**Date** – June 5, 2022

**Sermon Series** – The Disabled Body—A Wondrously Wounded Banquet of Belonging

**Scripture** – Luke 14:21b-23 ESV

And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ 23 And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.

**Big Idea** – The Kingdom of God is a banquet of belonging.

**Summary** –

God is not surprised when a person is born. He knows that person from the very beginning and is working steadily to make him/her into a reality. Every human life images God. So as we think about THE DISABLED BODY, we need to understand and acknowledge that bodily abilities or disabilities in themselves neither advantage nor disadvantage the imaging of God’s glory.

Amy Kenny is a disabled scholar who wrote the book*, My Body is Not a Prayer Request*. Following is an excerpt that Randy shared:

*To assume that my disability needs to be erased in order for me to live an abundant life is disturbing not only because of what it says about me but also because of what it reveals about people’s notions of God. I bear the image of the Alpha and the Omega. My disabled body is a temple for the Holy Spirit. I have the mind of Christ. There’s no caveat to those promises. I don’t have a junior holy spirit because I am disabled. To suggest that I am anything less than sanctified and redeemed is to suppress the image of God in my disabled body and to limit how God is already at work through my life. Maybe we need to be freed not from disability but from the notion that it limits my ability to showcase God’s radiance to the church. What we need is to be freed from ableism.*

Amy says that not all impairments are disabilities. Instead, it’s the way the world responds to these impairments that’s disabling. She writes: “Not all disabled people are in pain. Not all suffer from our bodies, but all of us suffer from the way society mocks or limits those bodies.”

A Biblical worldview on disability differs from modern and postmodern perspectives. How people are viewed affects how people are treated.

* The 20th century modern world sees disability as an abnormal part of life in a normal world. This results in stigmatizing.
* Our 21st century postmodern world sees disability as normal part of life in a normal world. “Having a disability is a difference like any other human characteristic. It is not a deficiency. It is by no means a tragedy and does not deserve pity or benevolence or charity. Now is the time to recognize and celebrate disability rather than ignore, devalue or use it as a justification for lower expectations.” (Carol Tashdie)
* Christianity sees disability as something normal in an abnormal world. When God made the heavens and the earth, he said, “good.” When God created Adam and Eve he said, “very good.” Then tragedy struck. The fall of humanity adversely impacted every aspect of creation. Our world became an abnormal world. This marring of creation seeped not only into the spiritual, but also the physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, and social. The effects carry over today into our work, our world, our bodies, and our relationships with self, others, and God.

**Questions –**

* What is your definition of “normal?”
* What are your “weakness, inability, and brokenness?”
* Throughout the Bible God uses people with weakness, inability, and brokenness to reveal his glory and teach us to rely on him. Read Genesis 32: 22-32. What is the outcome of the struggle Jacob had with God? What is the purpose of this outcome?
* Consider Moses in Exodus 4. When God called Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt; Moses gave excuses. He finally asks God, “How can I speak?” Then the Lord said to him, “*Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak.”* (Exodus 4:11-12 ESV) Don’t miss the meaning. ***God not only does not deny responsibility for conditions we would call disabilities (blindness, deafness, muteness), he assumes responsibility for them.*** How do you respond to that statement?

Why would God intentionally allow these “disabilities?”

* Read 2 Samuel 9. What do we learn from the story of Mephibosheth?
* What does the passage from 2 Samuel 9 teach us about how we should treat the Mephibosheths among us?
* Read Luke 14:16-23.
	+ Who were the first people the host invited to the banquet? How did they respond?
	+ What was the next group of people the host invited?
	+ Finally, who filled the remaining seats at the banquet?
	+ How did this parable reflect what Jesus was modeling in his ministry?
	+ What does this tell us about the guests who will be at the table for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?
	+ How is our church striving to reach the “invisible” people?
* **The Kingdom of God is a banquet of belonging**. And here is the divine surprise – when we start to do for “the least of these” what David did for Mephibosheth and what Jesus called his followers to do, we learn that **we** are the broken and the needy. They are us. It reminds us of our true state before God. How does this divine surprise change your perspective about your own status?

How does it change your perspective about people who have disabled bodies?