

## Sermon June 7, 2026

### Long Thread of Mercy – take yarn

#### 1. Begin with a Question

Hold your hands out like you're inviting them into a story.

**"Have you ever had to try something new—something a little scary, like the first day at a new school, or trying a new sport, or meeting a new friend?"**

Let them answer.

**"Trying new things can feel exciting... and also a little wobbly inside."**

#### 2. Connect to Abraham

Say:

**"In our Bible story today, God asks a man named Abraham to go somewhere new. God doesn't give him a map. God just says, 'Go. I'll show you the way as you walk.'"**

Pause.

**"Abraham didn't know what would happen. But he trusted that God would go with him."**

#### 3. Connect to Matthew and the Woman

Say:

**"And then we hear about Jesus meeting people who were also having big, hard moments."**

- **Matthew** was sitting at his job, feeling left out and not liked by many people.  
**Jesus walked right up to him and said, 'Follow me.'**
- **A woman** who had been sick for a long, long time reached out to touch Jesus' cloak.  
**Jesus stopped, turned around, and saw her. Really saw her.**
- **A dad** came to Jesus because his daughter was very sick.  
**Jesus went with him and brought healing and hope.**

Say:

**“Jesus didn’t wait for people to be perfect or brave or important. Jesus met them right where they were.”**

#### **4. Bring It to Their Lives**

Ask:

**“Did you know God calls you too? Not just grown-ups. You.”**

Let that settle.

**“God calls you to be kind.**

**God calls you to be brave.**

**God calls you to help others.**

**God calls you to try new things.**

**And God sees you—really sees you—when you’re scared or sad or unsure.”**

#### **5. A Simple Object Lesson (Optional)**

Hold up a **small flashlight**.

Say:

**“This little light reminds me that God’s love goes with us wherever we go—even into new places or new feelings.**

**We don’t always get a map. But we always get God’s light.”**

Turn it on.

**“Just enough light for the next step.”**

#### **6. Practice Trusting God Together**

Invite them to place a hand on their heart.

**“Let’s take a deep breath.**

**Think of something new or hard you’re facing.**

**Now imagine God holding your hand, saying,**

**‘I’m with you. Let’s go together.’”**

#### **7. Blessing**

**“God who calls us,**

**God who sees us,**

**thank You for walking with us**

**into new places and new feelings.  
Help us be brave,  
help us be kind,  
and help us remember  
that Your love goes with us everywhere.  
Amen."**

### **Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26**

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with Jesus and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners."

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." and the woman was made well from that moment.

When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go report of this spread through all of that district, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the

### **The Long Thread of Mercy**

Beloved, today we stand with Abraham at the edge of a map that is not yet drawn. We stand with Matthew at the tax booth, with the bleeding woman reaching out in desperation, with the grieving father begging for life to return. Today's scriptures are full of people who are asked to move... sometimes physically, sometimes spiritually, sometimes into a new way of seeing the world and

themselves. Every one of them is called into a future they cannot yet imagine. They experience the long thread of mercy that extends to us today.

God comes to Abram *"Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you."* No map. No timeline. Just: **Go. Trust. Walk. I will show you as you move.**

Abram is seventy-five years old when this call comes. The world has already told him who he is, what he can expect, what is possible. And yet God shows him that life has more surprises just for you. **Extravagant blessings and a future filled with hope!**

This is not just a story about one ancient man. It is a story about every person who has ever felt the Spirit tug them toward a future that feels both terrifying and holy.

It is the story of the immigrant who leaves home with nothing but hope. It is the story of the person in recovery who chooses life one trembling day at a time. It is the story of the young trans person who steps into their truth even when the world tries to legislate them out of existence. It is the story of each of us that dare to ask, "What new thing is God calling us to become?"

God's call is rarely convenient. It is always disruptive. And it always leads toward blessing—not the shallow blessing of comfort, but the deep blessing of becoming.

Generations later, Matthew sits at his tax booth. He is part of a system that harms his own people. He does his job, so he can survive, but his job directly harms his neighbors. He sits that day filled with shame. Until...

Until that moment when Jesus walks by and says **"Follow me."**

And Matthew gets up. He follows because he chooses to accept the invitation to a new beginning.

And then Jesus goes to dinner at Matthew's house because Jesus always goes to the places respectable people avoid. And when the religious leaders complain, Jesus says: *"I desire mercy, not sacrifice."*

Mercy is the courage to see people as more than the worst thing they've done or the hardest thing they've survived. Mercy is the refusal to let shame have the last word.

And moments later, we see mercy in action. A leader kneels before Jesus and begs for his daughter's life. As he rushes to save her, a woman who has been

bleeding for twelve long years pushes through the crowd, reaching for the hem of Jesus' cloak.

She is not supposed to be there. She is not supposed to touch anyone. She is not supposed to hope.

But she reaches anyway.

And Jesus stops and turns to this unnamed woman. Not to scold of shame her... but to see her.

He names her faith and gives back her dignity. He restores her to her community.

This is the Jesus who calls us.

This is the Jesus who heals us.

This is the Jesus who sends us.

And he still has time to save a little girl's life and give her a future with hope.

These stories show us the long thread of mercy. A thread that extends from ancient Canaan to Galilee to our world today. A thread of mercy that each of us inherits. In Baltimore, there are harm reduction teams that walk the streets. They offer clean supplies, Narcan, and dignity. They don't ask people to get clean before they offer help. They don't demand repentance before compassion. They simply show up with the understanding that each person's life matters. Their story matters. We all matter.

Today we encounter a God who still calls, still heals, still disrupts, still leads.

God calls ordinary people into extraordinary futures. Abram and Matthew; a bleeding woman and a dying child; You and Me. The long thread of mercy reaching into this congregation and beyond.

So what is God calling us to now? Where is the Spirit saying, "Go to the land I will show you"? Where is Jesus saying, "Follow me"? Where is the hem of Christ's garment brushing past us, inviting us to boldly reach out?

Maybe God is calling us to provide sanctuary to those our society pushes to the margins. Maybe God is calling us to be a place where shame has no home. Maybe God is calling us to risk something for the sake of healing... our own or someone else's.

Maybe God is calling us to build a future we cannot yet see.

Like Abram, like Matthew, like the woman, like the grieving father—we are invited to step into a future shaped not by fear, but by the God who walks with us.

As children of the resurrection, we are called to see the world with new eyes. A place where:

A girl rises.

A woman rises.

A tax collector rises.

A whole people rises

Amen.