



June 27, 2021 Mk. 5: 21-43 Wis. 1:13-15; 2:23-24

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Have you ever wondered why Jesus asked who touched me in the middle of a pressing crowd? The disciples obviously didn't care, all they knew was they were on the cusp of a great opportunity if Jesus could heal the daughter of one of their rulers. People would have to sit up and take notice then, wouldn't they? But Jesus never uses a person's problem to advance his cause. He wants this woman to know that it was her faith, not some magic touch of his garment that healed her. Over and over again, Jesus will respond to someone's need and then free them to go and live their life. There are no strings attached to his love. The ruler and his household also protected when Jesus puts everyone out of the room. The ruler could have had his daughter restored to him, and his position not threatened by just telling others, that she was just asleep after all. He too is free then to just go and live his life. God's love seems to be free with no strings attached. Is our love like that?

Mk. 5:21-43

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, a great crowd gathered about him: and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the **rulers** of the **synagogue**, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he **fell** at his **feet**. 23 And **besought** him, saying, My little **daughter** is at the point of **death**: Come and **lay** your **hands** on her, so that she may be **healed**; and she shall **live**. 24 And Jesus went with him; and a great crowd followed him, and **pressed** round him. 25 And there was a **woman** who had had a flow of blood for **twelve** years, 26 and had **spent** all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and **touched** his **garment**. 28 for she said, "If I touch even his **garments**, I shall be made **well**." 29 and immediately the hemorrhage ceased; and she felt in her body that she was **healed** of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that **power** had gone forth from him, immediately turned about in the crowd, and said, "Who touched my **garments**?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd **pressing** around you, and yet you say, 'Who **touched** me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 but the woman, knowing what had been done to her, came in **fear** and **trembling** and **fell** down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "**Daughter**, your faith has made you **well**; go in peace, and be **healed** of your disease." 35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler's house some who said, "Your **daughter** is **dead**. Why trouble the Teacher any further? 36 but ignoring what they said, Jesus said to the **ruler** of the **synagogue**, "Do not **fear**, only **believe**." 37 and he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 when they came to the house of the **ruler** of the **synagogue**, he saw a **tumult**, and people **weeping** and **wailing** loudly. 39 And when he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a **tumult** and **weep**? The child is not **dead** but sleeping." 40 and they laughed at him. But he put them all outside, and took the **child's** father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the **child** was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, "Talitha cumi"; which means. "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 and immediately the girl got up and walked; for she was **twelve** years old. And immediately they were overcome with **amazement**. 43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The woman who was healed and the daughter that was restored to life both were the recipients of God's free gift of love. When was the last time you received such a free gift of love?

PRAYER: Loving God, Cyril Brooks says it well: There are so many different ways of being healed. The best way, and by far the commonest, is to be loved. To be loved by God, and to know it and live it, is to be healed indeed. The Good News first of all is that you and I are accepted and loved by God. From all eternity you and I have been in the mind of God. God's love for us is utterly reliable and has no conditions whatsoever." Let us all say; Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

RULER: One translation uses the word official in place of ruler. In either case, the man was someone who was taking a significant risk coming to Jesus who was now being seen as a threat to the status quo, all this for the sake of a daughter, who in those days was the least in importance in the value system of the day.

What does this tell you about the official? Do you like this man? What does this tell you about Jesus?

SYNAGOGUE: The synagogue was the place of study and prayer in the local communities. It was the most important place in the local communities of Judaism.

What does this father have to lose by this behavior? What do you think the people thought as they watched this important man beg for a girl child?

FELL: The man fell at Jesus' feet, the most abject posture a person takes in relation to another.

Have you ever loved enough to put yourself in this same situation?

FEET: The feet were supposedly the most lowly part member of the body. Jesus will later wash his disciple's feet at the Last Supper.

Do you think you would have been shocked if you were an 'upstanding' member of the synagogue and witnessed this episode? If you had been someone attracted to Jesus, what could this do for your budding interest?

BESOUGHT: To beseech someone is to plead for something. It usually implies a sort of desperation.

Have you desperately sought help for someone you loved? Has anyone sought help for you in this manner? What was that like?

GIRL / DAUGHTER / CHILD: In the times of Jesus, the value of a person often resided in their being someone who could enrich the family system. Girl children were of the least value in this civilization.

What would the women and children of Jesus' day made of this episode? Does it have anything to say to any of the questions of our day?

DEAD / DEATH: To be dead in those days meant the end of everything, since most did not have a belief in a life after life. If this girl dies before she can become a mother, it will be as if she never existed at all.

How does the belief in the Resurrection change all this?

LAY: The man believed that Jesus' touch could heal his beloved daughter.

