

Be Healed!
Mark 5:21-43
August 8, 2021

In today's scripture lesson from Mark, we find a woman who has an experience with doctors that many can probably relate to. She had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. Mark says, "She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse!" Mk 5:26

I have heard many people over the years over the years express those very sentiments –That they had been to many doctors and spent a lot of money, without being helped! Maybe you have had that experience.

In the second story today, we hear about Jairus and his daughter. As the story begins, Jesus is returning from time spent with the Gentiles in the country of the Gerasenes, which was located on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. They had just crossed a rough and stormy sea, and now they are going back to the Jewish or western side of the Sea of Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee represents a physical and spiritual boundary between the Gentiles and Jews. When Jesus arrived back on the Jewish side of the Sea of Galilee, a great crowd gathered around him. One of the men in the crowd was Jairus, a synagogue leader.

Jairus' daughter was sick—she was dying. Jairus was a desperate man. Jairus had heard of Jesus' healing miracles, and had come to ask Jesus to heal his daughter. If Jairus' daughter had not been sick, it seems quite possible that he would have been on the other side of the fence—that he would have been one of Jesus' enemies. But his daughter was dying, and he knew that Jesus was a great healer. When a parent's child is dying, they'll do anything and embrace anyone who might help.

What came next tells us clearly how distressed Jairus was. Jairus fell at Jesus' feet and begged him repeatedly,

"My little daughter is at the point of death.
Come and lay your hands on her,
so that she may be made well, and live" (5:22-23).

Nothing else mattered to him. If you were in his shoes, you wouldn't be interested in theological disputes or political differences. The only thing on your mind would be getting help for your child. So Jairus fell at Jesus feet and begged him to help his daughter. Jesus responded by going with Jairus to his home.

Unfortunately, there was a delay. The crowd was still there, and they were moving along with Jesus—and they slowed him down. There was that woman in the crowd—the sick woman you remember, with the issue of blood who had spent all her money on physicians without any improvement. She quietly made her way through the crowd until she was standing next to Jesus.

She didn't ask Jesus to help her, because she had no business being in the crowd in the first place. She had a bleeding condition that made her ritually unclean, so she was not supposed to touch anyone. If she touched someone, that person would also become unclean. That poor woman's status was little better than that of a leper. But she thought, "If I just touch Jesus' clothes, I will be made well." (5:28). So she took a chance.

Without anyone noticing, she reached out and touched Jesus' cloak—and her bleeding stopped. Immediately she felt the power. She knew she had been delivered from her illness. She was lucky that no one in the crowd noticed her, because they would have driven her away. But Jesus noticed! He said, "Who touched my clothes?"

What had she done? She trembled. The woman stepped up, and told Jesus that she touched him, and she had been healed. Jesus responded by saying,

"Daughter, your faith has made you well;
go in peace, and be healed of your disease" (5:34).

But getting back to Jairus -- Jairus was right there with Jesus all along —chomping at the bit to get Jesus moving. "He's moving so slow!" Can you imagine how frustrated he must have been? Then came the bad news. Some people came to tell Jairus that his daughter had died.

He was devastated. Jairus might as well quit bothering Jesus, because there was nothing further for him to do. His daughter was dead. But Jesus wasn't ready to give up. He said, "Do not fear, only believe." (5:36)

He took some of his favorite disciples with him, and together with Jairus they walked to his house. Can you imagine the conversation? On their way they met mourners—people weeping and wailing for the dead girl. Jesus said, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping" (5:39).

They laughed at Jesus because he wasn't making sense. The little girl was dead. They had seen her with their own eyes. There was nothing more to do except grieve.

But that didn't discourage Jesus. Along with some of his disciples and the little girl's parents, he went into the house. The little girl was lying there. Jesus took her by the hand and said, "Talitha cum!"—Aramaic for "Little girl, get up!"—and she got up and began to walk around. Everyone was amazed! Jesus told them to give her something to eat, and so just like that, they walked out into the sun and continued on their way.

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So what does this have to do with us today? I think it comes down to this -- Jesus enters our lives in helpless moments and brings us hope. He heals us when we thought healing was impossible, and he makes us whole, even if health is not restored. That's important. You have a choice about how you respond when you are not well. You can be bitter, or grateful that a spiritual presence is by your side, helping you get through it all.

I have been by the bedside of people who were dying, yet they are filled with joy. It has happened more than a few times. We understand Jairus when his daughter died. We have empathy. We can relate to the woman who had a hemorrhage for over twelve years with no relief. Most of you have been in their shoes in one way or another.

I remember going through some pretty desperate times when our oldest son Jackson was chronically ill for two years. We had been to many doctors, but to no avail. None of them could find what was wrong. None of the medicines helped. But there was prayer. Thank God there was prayer. We prayed a lot, and if we could have reached out to touch the hem of Jesus' garment like the woman in today's story, we would have.

It took a long time – over two years. The healing wasn't instant, but it was nonetheless miraculous. Sometimes miracles take time. Not all miracles are immediate. The doctors never did understand what was wrong, but we do know what helped the healing. We prayed and the people in our churches prayed. That was a lot of prayer. Today he is healthy and symptom free.

I have been privy to more than a few miracles over my 40 years of ministry -- probably more than a few, but I was just too dense to notice. Six or seven years ago while serving a church in New Jersey, I got a call one day from one of the young moms in my congregation.

She had received bad news about her young two year old son, Wyatt. After a series of earaches and headaches, the doctors weren't expecting what they found. Wyatt had neuroblastoma – a rare malignant brain tumor. They couldn't do surgery. Chemo was the only option. Even so, the doctors weren't very optimistic. A two or three percent chance of survival at best.

The family was determined to beat the odds. That night, a prayer chain went out to over a hundred people from all around the world. It must have helped. Over the course of a year, the tumor had shrunk from the size of a golf ball to the size of a pea, and showed no signs of spreading.

The doctors will credited the chemo, and of course it helped, but they didn't expect that result. The family must have felt like the woman tugging on the hem of Jesus' garment. Persistent prayer made all the difference. Three years later, there was no sign of cancer. Wyatt was a normal, happy five year old running around and getting into mischief, much to his parents' delight. It doesn't always work that way, yet no matter the outcome, we can know the spiritual presence of Jesus never leaves our side.

What needs to be healed in your today? It may not be a physical need. It may be emotional or spiritual. You may be stressed and overwhelmed, or worried about the outcome of a particular situation.

A lot of this remains a mystery. Maybe there was a reason Jesus warned the disciples not to tell anyone. Like the woman with a hemorrhage, or Jairus worried about his daughter, be persistent. Don't give up. What Jesus said to Jairus, he says to us: "Do not fear, only believe." Amen.

Mark 5:21-43

5:21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea.

5:22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet

5:23 and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live."

5:24 So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.

5:25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years.

5:26 She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse.

5:27 She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,

5:28 for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well."

5:29 Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

5:30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?"

5:31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'"

5:32 He looked all around to see who had done it.

5:33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth.

5:34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

5:35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?"

5:36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe."

5:37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

5:38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly.

5:39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping."

5:40 And they laughed at him. Then 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.

5:41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!"

5:42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement.

5:43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.