

## Called to Compassion

October 25, 2020  
Rev. Dr. Charlene Han  
Powell  
Senior Pastor

### OPEN IN PRAYER

### OPENING QUESTION

Share about a time you were the recipient of meaningful compassion. What was that like for you? How did it impact you?

### SCRIPTURE READING

Together Read 2 Kings 5:1–19 (NRSV)

**5** Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. **2** Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. **3** She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." **4** So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. **5** And the king of Aram said, "Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel."

He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. **6** He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy." **7** When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me."

**8** But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel." **9** So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. **10** Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." **11** But Naaman

became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! <sup>12</sup> Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage. <sup>13</sup> But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean'?" <sup>14</sup> So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

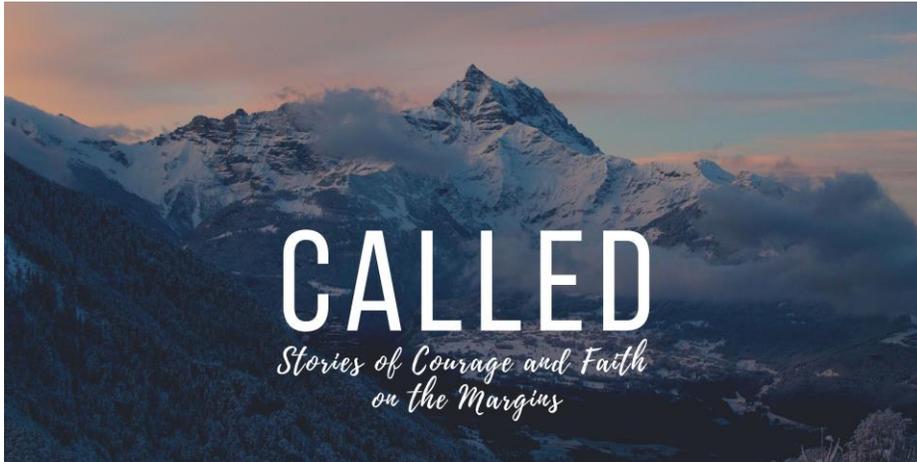
<sup>15</sup> Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; please accept a present from your servant." <sup>16</sup> But he said, "As the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing!" He urged him to accept, but he refused. <sup>17</sup> Then Naaman said, "If not, please let two mule-loads of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will no longer offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god except the LORD. <sup>18</sup> But may the LORD pardon your servant on one count: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow down in the house of Rimmon, when I do bow down in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant on this one count." <sup>19</sup> He said to him, "Go in peace."

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What is surprising/troubling to you about this passage?
2. What is compassion? How does one cultivate compassion?
3. Who modeled compassion in this passage? How so?
4. What can we as individuals and faith communities learn from this passage?

### PRAYER

As you close, spend time sharing praises and prayer requests, compassionately offering these to the God whose mercies never come to an end. In addition to offering prayer for those people and causes familiar to you, quietly ask the Spirit to reveal to you those "others" for whom you might not instinctually consider. Invite the Spirit to guide your compassionate prayer and care for them this week.



## Called to Worship

October 18, 2020

Rev. Dr. Charlene Han Powell  
Senior Pastor

### OPEN IN PRAYER

Lord God, be your Spirit, teach us to obey your voice and keep your covenant so that we may be a priestly kingdom, your holy people; in Jesus's name. Amen.

### OPENING QUESTION

What does it mean to you to belong to God?

### SCRIPTURE READING

Together Read Exodus 19:1–9a, 20:1–3 (NRSV)

**19** On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day, they came into the wilderness of Sinai. **2** They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. **3** Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: **4** You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, **6** but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

**7** So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. **8** The people all answered as one: "Everything that the LORD has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD. **9** Then the LORD said

to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.”

**20** Then God spoke all these words:

<sup>2</sup>I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; <sup>3</sup>you shall have no other gods before me.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What was the unique call of the congregation of Israel? What do you think is the unique call of First Pres?
2. For the Israelites, what responsibilities came with their chosenness? What are the responsibilities or commitments that come with being a child of God today?
3. What does it mean to worship God?
4. In Exodus 19:4, God recalls bearing the Israelites on “eagles’ wings” to bring them to God, but maybe God’s wings take us to places unknown. What ways does God draw you towards the divine? Where might be God calling you/First Pres/the church to go?

### PRAYER