What in the gospel so far could give the man this hope? Scan chapters 1-5 for clues.

HANDS: Healers often used their hands to heal people. (See Jn. 9:6; Mk. 6:5-6; 8:22-26) In today's alternative healing therapies there is a method known as "healing touch".

Do you know of anyone who has been healed through touch? What forms does this type of therapy take today? Have you ever healed someone by the touch of your hands?

HEALED / WELL: To be healed or made well is to be able to make meaning out of what is happening. This may or may not include a physical cure.

Have you ever been healed of the need to be healed? Does this permit you to keep on in spite of adversity?

LIVE: To live is to be able to experience being in relation with God and others.

How will this family be different after today? How will their relationships with God and each other be affected by this experience?

PRESSED / PRESSING: The crowds were jamming around so much as to make it hard to proceed.

What does this tell you about their expectations? Have you ever 'pressed' for something/ someone?

WOMAN: Now we encounter the second least valued person in those days; a woman who is afflicted with something that separates her from her community and her worship. She was considered 'unclean'. She has been searching for wholeness as long as the little girl above has been alive.

What connections do you make between these two females? Why do you think the community of Mark valued these miracles so much as to include them in the gospel? What is being said about Jesus' God in these stories?

TWELVE: The number twelve always signifies completeness in the system of thought of Jesus' day.

What is completed in these two miracle stories?

SPENT: To spend is to give something of value for something valued.

We know what the woman spent, what did Jesus spend? What was gained?

TOUCHED: In being touched by the woman, and then touching the dead child, Jesus incurred uncleanness.

What idea about God was confronted by these times of being touched and touching?

GARMENT / S: There was a belief that clothing touched by the healer could heal. See Acts 19:12.
What do you think could have started this belief? Is there a similar belief active today? Where?

POWER: Jesus felt his power leave him and wanted the woman to know it was her faith, not his garment that healed her.
What difference would this make for the woman? What do you think the ruler thought as Jesus delayed in the effort to find the woman? Could this time lapse be seen as the cause of the little girl's death?

FEAR / TREMBLING: The woman is faced with a crisis now as she is confronted. She sees the impatience of the disciples and she feels the press of the crowd, and maybe even the distress of the official of the synagogue. She has made Jesus unclean. She could be still and just slip away in the crowd.
What do you think gave her the courage, in spite of her fear and trembling, to come forward with the truth? Was she healed on several levels by owning up to her actions?

BELIEVE: To believe is to accept something as true.
What did this woman believe now that Jesus has identified the real source of her healing?

TUMULT / WEEPING / WAILING: All these words set the scene for tragedy. Jesus and the father of the girl are greeted with the truth that the girl is dead. Jesus assures the man that the people's truth is not true.
What 'truths' reveal themselves not true with the eyes of faith?

AMAZEMENT: The word amazement implies open-mouthed awe. Something totally unexpected and yet wonder-filled has just happened. The father and mother of the girl have gone from wanting a healing for a sick child to seeing her come back from the dead.
Have you ever gone to God for a need that started out to be one thing and turned out to be even greater than you thought? Did you go from pleading, to despair, to amazement as this father did? How was your faith changed by this experience?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mk. 5:21 // Mk. 2:13; Mk. 5: 22 // Mt. 9: 18-26; Lk. 8:41-56; Mk. 5:34 // Lk. 7:50; Mk. 5:39 // Acts 9:40f;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: 2 Sam. 1:1, 17-27; Ps. 130; 2 Cor. 8:7-15; Mk. 5:21-43;
Revised Common Lectionary: 2 Sam. 1:1, 17-27; Ps. 130; 2 Cor. 8: 7-15; Mk. 5:21-43;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

There was a flow of power, and instead of the unclean power overcoming him, the holy power flowed out and healed her.
Fr. Robert Beck

[Doctors, Diseases and Deities: Epidemic Crises and Medicine in Ancient Rome](#)

Conversion takes place with the community. Perhaps that crowd around the woman was more like a supportive community than a cursory reading would indicate. It was from others (in the crowd?) that she had heard about Jesus. It may well have been the enthusiasm and faith of the crowd that gave her the courage to move towards Jesus. And I don't think it's forcing the facts to imagine the joy of the people around her when they saw the work of God that Jesus had performed. So this conversion of a person who had so long been tormented by sickness is within the context of a crowd, a community. Christians are a walking crowd of histories, jostling each other at times, carry each other at other times. We need each other. Most likely the word that will lead us to Jesus, the word that will turn our needs towards his power in faith, will come to us from this crowd around us. We need each other, in a sense, to conceal ourselves as we grope toward Jesus. And we need each other as our wounds are finally uncovered, because even in a Christian community we realize that no sickness is so utterly unique that many others don't share it.
Fitzpatrick, Mother Gail, OCSO. [Seasons of Grace: Wisdom from the Cloister](#). Chicago. ACTA Pub. 2000. Pg. 160-1.

