first step to moving beyond rupture towards repair? “Seeing ourselves as roots on a tree rather than actors on a stage,” preaches the Rev. Kristin Miles. The readings are Job 23:1–9, 16–17; Psalm 22:1–15; Hebrews 4:12–16; and Mark 10:17–31.

Sermon Transcript:

In the name of our creating, redeeming and sustaining God.

All of life, our relationships, our physical and emotional natures, move on the pendulum; from rupture to repair. At any given time, we may ask ourselves, are our actions individually, societally, moving towards rupture or repair? A passage from Hebrews testifies that we have this great high priest who passed through the heavens, but the stories that may most profoundly touch us involve what was happening on Earth. It was Jesus passing through here. His empathetic engagements of realities beyond his own particular experience, by reaching out to understand, to bless, to include, to heal. It was Jesus teaching us again and again, how to move from rupture to repair. Our scriptures today call us to account for how we hold or fail to hold the realities of others. Part of repairing is hearing, witnessing, not denying the struggles of others, by rushing to offer advice. We have Job expressing his hardship, his “if only,” his inability to perceive God. Rather than console and be with Job, his friends each approach him, assuming he has done something bad, and God is punishing him. They each just come to him with their prescription of what he needs to do to make things better. “Job should repent, assess what he has done that is wicked, and plead for God’s forgiveness.” Job’s friends cling to their certainty rather than their compassion, thereby adding loneliness, judgment, and misunderstanding to Job’s heartache.

In contrast, Becca Stevens’ in her book, *Practically Divine*, talks about sitting in silence with a friend who can’t take anymore advice. Certainty about what another should do is usually not helpful and nor is making it all about ourselves. A person or recently sent to me a New Yorker cartoon that points to this truth. A man and a woman are sitting across from each other at a table in a restaurant, and the woman says to the man, “Thank you. I knew I could count on you to turn my problem into something way worse that happened to you.” In this world of vulnerability where all our relationships move between rupture and repair, Psalm 22 contradicts those schools of thought that suggests that pain can be overcome with a simple attitude of adjustment. Psalm 22 names the speaker’s sense of rupture from God. Naming is part of the moving to repair. The Psalmist calls out the predatory and people and systems like the bulls that are surrounding. We know the Holy Spirit is at work when we are drawn to see and name things as they are in our lives, as they are in the world, stripping away illusions. The truth is that those with more resources do not fully understand the reality of living without them. There is a barrier to engaging suffering. The barrier hold us back from the kingdom of God.

In our own way, we must ask the questions that the young man and the disciples did. What must I do? Who can be saved? Jesus is saying to the rich young man, "Pay attention." There is an emptiness, a seeking that for you involves partying with all that you have, with your focus on performance. You are seeking God, but it's not about eternal life to come. Open yourself to the suffering of others, to the scarcity in poverty if you want to be close to God and to me. The Kingdom of God is found there. There was something about this instruction for the young man to sell everything and follow, that Jesus thought was necessary to challenge and awaken him. Jesus is not saying that every one of us should sell all we have, leave our families, and live as renunciates, right this very minute. He is not saying that this would ameliorate the world's hurt and brokenness. We are to do an honest assessment of ourselves. Allowing the word of God as we hear in Hebrews, to judge the thoughts and intentions of our heart. How we consume, spend our time, how we hold ourselves back, the barriers we need to pass through, as Jesus did. It's a thing how we hoard and fixate about what we have are stinginess. Other Talmudic sources also talk about the difficulty of the elephant getting through the eye of a needle.

Like the rich young man, all of us are to open ourselves to address suffering, not deny, minimize distance. That is how we move to this kingdom of God. In John Calvin's famous analogy, "Scriptures are like spectacles for weak, failing eyes. We see a world in chaos, human ambition and neglect, predatory harm and scarcity. With the lens of scripture, we can refocus our vision to see God's transforming love, which allows good to emerge from despair." The word of God is active here that in our scriptures today, it's grace, it's being with what is, seeing what is, acting in the only moment that we can act in. The only moment that is truly ours, this moment, now. To help us with these questions; who can be saved? What must I do? Celtic poet John O'Donohue offers reflection at the end of the day that can point us from rupture to repair. It's like the examine along the lines of Saint Ignatius. He gives us questions so that we can see ourselves in the words of Reverend Mark Richardson, "As roots on a tree rather than actors on a stage," that we can open ourselves to make room for the suffering of others and our own. From at the end of the day, a mirror of questions. See which one of these might resonate with you. Where did my eyes linger today? Where was I blind? Where was I hurt without anyone noticing? What did I learn today? What did I read? What new thoughts visited me? What difference did I notice in those closest to me? Whom did I neglect? Where did I neglect myself? What did I begin today that might endure? How are my conversations? What did I do today for the poor and excluded? Where could I have exposed myself to the risk of something different? Who did I allow myself to receive love? With whom did I feel most myself? What reached me? What did I avoid?

From the evidence, why was I given this day? Perhaps, even a few of these questions may move us again and again, understanding that we will always be on this pendulum and our relationships in our world from rupture to repair, but not allowing us to give up and stay in rupture. Becca Stevens' reminds us that the bravest thing we can do in this world is not to cling to old ideas or fear of judgment, but step out and do something for love's sake. She quotes her mom, "We are dirt and Angels." This work is not just individual, it is ours to do, it's also collective, so we're invited to see who's doing this work to repair? Where are we opening to the Kingdom of God? I can tell you what's happening around us. Just this week, our choir did a beautiful rendition of the Rain Westcars piece of music, she had passed away at her funeral. They offered this gorgeous offering for her sister Shirley and those gathered here. We had Sister Promise connecting with all the sorrow and hardness that's going on in Haiti, connecting with a HEART 9/11 that is building and reconstructing. There is this joy and connection. I have to tell you, on Friday night, I was a little tired and grumpy, and my spouse got tickets to go hear Joey DeFrancesco at a jazz club. He said, "Big organist and he plays everything." I wasn't in the mood, but I went. You could hear Joey, starting off and starting off. One of the ladies behind said, "Take us to church, Joey." He started crunching this organ, and everybody started moving and it felt like the Kingdom of God. Let us

open our hearts to where we can find that energy, that connection. May we again and again, as Jesus talks to the rich young man and the disciples, move from rupture to repair.

Amen.