



*Celebrating  
175 Years*



**July 4, 2021**

Melville United Church  
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**Melville United Church**  
**July 4, 2021**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

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Presiding today - Rev. Steven Huntley

**Sharing the Light:** (*If you are watching this on-line or reading it from a page I invite you to take a moment to light a candle, centre yourself and prepare to enter into a time of worship and prayer.*)

**Welcome**

**Acknowledgment:**

*We live on the traditional territories of the Attawandaron, Wyandot, Mississauga, and Haudenosaunee First Nations. These are treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit ("Between the Lakes Treaty"). They are also part of the crown grant to the Six Nations ("Haldemand grant"). Grateful for their stewardship of this land, we humbly seek to live together in pursuit of justice and right relations.*

**Call to Worship:**

**Hymn:** Come, Let Us Sing   **VU222**

- 1     Come, let us sing to the Lord our song,  
      we have stood silently too long;  
      surely the Lord deserves our praise,  
      so joyfully thank God for our days.
  
- 2     O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;  
      God's living waters will never fail.  
      Surely the Lord will help you to stand,  
      strengthened and comforted by God's hand.
  
- 3     You dwell among us and cause us to pray,  
      and walk with each other following your way;  
      our precious brothers and sisters will grow  
      in the fulfilling love they know.
  
- 4     Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing  
      to the desire of all living things.  
      Come, all you creatures, high and low,  
      let your praises endlessly flow.

**Opening Prayer:**

**Ministry of Music:** Something to Sing About/This Land is Your Land

**Scripture:** Luke 17, 5-6 1-34 (Good News Bible)

(Faith)

The apostles said to the Lord, “Make our faith greater.”

The Lord answered, “If you had faith as big as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea!’ and it would obey you.

**Scripture:** John 9, 1-34 (Good News Bible)

(Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind)

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. His disciples asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused him to be born blind? Was it his own or his parents' sin?”

Jesus answered, “His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents' sins. He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him. As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light for the world.”

After he said this, Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the spittle; he rubbed the mud on the man's eyes and told him, “Go and wash your face in the Pool of Siloam.” (This name means “Sent.”) So the man went, washed his face, and came back seeing.

His neighbors, then, and the people who had seen him begging before this, asked, “Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?”

Some said, “He is the one,” but others said, “No he isn't; he just looks like him.”

So the man himself said, “I am the man.”

“How is it that you can now see?” they asked him.

He answered, “The man called Jesus made some mud, rubbed it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash my face. So I went, and as soon as I washed, I could see.”

“Where is he?” they asked.

“I don't know,” he answered.

Then they took to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. The day that Jesus made the mud and cured him of his blindness was a Sabbath. The Pharisees, then, asked the man again how he had received his sight. He told them, “He put some mud on my eyes; I washed my face, and now I can see.”

Some of the Pharisees said, “The man who did this cannot be from God, for he does not obey the Sabbath law.”

Others, however, said, "How could a man who is a sinner perform such miracles as these?" And there was a division among them.

So the Pharisees asked the man once more, "You say he cured you of your blindness—well, what do you say about him?"

"He is a prophet," the man answered.

The Jewish authorities, however, were not willing to believe that he had been blind and could now see, until they called his parents and asked them, "Is this your son? You say that he was born blind; how is it, then, that he can now see?"

His parents answered, "We know that he is our son, and we know that he was born blind. But we do not know how it is that he is now able to see, nor do we know who cured him of his blindness. Ask him; he is old enough, and he can answer for himself!" His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities, who had already agreed that anyone who said he believed that Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue.<sup>23</sup> That is why his parents said, "He is old enough; ask him!"

A second time they called back the man who had been born blind, and said to him, "Promise before God that you will tell the truth! We know that this man who cured you is a sinner."

"I do not know if he is a sinner or not," the man replied. "One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see."

"What did he do to you?" they asked. "How did he cure you of your blindness?"

"I have already told you," he answered, "and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Maybe you, too, would like to be his disciples?"

