

Pastor Jon's June 30, 2024, sermon based on Mark 5:21-43

Title: "There is no such thing as an interruption for Jesus"

Healing stories are tough to preach on, because healing is often equated with everything working out. As you know, some prayers get answered for healing right away, but sometimes they don't get answered the way we want them to or in our timing. But God can still bring healing in other ways even if our prayers for physical healing aren't answered to our satisfaction. Through our faith in our Triune God, we can still receive things like emotional healing, spiritual healing, relational healing, and now more than ever, political healing. Come Lord Jesus... as we process the first debate.

In the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we hear of Jesus healing people with a word or physical touch or just by someone touching the fringe of his cloak. We want that same immediate healing for ourselves or our loved ones. But it doesn't always happen that way. Sadly, we live in a fallen world where sin and disease still exist. But thanks to advances in health science, we as the church partner with the medical community and all the people God gifts to bring healing, cures and treatments.

But the thing I want to lift up today from our Gospel is how much God cares for those who are sick or hurting... regardless of their social status. Are you ever overwhelmed with medical problems or navigating the health care system? You're not alone.

In our Gospel for today, we meet two people who have exhausted the help of the medical community. People who have spent countless dollars and time on medical care, finally turn to Jesus for help. They are desperate. They hope Jesus can do something for them. First, we meet a man of power and status named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, who's 12-year-old daughter is sick and near death. Jairus comes and prostrates himself at Jesus' feet and begs him repeatedly for help. This was probably a career risk for Jairus as a leader in the synagogue to go to Jesus because of who Jesus calls, eats with, touches, and heals. Jesus was a threat to religious leaders and the political system. Jesus agrees to go. While Jesus is on the way to Jairus' house, he is interrupted by a woman in a crowd who has been

bleeding for 12 long years... possibly having a 12-year menstrual period. She would be considered ritually unclean and an outcast in Jewish circles. According to Leviticus 12:1-19, such a constant flow of blood during menstruation would make her ritually impure and restrict her from conventional society.

She believed that if she just touched the fringe of Jesus' cloak, she would be healed. Strangely, Jesus feels the power come out of him. He wonders who touched me? He really wants to know. But his disciples would rather have Jesus move on. For Jesus, there is no such thing as an interruption. Henry Nouwen, Christian writer, wrote about a teacher friend and interruptions: "You know... my whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I discovered that my interruptions were my work."

The woman returns in fear and trembling. She fell down before him like Jairus and told Jesus the truth. She has no name, no agency, and she would have made anyone who touched her unclean. Then Jesus turns to her and calls her a daughter, a term of endearment. "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease. Jesus not only physically heals her but lifts her up publicly and names her act of coming to him as faith. Jesus welcomes her into his own family.

Finally, after Jesus' encounter with the bleeding women, he heads to Jairus' house. In the meantime, Jairus' daughter died. Jesus arrives and enters the room with the child's parents and his disciples. He took the dead girl by the hand, again ritually unclean, and said, "Talitha cum" which means little girl get up. And she got up. Jesus has the power to raise the dead. This is good news for us who die in the faith.

Talitha cum is ministry of Catholic sisters committed to ending human trafficking on all continents.

Jesus, our God in human flesh, cares about our individual problems. No matter how big or small, related to physical health or mental health, spiritual health or political health, Jesus isn't afraid to get his hands dirty on our behalf and lift us up. Jesus' work on the cross was the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf of becoming sin who knew no sin. These lessons also a call to the church and us as individuals to

continue a ministry of healing and restoring people who are considered outcasts into communities of love and care. Who do we consider unclean or outcast in our world today? There is a place for them/us at Jesus' table. No one is an outsider in Jesus' kingdom.

Finally, in baptism, we are reminded that Jesus names us and claims us as his very own forever, like little Henry tonight. Henry is in Jesus' family the rest of his life. And for Matthew and Sarah, your call to Christian parenting is a holy task that lasts as long as you live. And in the laying on of hands and Holy Communion, Jesus reaches out and touches us in our uncleanness with grace and forgiveness. Amen