

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

The Divine Gift of Life

Gospel Lesson

Mark 5:21-43 (NRSV)

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and 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." ²⁴So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶But overhearing^[b] what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰And 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. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Bible/Sermon Focus

Twelve years is a long time to bleed. Twelve years to live is a short life. Twelve years. In this week's Gospel lesson, we encounter a hemorrhaging woman who has been ill for twelve years. What we may not know, is that women with bleeding issues, or even when bodies would bleed for their monthly cycle, were considered "unclean" and therefore "untouchable" bodies. Many of us during the COVID-19 pandemic found that we had much less touch, if any, in our lives. Can you imagine what it was like to not receive any kind of touch for twelve years? We also

hear of another woman in this story, a girl actually. She is twelve years old. When a twelve-year-old dies we mourn the loss of such a short life. Twelve years is a short life...and yet, a long time to bleed. The juxtaposition of these women is glaring. The little girl who was most likely showered with love and with comfort, given her father's position in the community, and an outcast woman who had no safety or protection.

And yet, as Pastor Phil pointed out in his sermon, both of their stories are stories of faith healing. The station of these women was different but, faith healed them. The love and grace that God offers us, modeled by Jesus in this story, is a love and grace so expansive that it reaches beyond any societal preconceived notions about who is or isn't deserving. Faith healing is a sticky topic. We may find ourselves weary of the idea of faith healing given how it has been abused by some scamming religious leaders and televangelist. False faith healings have been used to convince people to give money, with promises of riches and physical healing that never come to fruition. Sometimes, no matter how much we pray or how much faith we have we do not experience the kind of miracle that those people from our text today witnessed. And that's a hard thing to live with sometimes.

Perhaps there is another miracle that we can glean from this story. Whenever Jesus heals and restores someone to health, he also restores them to community. Perhaps the miracle was in the touch of the first hug that the woman who bleed for twelve year felt. Perhaps it was in Jairus's daughters next birthday celebration. Perhaps part of our deep faith, also comes from our deep appreciation for life and those we want to share it with.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe in miracles? Have you ever witnessed a miracle? Share the story.
2. What is the role of community in your faith life?
3. When has God restored you back into community?
4. How would you define faith in your own words?
5. What do you have faith in?

Prayer

Healing God, we ask that you be with those who are sick, with those who are isolated, and with those who are suffering the loss of a loved one. God teach us to be your faithful presence in the lives of others so that they may never walk the difficult days alone. In the name of your Son and by the power of your Spirit we pray, Amen.

Healing happens through prayerful acts of kindness and love that hold evil at bay.