They insulted him and said, "You are that fellow's disciple; but we are Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses; as for that fellow, however, we do not even know where he comes from!"

The man answered, "What a strange thing that is! You do not know where he comes from, but he cured me of my blindness! We know that God does not listen to sinners; he does listen to people who respect him and do what he wants them to do. Since the beginning of the world nobody has ever heard of anyone giving sight to a person born blind. Unless this man came from God, he would not be able to do a thing."

They answered, "You were born and brought up in sin—and you are trying to teach us?" And they expelled him from the synagogue.

**Message:** Lord, Increase Our Faith

Luke 17: 5-6; John 9: 1-34

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus' disciples have been traveling with Jesus. They have seen and heard the amazing acts and wonders; they've seen and heard things they couldn't possibly imagine before they decided to follow Jesus. They have been amazed and sometimes shocked at his words and deeds.

In chapter 17, Jesus had been teaching his disciples on the subject of...sin, faith and duty as Luke records, and even after all they have seen and heard they appear bewildered at the demands that Jesus sets forth, and they respond with, "Master, "Increase our faith!"

I'm betting that there isn't' one person listening into this service who wouldn't say the same thing, "Increase our faith." What Jesus asked of them and us seems monumental – how could they/we meet that kind of standard. No sinning, forgive someone 7 times in a day, etc., etc. They needed more faith!

What is faith? **Hebrews 11:1** "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

So, we walk by faith, our entire relationship with God is based on faith, trust "Without faith it is impossible to please God, James 2" YES, without faith it is impossible to please God, "Lord, help me! Increase my faith.

Yet faith is not just the domain of the holy, or Christianity, it is something we do every day. We exercise faith daily, sometimes every few minutes. **Think about it**, when you drove to the church, or the grocery store or to visit the family, you did so by faith. You had faith that the cars that were going in the opposite direction would stay in their lane! Driving in Toronto notwithstanding. And you didn't even think about it, you just did it. No, "increase my faith, Lord"- You just did it. We have faith when we turn the watertap on – that water would come out. Switch on the light in darkness. I'm a golfer, without faith and its synonym, trust I'd be hopeless! I'd be chasing the golf ball all over the course -which often happens!!

YOU KNOW, ALL THESE THNGS that require faith we've all learned to do at one time or another- we do them well or we wouldn't be here. Many of them we have practiced like, sports or music, and many other areas of life. Sometimes it seemed scary at first and took courage – they all took faith!

So, when Jesus say's to us, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry bush cast into the sea, you can imagine it is possible. I don't think he meant that literally, he was making the point that it is possible to be a follower and learn to stop sinning, learn to forgive, learn to love your neighbour and more.

We don't need to be the world's greatest lover or forgiver, Jesus has that job, we just need the faith a mustard seed, just tiny faith, small faith. Not huge acts of supernatural faith and service, just those faithful acts of everyday obedience we can do every hour, minute, days of our lives. Just plant them and watch them grow!

The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him, we start to imagine the possibilities. Yes, and God forgives us and loves us and has plenty of patience. **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift God. I have some Good News for you, **our God is the God of more.** MORE of God – look at

nature, look at life, look in our own lives where God filled your life with his love and beauty. Faith size of Mustard Seed!

**Faith is all these things and more. Synonymous with trust. It is by faith that we follow Jesus.**

Let's turn now to the story of the blind man in the ninth chapter of John. In this story the gospel writer John delivers a remarkable example of faith and MORE faith, the story of the blind man born at birth. It is a story of faith unapparelled that grows and grows.

It is an amazing story for many reason, not least that a blind person received their sight, it is also a story of faith, healing, courage and growing faith. In this story we experience how one man's faith saved him and how that faith grew and grew. Lessons for us.

Jesus is in Jerusalem, arriving knowing that he will experience stiff opposition, still he continues in his teaching and healing. In many ways, it is an acted parable. Jesus used parables to teach. Let's dig deeper.