Another Galilean charismatic, Hanina be Dosa, was a famous healer. When the son of his community leader, Yohanan ben Zakkai, was taken ill, Yohanan said to the healer, "Hanina, pray for my son that he may live" Hanina put his head between his knees and prayed – and the boy was made well.
(Babylonian Talmud, *Berakot 43b*. Fossum, Jarl. [Understanding Jesus' Miracles](#). Bible Review April 1994. Pages 16ff.

"Matthew, for example, takes offence at the drastic way with which Mk. 5:27ff told the healing of the woman with the hemorrhage. The idea that the garments of the miracle worker communicate divine power, which leaps forth and is capable of healing, is a vulgar Hellenistic notion that appears in exactly this way in the account of Peter's healing shadow and Paul's miraculous handkerchief (Acts 5:15; 19:12) and later shapes the cult of relics. Matthew corrects this magical view by making the cure take place no longer through the touching of the garment as such, but through Jesus' word of power. He reduces in general the broad depiction of the miracle stories in Mark, which reveal a novelistic joy in narrative, and where even motifs of profane narrative technique are sounded, in the strongest way, in order to place a stronger emphasis on the mysterious grandeur of Jesus."

E. Kasemann, *Bgründet der neutestamentliche Kanon ide Einheit der Kirche? Exegetische Versuche und Besinnungen I* 1960) PP. 214-34.
Note 6 in Chapter III. SCHISIM BECAUSE OF THE BIBLE? Kung, Hans. [Theology For the Third Millennium](#). Doubleday. NY. 1988. Pg. 287.

Notice in this story the woman is healed simply by touching Jesus, even before she actually speaks to him. As well there are two moments of healing: the initial, mute touch, and the explicit exchange between her and Jesus that later takes place. Why two different

moments of healing? What does the explicit exchange add to the essential moment of touch? Risking an interpretation through other categories, one might say that when she touched the hem of Jesus; garment she was essentially healed and when she spoke with Jesus explicitly and told him the whole truth she was fully healed. Pg. 86. Rolheiser, Ronald. [The Holy Longing](#). NY. Doubleday. 1999.

Talitha kumi (Damsel arise!) These words are inscribed on the gate of an orphanage for Arab girls designed by Conrad Schick and built in 1865, according to Martin Gilbert, *Jerusalem* (London: Hogarth, 1985), p. 123. It was torn down in 1980, according to Nitza Rosvosky, *Jerusalemwalks* (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1982), p. 217. All that remains of it now is the gate with its inscription,...

Dunne, John. [The Homing Spirit: A Pilgrimage of the Mind, of the Heart, of the Soul](#). NY. Crossroad. 1987. P. 80.

We meet dozens of people, have so many conversations. We do not feel how much energy we spend on each activity, because we imagine we will always have more energy at our disposal. This one little conversation this one extra phone call, this one quick meeting, what can it cost? But it does cost, it drains yet another drop of our life. Then, at the end of days, weeks, months, years, we collapse, we burn out, and cannot see where it happened. It happened in a thousand unconscious events, tasks, and responsibilities that seemed easy and harmless on the surface but that each, one after the other, used a small portion of our precious life. And so we are given a commandment: Remember the Sabbath. Rest is an essential enzyme of life, as necessary as air. Without rest, we cannot sustain the energy needed to have life. We refuse to rest at our peril – and yet in a world where everwork is seen as a professional virtue, many of us feel we can legitimately be stopped only by physical illness or collapse. Muller, Wayne. [Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest](#). NY. Bantam Books. 1999. Pg. 19.

Another take on bleeding: The prescription for headaches was to place six large leeches on the forehead for several hours. For depression, they were used three to five times a day, so they would draw at least two pints of blood; hysterical patients were drained of four pints or until they became calm. As strange as all this may sound, the use of leeches was actually a medical advance over the customary practice that began in 400 B.C. by the Greeks, who instead drew blood with a knife to purge the body. We still have relics of this cure: the red-and-white striped poles in front of barbershops. In medieval times these were also bleeders. Indeed, bleeding was a commonplace prophylactic protection against various afflictions. It was even used religiously to ensure chastity when older monks would bleed young monks to reduce their passionate urges.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle B 2011-12. Pgs. 92-95. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Janice Grana Ed. [Images](#). St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN 1976. PRAYER IS FOR REAL PEOPLE; Page 35

Shea, John. [Stories of faith](#). Thomas More Press, Chicago. 1980. WHO TOUCHED ME? Pages 193-4.