

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

“Who Touched Me?”

Gospel Lesson

Luke 8:40-56 (NRSV)

⁴⁰Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ⁴¹Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus’ feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴²for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. ⁴³Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians,^U no one could cure her. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵Then Jesus asked, “Who touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.” ⁴⁶But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.” ⁴⁷When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

⁴⁹While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.” ⁵⁰When Jesus heard this, he replied, “Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.” ⁵¹When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child’s father and mother. ⁵²They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.” ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But he took her by the hand and called out, “Child, get up!” ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

Bible/Sermon Focus

The story of Jairus’s daughter and the story of the hemorrhaging woman are told together, with one story sort of sandwiched in the middle of the other. The literary term for this format is “intercalated.” Reading intercalated stories has the effect of placing them in comparison / contrast with one another.

They also appear in all three of the synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These three books are known as the “synoptics” because they look similar to one another. Most scholars believe Mark was written before the other two, so the other two authors actually knew of and had read Mark’s version before writing their own. The fact that the story appears three times, in very similar format each time, gives them some extra significance.

They are healing stories, and they happen in the midst of Jesus’s ministry. The woman is healed of twelve years of uncontrolled bleeding. Jairus’s twelve-year-old daughter is brought back to life. The number twelve in both stories is no coincidence; it further links them together.

Another connecting point is the idea of daughter. Jairus's daughter is fortunate to have Jairus as her father, because he can speak for her and serve as her advocate in seeking healing. The bleeding woman is not so lucky. She has no one, and furthermore has spent all of her money seeking cures for her condition, so she has no resources either. With no male to speak for her, to claim her as family, her situation could be considered rather bleak indeed.

And so, when Jesus calls this woman "daughter," it is more than just a term of endearment. Naming her as "daughter" reconnects her. It creates relationship where there was isolation. Jesus brings the woman into a relationship in which family is defined by neither genetics nor legal definitions, but rather by choice.

And none of that would have happened if the woman had not dared to show herself in public, approach Jesus, and touch the hem of his robe. In this sermon series we are looking at people in the Bible who were audacious enough to ask of Jesus what they needed. It was the audacious touch of the woman that prompted Jesus to offer the healing power of God.

Discussion Questions

1. Does the church have power?
2. How exactly are the actions of the woman in this story audacious?
3. Reflect on this quote from Rev. Alisha Reipma, *"I find it unfortunate that the blood that is shed by women routinely for the sake of giving life has been shamed throughout history, while the blood shed by men in battle - in the act of taking life - is honored. Women, simply by having a body that works, were considered unclean and cast out routinely."*
(<https://www.faithward.org/the-woman-who-bled-for-12-years/>)
4. What can the church do to ensure that the healing power of God flows outward, into the world? How have you seen this happen?
5. How have you experienced the healing power of God?

Prayer

God of audacious healing, a mere touch of the hem of your garment has great power. Thank you for the witness of audacious people who reach out from their hiding places to be healed. May your healing grace always flow outward from us, into the hiding places of the world. To you, in the name of Jesus, in the presence of your Spirit, Amen.

"Divine power is always flowing outward, it seems. Like heat always travels into cold. Light always travels into dark. The power of God flows outward from the Body of Christ into the world."