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth.<sup>2</sup> His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

<sup>3</sup> "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.<sup>4</sup> As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.<sup>5</sup> While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

<sup>6</sup> After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. <sup>7</sup> "Go," he told him, wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

In this one verse The Blind Man (we never get to know his real (name) makes an act of faith. Did you hear it? It is a small word as, small as a mustard seed, yet it can cast a mustard tree into the sea! Just two-letters, "Go," pretty small, eh! Jesus said go and he went. He could not see who was talking to him...think of that!! Yet he moved, that was faith. He got up and went. He didn't think about it or analyze it to death; he just acts. And what happens? He regains his sight.

Abraham GO! "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." Apostle Paul – blinded himself Hears a voice saying, Go into town Damascus and you will be told what you must do. And he does, hearing not knowing what is next. For all he knew he was going to see at Ophthalmologist.

Notice in all three instances they acted after. Romans 10: 17 "Faith comes through hearing, not sight.

So often we ignore the prodding's of the Holy Spirit, really, you want me to do what? I've never on that before = and hundreds of other answers. The point is to act in a timely fashion, don't let it pass.

**Dave** – daughter, not much contact over the years, so I didn't know if he'd be prepared to share what was going on in his world. I don't always act either and ends in regret.

Back to the story. Of course, the miracle soon gets around, people are asking and spreading the news and the news reaches the Pharisees.

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup>Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

<sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.

Others said, "No, he only looks like him."

But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

<sup>10</sup>"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.

<sup>11</sup>He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."

<sup>12</sup>"Where is this man?" they asked him.

"I don't know," he said.

### **The Pharisees Investigate the Healing**

<sup>13</sup>They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. <sup>14</sup>Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. <sup>15</sup>Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."

<sup>16</sup>Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So, they were divided.

<sup>17</sup>Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man replied, "He is a prophet."

<sup>18</sup>They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. <sup>19</sup>"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"

<sup>20</sup>"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. <sup>21</sup>But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." <sup>22</sup>His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. <sup>23</sup>That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

<sup>24</sup>A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."

<sup>25</sup> He replied, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!”

<sup>26</sup> Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

<sup>27</sup> He answered, “I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?”

<sup>28</sup> Then they hurled insults at him and said, “You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses! <sup>29</sup> We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.”

Later he even bantered with Jesus, his faith having grown.

<sup>30</sup> The man answered, “Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. <sup>31</sup> We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. <sup>32</sup> Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

<sup>34</sup> To this they replied, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” And they threw him out.

Ending From Steve...The Blind Man's faith grew exponentially as he trusted what God in Jesus had done for him. By God's grace we do the same thing knowing/growing in the light of His love. There is no limit what God can do for us, even when our faith seems small....like the size of a mustard seed!

### **Prayers:**

#### **Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

## **Offering:**

If you would like to do your part by making a monetary donation to Melville United church, there are a number of ways to do that.

1. *Cheque (post-dated cheques are welcome): made payable to: Melville United Church - which can be mailed to the church at P.O. Box 41, Fergus, ON N1M 2W7 or put in the mail slot beside the parking lot door.*
2. *Donate online through the Canada Helps website  
<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/melville-united-church/>*
3. *Call Lynda, to arrange Pre-Authorized Remittance payments (PAR).*
4. *E-transfer directly from your bank. E-mail to [secretary@melvilleunited.com](mailto:secretary@melvilleunited.com)*

## **Offering Prayer:**

**Hymn:** Precious Lord, Take My Hand **VU670**

- 1      Precious Lord, take my hand,  
lead me on, let me stand,  
          I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
through the storm, through the night,  
lead me on to the light:  
          take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
- 2      When my way grows drear,  
precious Lord, linger near,  
          when my life is almost gone,  
hear my cry, hear my call,  
hold my hand lest I fall:  
          take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
- 3      When the darkness appears,  
and the night draws near,  
          and the day is past and gone,  
at the river I stand,  
guide my feet, hold my hand:  
          take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

## **Blessing/Sending Forth:**

## **Postlude:**

## **Prayer of the Week:**