

## Sermon Notes - May 3, 2020

### Mark 5:21-43

Have you ever been busy and got interrupted by someone needing help? Have you ever felt like you prayed so hard for something and felt like God wasn't listening or put you on hold or didn't care?

Then, I invite you to reflect with me on our gospel story today. In our story, two people from different situations come to Jesus - both have a common need (healing) and both have faith in Jesus' healing power... but, these two persons are very different. Jairus wants healing for his very sick daughter - the unnamed woman wants healing of her bleeding condition. Jairus is socially prominent - a Jewish synagogue ruler and materially wealthy - the unnamed woman is a social outcast in her community and excommunicated from synagogue worship due to her physical bleeding condition. She was materially poor, having spent all her money on doctors and her condition was worse, rather than better.

Jairus first comes to Jesus in public, pleading for Jesus' help with his dying daughter. He risked his reputation by coming to Jesus in public and fell at Jesus' feet begging for the Lord's help. Jesus and three of his disciples (Peter, James, & John) go with Jairus.

On the way to Jairus' house, Jesus notices that someone touched him and power went out of him. He asked "who touched me?" The disciples are taken aback and kind of ridicule Jesus - "How can you ask who touched you? Look around at the crowds, Jesus. It could be anyone." But it didn't stop Jesus from asking.

Finally, the unnamed woman with the bleeding condition confessed and told Jesus her story and how she believed, like the ancient myths, that she could just touch the hem of the robe of a healer (Jesus) and she'd be healed - and she was. She risked public shame by touching Jesus and according to Jewish customs at that time - 1) a woman was not to touch a man in public, 2) she was ritually unclean due to her physical bleeding condition and would make Jesus unclean.

But notice, Jesus allowed himself to be interrupted by this woman, even though he was on the way to Jairus' house to see his daughter who was very sick. Can you imagine Jairus' thoughts and feelings right then? -- probably a bit of irritation and impatience with Jesus for stopping for this woman (cause in their day, women had no status) and irritation at the woman for holding up Jesus and prolonging Jesus' getting to his home to attend to his daughter.

Jesus had the woman publicly confess to touching him - not to shame or embarrass her, but to not only heal her physically, but to restore her socially and spiritually - she had been an outcast in society and forbidden to attend synagogue worship. By Jesus' healing her, she could now be acclimated back into society and go to the market and spiritually attend worship. Jesus was restoring her physically, socially, and spiritually. *Did you notice in the gospel story Jesus called her "daughter"?* **Jesus was publically proclaiming that she was a child of God - a part of God's family - she mattered and had value.** She was worthy of God's love and compassion and healing. What a proclamation for Jesus to make in front of Jewish religious leaders who de-valued women!

Jesus' interruption of tending to the unnamed woman with a bleeding condition probably angered or irritated Jairus. *Have you ever been put on hold on the phone for minutes or hours? Have you ever prayed for something and felt like God put you on hold or didn't care?* Jairus must have felt that right then. About the time Jesus finished his conversation with this woman, Jairus' servants came to him and said "your daughter is dead. No need to bother the Master any longer." Jesus overheard the comments to Jairus - looked Jairus in the face and said, "Do not be afraid. Only believe." ***When you pray and feel like God isn't answering or doesn't care, that doesn't mean God is not aware of your situation.*** He knows all things about you and me and especially what concerns us. Sometimes God's delays don't mean God's denials or rejection or that He doesn't care. Sometimes God works in ways we don't understand and He works on His time table - NOT mine or yours. The scriptures in Psalms

teach us that God's ways are higher than our ways, his thoughts higher than our thoughts.

After telling Jairus to believe - to trust Him - Jesus proceeds to Jairus' house. He sends all the weeping, wailing neighbors out and takes only His three disciples and Jairus and his wife into the room of the little girl who had died. Jesus goes to the bedside of the little girl, takes her hand, and says, "little girl (little lamb) arise (get up)" and she does and then Jesus tells her family to give her something to eat, so they would know she was alive, not a ghost or a disembodied spirit.

