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Today's Gospel shows Jesus at a point in His ministry when everyone who wants to get close to Him must go through a crowd. People want to be near Jesus, to hear anything He might say, and to see anything He might do. There are the gawkers, the objectors, the cynics, the skeptics, the false reporters, the fair-weather friends, the inquirers, and believers. All of this comes, the crowd, the mourning, the noise, come together to create a kind of static in the system. But out of the crowd comes Jairus, ruler of the local synagogue whose daughter has just died. He has asked Jesus to come and lay His hand on her that she may live again.

So, Jesus, Jairus and the disciples begin to make their way to Jairus' house. At the same time a woman in the crowd comes from behind. She has been hemorrhaging for twelve long years. That means that, apart from her physical anguish, she has been ceremonially unclean for twelve years. She has been excommunicated from the local synagogues, forbidden from the Temple, and likely disowned by her own family. Blood was to be avoided at all costs. The one bleeding was to separate themselves from sin until the bleeding stopped and they were ceremonially cleansed. Imagine the spiritual and mental turmoil. Here was a woman who's hopes had been raised and dashed by numerous doctors. Luke the Physician, in his account, calls her incurable, and says that she had used up all her money seeking treatment and was only made worse.

But now, with faith born out of desperation, nothing is going to stop her from seeing Jesus. She says to herself, *if I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be whole*. She is so desperate that she is willing to risk interrupting Jesus as He goes to Jairus's house, she is willing to risk getting trampled on by the crowd, she is willing even to steal a blessing if that is what it takes. She has reached a turning point, either out of robust faith, or having no other option left. Perhaps she does not want to trouble Jesus as He goes to raise the dead, what some might consider a far more spectacular and important miracle. But she has reached that point where no substitutes are acceptable, no delays are tolerated, she reaches out in faith, through the crowd, and touches the hem of His garment.

At this point we can debate when the healing actually happened, was it when she touched His garment, or was it when Jesus said, *Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole*. But to dwell only on this is to add more static to the system. What matters most is that Jesus stopped. He inhibited the whole noisy parade for this one infirm woman. As one Bishop writes, *Jesus is like that. If we take one step toward Him, He will take ten steps toward us. He honors our first movement toward Him. Jesus is never too busy. He honors even the weakest faith. He pauses, the way He paused for His Mother at the foot of the Cross, to give her to us to be our Mother. He pauses, the way He paused for the penitent thief, to promise Him paradise. He paused, just like how he pauses for you in your every need*. Jesus, in the midst of the crowd, turns around to ask who touched Him, and there He meets this woman of desperate faith, and instead of upbraiding her in front of everyone for trying to steal a healing, He commends her faith, and she was made whole from that hour.

Jesus continues to Jairus's house to raise the girl who had died. When he arrives, He immediately goes into the house and dismisses the paid mourners, He leaves the crowd outside, He reaches out through the static, and takes Jairus's daughter by the hand and raises her up to life again. In Mark's account Jesus commands them to tell no one, but of course it does nothing to stop the spread of His fame. We might wonder this morning, why the show in front of all over the woman who touched the hem of His garment, and yet He puts everyone out of the house to raise the dead? But between these two healings we learn a profound truth about Jesus, which is His great humility and compassion. He is humble enough to admit that He felt power or virtue go out of Him when the woman touched Him, but He had no idea who it was. We may safely assume that He puts the crowd and the mourners out of the house to raise Jarius's daughter to avoid the chaos, the increased static, the crowd would have caused over such a miraculous display of power.

We also learn from the Gospel how to approach Christ in faith and humility. We learn that no touch of faith, however hesitating, will escape His observation. And that no case of physical or spiritual illness, however desperate and long continued, is past His power to heal. But there must on our side be the touch of faith, a personal contact with the personal Lord of health, a contact hindered by no sense of inward guilt and impurity, and by no crowd of worldly impediments. We must reach out to the Savior if His Salvation is to be ours. We do this in our daily prayers and in His Holy Word and Sacraments, even when our hearts are cold and seem dead, when sin tempts and evil thoughts arise, in the midst of daily duties and employments, for the lesson for today is that we shall never reach out to Him in vain.

Right now, regardless of whatever static there is in our lives, Jesus wants us to reach out to Him, and in return for Him to reach down to us. He desires us to reach out to Him in humility and repentance, embracing His cross in our own lives, the life-giving Cross of Christ, which is where Jesus will take our worst, and make even that the turning point in the light and joy of His Kingdom. With all of this in mind, we may pray along with St. Paul in this morning's Epistle, *that we might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that [we] might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.*