

## **Restoration Through Faith**

Job 42:1-6, 10-17, Psalm 23, Hebrews 7:23-28, Mark 10:46-52

27 October 2024

Today, as we reflect on the readings, we encounter a profound theme that connects them all—the restoration through faith. This is a powerful message for each of us, whether we are facing personal trials, moments of uncertainty, or seeking healing. Through faith in God’s grace and Christ’s eternal priesthood, we are invited into a journey of restoration—of our hearts, spirits, and communities.

As I was preparing this message I deliver today, I am reminded that each of these readings speaks to our shared experience of both suffering and renewal. In different ways, these texts remind us that faith in God leads to healing, renewal, and ultimate restoration, whether spiritual, physical, or relational.

In the story of Job, we find a powerful example of faith that endures in the midst of unimaginable suffering. Job, stripped of his wealth, health, and family, remains in dialogue with God, grappling with his suffering. In Job 42:1-6, Job humbly acknowledges God’s sovereignty, realizing that he has spoken of things beyond his understanding. He says, "My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes." Job’s deep humility and repentance mark a turning point, as he surrenders his confusion and pain to God’s wisdom.

What follows is a remarkable moment of restoration. In Job 42:10-17, we see how God restores Job’s fortunes—doubling his wealth and blessing him with new children and a long, fulfilling life. Job’s experience teaches us that even in the darkest moments, when we cannot see the full picture, faith in God’s goodness leads to renewal. This passage offers a reminder that, while suffering is real, so too is God’s power to restore us.

In Psalm 23, we are given a comforting image of God as the Good Shepherd who guides, protects, and restores His people. The psalmist expresses deep faith in God’s care: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." Even in "the valley of the shadow of death," the psalmist does not fear, knowing that God’s presence provides comfort and assurance.

This image of the Shepherd speaks to the constant, restorative care that God provides for us. “He restores my soul,” the psalmist declares, reminding us that faith in God’s guidance leads to wholeness and peace. In this psalm, we are invited to trust God’s provision, even in times of uncertainty, knowing that God’s goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives.

Moving into the Hebrews passage, we encounter the theological foundation of our faith: Jesus as our eternal High Priest. Unlike the priests of the Old Covenant, who were limited by their mortality, Jesus lives forever. His priesthood is eternal, and through His once-for-all sacrifice, we are reconciled to God.

The author of Hebrews tells us that because Jesus is holy, blameless, and set apart from sinners, He is the perfect mediator between us and God. This passage emphasizes that through faith in Christ, we are restored to a right relationship with God. Christ’s eternal priesthood offers us salvation and renewal—not just for a moment, but for eternity. His sacrifice is enough, and through Him, we find the ultimate restoration of our souls.

The story of Bartimaeus in Mark is one of my personal favorites because it shows how faith opens the door to healing and restoration. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, calls out to Jesus as He passes by, crying, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Despite the crowd’s attempts to silence him, Bartimaeus persists in his faith. His belief in Jesus’ power to heal is unshaken.

When Jesus asks, “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus responds with faith, saying, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus then tells him, “Go; your faith has made you well,” and immediately, Bartimaeus receives his sight. This story teaches us that faith is key to receiving God’s restoration. Like Bartimaeus, when we call out to God with faith, He hears us, and His healing power is made manifest in our lives. Bartimaeus didn’t just receive physical sight—he experienced spiritual renewal, as he followed Jesus on the way.

As we reflect on these passages, we see that faith is the common thread that leads to restoration. Whether we look at Job’s unwavering faith during his suffering, the psalmist’s trust in God’s shepherding care, the theological depth of Christ’s priesthood in Hebrews, or Bartimaeus’ persistent faith in Jesus, the message is clear: faith is the path to renewal.

As we gather today, I also want to honor the life and faithful service of Eric, our long-time lay leader, who passed away on the 4th of July this year. Eric served this chaplaincy with dedication for many years, as a church warden, council member, and a beloved voice in choral and group singing. Though illness marked his later years when I began my ministry here, Eric remained a steadfast presence, a man whose life reflected the quiet strength of faith.

As we remember Eric today, we give thanks for the way his faith shaped this community and the example he set for all of us. His life reminds us that restoration is not only something we await after death but something we witness in the lives of those who serve faithfully, even through times of weakness. We trust that Eric now rests in God's eternal care, fully restored and at peace.

In conclusion, we are reminded today that restoration through faith is a promise for all of us. No matter what brokenness we face—whether it is the suffering of Job, the need for guidance as in Psalm 23, the desire for spiritual renewal in Hebrews, or the cry for healing from Bartimaeus—faith is the key to experiencing God's restoration.

As we go forward, let us place our faith in the God who restores, knowing that through Him, we are constantly being healed and renewed. Whether we face trials, walk through the valleys of life, or seek healing, God's grace is always at work, restoring us and bringing us closer to wholeness in Him. Amen.