Jesus has healed a woman with a bleeding condition of twelve years and He has raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. I want you to notice several things in these two healings:

1. **Jesus' love and compassion reaches out to ALL people** - young and old, male and female, rich and poor, clean and unclean, saint and sinner.
2. **Jesus' compassion is sensitive and aware of the needs of those around him and He is available to all who need Him** - no matter who they are - rich or poor, male or female, clean or unclean.
3. **His compassion is willing to be interrupted.** I would like to share a story told by Dr. James Moore, former UMC Minister in Tennessee: One Sunday when Dr. Moore was preparing for the 11:00am Worship, he had had a busy morning - early service, Sunday School, etc. At 10:45am, he came out of his office on the way to the Sanctuary for the 11:00am service. He was met by a staff member who wanted to give him two announcements to make during worship, then met by a deacon who wanted to introduce a new couple visiting the church, then an usher wanted to have him ask about a car in the parking lot with the lights still on, and then a man wanted to tell of his brother who had died the night before, etc. All of a sudden, Dr. Moore felt a tug on his clergy robe and looked down to see his 5-year-old daughter. He was thinking - "Judy, couldn't you wait till after church and we're in the car on the way home?" - but he didn't say that. For some reason, he felt deep inside that he needed to listen to her. He got down on his knee and

looked into her face. She said, “Daddy, I made this present for you in Sunday School and I want you to open it right now. It’s Father’s Day.” He knew he was going to be late for worship, but felt deep down this was important for his daughter. He opened the card made by his daughter – it was a picture of their family on the outside and inside it said, “Happy Father’s Day – You’re the bestest father in all the world.” She hugged his neck and said, “I love you, Daddy. Happy Father’s Day.” He said even though he was two minutes late for worship, he realized how important this interruption was to his little daughter. He said, “I will always remember this tender moment – tender interruption with my little daughter. Thank God, I was willing to be interrupted – what a special moment I could have missed.” Sometimes, our interruptions are divine – God sent – and it’s up to us what we do with it.

4. **His compassion shows itself in graciousness and kindness** – He didn’t reprimand the woman in public – he helped her to know she was a person of value in God’s eyes. May we remember ALL people are precious to God!
5. **God’s delays are not always denials or rejections or not caring about you and me.** His answers don’t always come on my timetable or yours. Sometimes when we’re put on hold – we are to “hold on tighter and keep trusting God” – like when Jesus told Jairus – “do not be afraid – keep trusting, keep believing”.

I want to end with a true story about Thomas Jefferson from a book I have:

*It was a bitter cold evening in northern Virginia many years ago. The old man’s beard was glazed by winter’s frost while he waited for a ride across the river. The wait seemed endless. His body became numb and stiff from the frigid north wind. He heard the faint, steady rhythm of approaching hooves galloping along the frozen path. Anxiously, he watched as several horsemen rounded the bend. He let the first one pass by without an effort to get his attention. Then another passed by, and another. Finally, the last rider neared the spot where the old man sat like a snow statue. As this one drew*

near, the old man caught the rider's eye and said, "Sir, would you mind giving an old man a ride to the other side? There doesn't appear to be a passageway by foot." Reining his horse, the rider replied, "Sure thing. Hop aboard." Seeing the old man was unable to lift his half-frozen body from the ground, the horseman dismounted and helped the old man onto the horse. The horseman took the old man not just across the river, but to his destination, which was just a few miles away. As they neared the tiny but cozy cottage, the horseman's curiosity caused him to inquire, "Sir, I notice that you let several other riders pass by without making an effort to secure a ride. Then I came up and you immediately asked me for a ride. I'm curious why, on such a bitter winter night, you would wait and ask the last rider. What if I had refused and left you there?" The old man lowered himself slowly down from the horse, looked the rider straight in the eyes, and replied, "I've been around these here parts for some time. I reckon I know people pretty good." The old-timer continued, "I looked into the eyes of the other riders and immediately saw there was no concern for my situation. It would have been useless even to ask them for a ride. **But when I looked into your eyes, kindness and compassion were evident. I knew, then and there, that your gentle spirit would welcome the opportunity to give me assistance in my time of need.**" Those heartwarming comments touched the horseman deeply. "I'm most grateful for what you have said," he told the old man. "May I never get too busy in my own affairs that I fail to respond to the needs of others with kindness and compassion." With that, Thomas Jefferson turned his horse around and made his way back to the White House.

May we be marked with kindness and compassion - may we not only take on the name of Christ, but the value system of our Lord - loving all - being kind and compassionate.