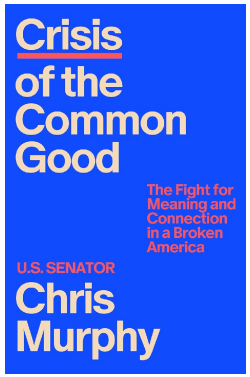
SERMON TAKE-HOME NOTES — June 7, 2026

A paragraph from Senator Chris Murphy's new book *Crisis of the Common Good*:



> Justin Ford Kimball was a lifelong educator before he was hired as an executive at Baylor University Medical Center in 1929, so it wasn't surprising that he was the one to notice something odd about the hospital's [finances]: an unusually high number of local teachers were carrying large unpaid bills. He called up the local teachers' union and offered them a deal: for 50 cents a month, teachers would be entitled to free stays of up to twenty-one days at the hospital after paying full charge for the first week. The arrangement proved to be so popular that it quickly spread across the country and gained a name: Blue Cross plans. The 50-cent fee was America's first health insurance premium, and the first week's charge was the first deductible. Justin Ford Kimball didn't know it, but he had invented the health insurance industry.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield dominated the health insurance industry las century with a model of a not-for-profit approach. What has happened in the 21st century, even as we've tried to increase the non-profit options of health insurance through Obamacare especially for those whose employers don't provide health insurance? We've gone the way of *for*-profit health insurance. In 2023, the largest health insurance company, United Healthcare, bragged about making a $22 billion profit for investors. You health and my health are now just another commodity for which the wealthy to make even more money.

Jesus in today's Gospel Reading shows us different 'health care' values, where each person, instead of being a commodity, has the same precious value in God's eyes. He heals a poor woman who's been bleeding for many years; and then he raises the daughter of a wealthy leader.

Modern healthcare professionals are thankfully *trained* with Jesus' values. When you or I show up in the emergency room, the doctors and nurses are trained to treat us as having equal value. But the system they work in is increasingly asking them to operate in seeing patients as having unequal value, based on how much they can pay. Every other industrialized nation on earth operates their health care with Jesus' values by making all health insurance non-profit, mostly through the government. Their health outcomes are better than ours, and their health costs are *substantially* lower than ours. Why do we keep choosing health care that treats us as commodities off of which to make and hoard billions of dollars?

Here's a proposal as to why: In the other industrialized nations that have Christianity in their background, they have kept Jesus' values at the core of their healthcare, treating each person as having precious, equal value. But the church itself no longer has much influence in their democratic policy choices. Jesus' way of healing quietly forms the foundation of their healthcare, even if few realize or name it that way. In this country, the church has still had some significant influence, but it has been the wrong kind. Conservative Christianity has bought the antisocialist, unregulated-capitalist story perpetuated by the wealthy, and convinced enough others of us, to keep making choices that turn our health into commodities. Meanwhile, Christians of a different mind have been bashful to speak up.

But here's the part we can work to change: in the background to Christians being sold a bill of goods on unfettered capitalism has been a tendency to increasingly get our story wrong! As we increasingly focus the Good News on what happens to us in the afterlife, we become more prone to accepting someone else's story of how we should order our values and our common good along other lines, in which a person's value is measured by how much wealth they can accumulate in this life.

Here's an overview once again of getting the Bible's story straight:

- **Christmas/Incarnation**: God begins to come home to earth once again by taking the form of a human life, to live the values of love and justice to all the human family, working to heal and unite us.
- **Good Friday/Easter**: the empire strikes back. The values of nationalism and empire can't abide these values so they execute Jesus on the cross. God vindicates Jesus by raising him on the third day.
- **Ascension/Pentecost**: God's rule in love does not operate as an authoritarianism, so Jesus pulls back for a time and pours out the Holy Spirit of God's love on all who will receive it, so that *we* might continue to live the values of God's reign in this world.

Siblings in Christ, it's time for us to choose the right story and to speak up for the healing and health of all God's children!