

Pastor Jon's Sermon from Sunday, June 27, 2021.

I had just finished writing my sermon last night in the gathering area at about 5:00 PM when two people showed up for Saturday church... looking a little confused, "Is there church tonight?" One part of my sermon was about how Jesus handled interruptions with grace. So I said, "You're here, let's have church... have a seat." I read the Gospel and shared my sermon. Then we talked about it and shared personal stories of pain and hope for healing.

So far in Mark's Gospel, we saw that Jesus can calm storms with a Word.

He can cast out demons and restore people to their right mind.

But does Jesus care our more common human woes?

Our everyday problems? Absolutely.

For example, I am praying for my dad who is battling lung cancer and my mom who has an open wound in her leg... among many other prayers. My mom was supposed to get surgery on Tuesday this past week, and when they opened up the bandages, the Doctor finally said after four months of pain, wound vac, and sleepless nights, "You are getting better. You don't need surgery today."

In our Gospel for today we meet two people who are desperate for medical intervention... a man of means, a leader of a Jewish Synagogue, named Jairus, who has a 12 year-old daughter who is ill to the point of death, and a woman with no name, who is broke, has exhausted all medical possibilities, and is considered unclean due to hemorrhaging for 12 years.

Remember, in Leviticus 12:1-19, such a constant flow of blood during menstruation would make her ritually impure and restrict her from conventional society.

Jesus comes from Gentile territory on the other side of the Sea of Galilee back to Jewish territory. Huge crowds were following him. Jairus, a Jewish leader, who was in the crowd, came and threw himself at Jesus' feet... continually begging to help for his sick daughter. This must have been a huge risk for Jairus in front of his

faith community. But he was desperate for help. So Jesus went with Jairus to his home. Imagine stepping off the boat and immediately going to a stranger's home to help them out.

But then on the way, Jesus' mission is interrupted by the bleeding woman in the crowd. She believed that if she could touch Jesus' cloak, she would be made well, or literally be saved in the Greek. And upon touching Jesus' cloak, she in fact was healed. Her bleeding stopped. But the story didn't end there. For some reason, Jesus wanted to know this person who touched him.

Jesus felt the power go out of him and turned around. "Who touched my clothes?" he asked. Just the act of the bleeding woman touching Jesus would now make him unclean. She knew this, therefore coming out of the crowd with fear and trembling and fell at Jesus feet too. Jesus surprisingly called her "Daughter"... a term of warmth and love. Jesus welcomes her into his kinship... his family. Jesus names the hope she had in him "faith". Daughter, your faith... your trust in me... has made you well... go in peace... be healed of your disease. She was already physically healed, but Jesus declared her healed in front of others so that she could be restored to community.

How did Jesus handle this interruption? With grace and compassion. I saw a quote this week from Henri Nouwen's book, *Reaching Out*, that makes us rethink our own interruptions when a school teacher said to Nouwen: "You know... my whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I discovered that my interruptions were my work."

There is no such thing as an interruption for Jesus. Jesus welcomes everyone. He treated the unnamed woman with the same care that he will treat the leader of a synagogue's daughter.

What does this say about our God? This story is more about God's compassion for those who are hurting than about our credentials, means, or amount of faith. In today's world, this reminds me that access to healthcare is an inalienable human right. All should have equal access to health care regardless of means. But as we saw during the pandemic, health care disparities exist among poorer communities and systems, like jails and prisons, for example. I spoke to a parent

who's child is incarcerated. He was lamenting that his son got Covid twice while in jail while the legislature in Wisconsin argued whether they should get the Covid vaccine in the 1B group or lower. They already got their sentence from the judge, should they get the sentence of Covid too? Thankfully, now, 70% of the incarcerated population in Wisconsin is vaccinated.

The Gospel concludes with people coming to Jairus to tell him "Your daughter is dead". Why trouble the teacher any further?" But Jesus who heard this said, "Do not fear, only believe." So at the house, amidst people weeping and wailing Jesus enters to room where the daughter was. He took her parents and others with him. He then took the girl by the hand, another example of Jesus crossing purity boundaries, and said, "talitha cum", which means, "Little girl get up." And she got up. Jesus, again concerned about the whole person said to others gathered, "give her something to eat."

I learned that "Talitha Cum" is a name of a ministry that helps young women caught in human trafficking. "Little girl get up."

To conclude, two people were healed by Jesus in this Gospel. One by her own faith and persistence, and one by a Father's faith. However, we know that not everyone is healed the way we want. Because of our fallen world filled with sin, disease, and brokenness, our prayers for healing don't always get answered to our liking.

But I notice a truth in this text that Jesus, our God in human flesh, cares deeply about everyone and their individual struggles. God wants abundant life for all. Jesus enters into rooms of people crying and is willing to become unclean... to touch the untouchables. Jesus wants people to be healed and restored to community. And as we saw at the grave of his friend Lazarus, Jesus weeps when a loved one dies.

The best example of Jesus compassion for us and willingness to become unclean is on the cross. He who knew no sin took our sin upon himself in order to save us... to make us well.

Most of us here have the means to live in an insulated world? Most of us have the choice to avoid people like the unclean woman. But Jesus drops his agenda and responds to people in crisis. He cares about our

individual problems. He isn't afraid to get dirty on our behalf. We are reminded today that Jesus reaches out to touch us sinners in the word and Holy Communion to forgive us and restore us to wholeness... so we can love the neighbor with the same grace. Amen.