



# Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

## Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

January 28, 2018

### Take heart, get up!

Mark 10:46-52

The words of Herman Stuempfle, Jr. which make up stanza one of our Hymn of the day:

“Your church is like a family formed by gifts of grace and richly fed---each member born through water, Word, and nurtured by Christ’s living Bread, Christ knit our lives in unity; in mutual love and ministry.”

As if a prayer: CHRIST KNIT OUR LIVES IN UNITY; IN MUTUAL LOVE AND MINISTRY. So it is, has been, and will be!

There must have been a great crowd that day. Jesus had been on the way for a time and the word had spread widely. Recall where He has been---Peter’s confesses him to be “The Christ,” twice He speaks of his death and resurrection; now on the outskirts of Jerusalem, in the city of Jericho.

1. Jesus is in a time of transition...from active ministry and now about to enter Jerusalem. On the cusp of His last week of life. What must the words have been among his followers? How were the crowds who have heard about Him and were joining the pilgrimage up to the Temple to keep the Festival of Passover? His first 12 remembering His words about betrayal, mockery, death. And some wondering what the future would be like in a time of change; anxious to get on and to be about the rest of the story.
2. Leaving Jericho, a blind man, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, seeks transformation. His will be the only healing in Mark where the one made whole is named.

The dialogue is rich as the blind beggar has heard of Jesus and he cried out, “Jesus, son of David, mercy.” A deep confession of who Jesus is, “son of David, mercy.” Would not be silenced in his confession of this rabbi from Nazareth!

Note the words that “Jesus said, ‘Call him.’” Call him as in “Follow me.” And they, those who had tried to silence him, CALLED (That word again!) him and said, “Take heart, he is calling you.” CALLING YOU (That word again!).

3. Transition and transformation is found wholly on the foundation of trust. With confidence, this blind one “throwing off his cloak, sprang to his feet (WE call that a “leap of faith”), and came to Jesus. For he believed that a future truly makes all things to be new.

Listen! “Jesus said, ‘What do you want me to do for you.’” “My teacher, rabbi, let me see again.”  
Vision! “Go your faith/trust has made you well.”

4. Right now...immediately, "his sight regained and followed on the way." They were together.

The net result of the miracle is sight, insight, and clarity, enfolded in charity, which becomes a vision with a time to discern where the path of following Jesus will lead to the renewal we all seek.

Mission Forward is always where the Holy Spirit leads those who follow Jesus, like the first 12, those who became eyewitnesses and ear witnesses to Jesus when He walks the earth. Like each one of us who are made new and serve under the Sign of the Cross.

Many years ago, there was a movement with the theme "What Would Jesus Do?" It was the premise that WWJD would mark the decision point in looking back to see, from His life, what Jesus would do in any situation.

In a sermon of response, I turned the question a wee bit to "What Would Jesus **have me** to DO?" In the events that impact my life, that I face each day as a child of God.

We are called reflect on that question in our life, in this time, in this complex time of transition as a congregation facing a whole new world. Most appropriately that calls us to note the relationship we share in Christ...and here is that fourth "T" --- Together!

Better yet, here are the "FOUR T's:" Transition, Transformation, Trust, Together. That is the core value sense of our Mission Statement and the Core Values we will establish in the times ahead.

{Notice that not one of the "T's" is Tradition. Looking back is not generally helpful except in a spirit of thanksgiving. Many of us believe that we are not where we were, or even, where we are, but what we are becoming as a community of faith which is fed with forgiveness, compassion, and hope in the face of each new day.

Recall what Jesus taught about impulsive and reluctant followers: "No one who puts his hands to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." Mission is not about reverie of past accomplishments, but discerning and dreaming about boldness in the Spirit moving forward.}

So here are the pivot points in mission forward: Transition is a time of anxiety, change means past expectations will give way to new venture not yet seen, as process moves along, questions begin to be answered with some left hanging, opposite views occur, prayer empowers dialogue, which leads to transformational trust. That leads to renewed growth and strength as we trust that we are in this mission of life together, being the Body of Christ in the world, his hands, his feet, his heart, his voice as we see to know the mind of Christ which alone is our firm foundation.

We are a strong and vibrant people. Some say there is waning energy in this place. I miss seeing that as we become consistently discipleFIT, sharing as good stewards, managing the myriad of gifts we are being given through the generosity of the God we know, who knows us, walking with us every step of the way.

With vision renewed...puzzling pieces settling into place...it is time to say "Take heart, get up!" The Holy Spirit bids us forward, in Jesus' name, Amen.