### “Created for Incorruption” Steve Finlan for The First Church, June 30, 2024

**Wisdom 1:14–15; 2:23**

14 For he created all things so that they might exist; the generative forces of the world are wholesome . . . 15 For righteousness is immortal. . .
23 For God created us for incorruption, and made us in the image of his own eternity.

**Mark 5:22–34**

22One of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” 24So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed and pressed in on him. 25Now there was a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years. 26She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better. . . 27She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” 29Immediately her haemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30Aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” 31And his disciples said to him “you see the crowd pressing in on you”. . . 33But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

Happy summer! Hopefully it’s not stifling where you live.

The passage from the Wisdom of Solomon contains a very intriguing idea, the notion that we are *meant* for eternal life, that goodness is undying, that we are made in the image of the incorruptible and eternal God. We are made to reflect God while we live, and the goodness that comes into our lives will be undying.

This belief, this amazing piece of faith, seems to be confirmed by the gospel story. I have selected only the part that talks about the humble and frowned-upon woman who nervously reaches out for healing, stopping Jesus while he’s on his way to heal somebody else. The rest of the story has him going to Jairus’s house and healing his daughter.

But here we see the plight of an unfortunate woman. With her bleeding problem, she would have been considered *religiously* impure, and would have been avoided by most people, especially by religious figures. Impurity was thought to be *infectious*; so people would have treated her as someone with a religious infection. She has internalized some shame about this. She tries to stay in the shadows, and talks to herself. She tries to get healing without being noticed. Jesus, however, asks for the toucher of his garments to come forward.

She comes “in fear and trembling,” hurls herself on the ground and tells the whole story. She feels she is in trouble. But Jesus speaks tenderly to her, saying “Daughter, your faith has saved you.” The verb is in the perfect tense, so it means your faith has *already* saved you, and the effect continues into the present.

Jesus likes to involve people in their own healing, and he does this when he says “your faith has saved you,” which he says seven times in the gospels. He gets people *involved* in their own healing, or draws attention to how their faith helped to provoke their healing. The woman had *already* activated her faith, and Jesus draws attention to that. Every act of sincere faith *reaches* God. If that were our only lesson today, it would be enough. Faith reaches to heaven. Maybe that unnamed woman had just a little faith, but it was enough, and Jesus honored it.

Now, can we walk around as though we had spiritual *power*? Well, actually, yes, if we aren’t egotistical about it. Of course, it is *God* who saves, and it is Jesus who heals; but Jesus wants us to notice that *we* took the faith step that enabled him to operate on us.

When the woman is made well, she is also restored socially. She will no longer be shunned for being considered impure. She can walk around like a normal person, *without shame*! Isn’t this a greater miracle than any physical healing—to see shame cease from beating people down?

Healing is what Jesus is *always* doing with us, both here and in the afterlife, healing us from toxic shame, anger, fear, and smallness or narrowness of vision. Jesus is always healing us, encouraging our growth and recovery, and we will realize this in the afterlife. Healing is what he does for us all the time, making us *whole.* If that’s a miracle, then Jesus is always working miracles upon us, reaching down to us whenever we reach up to him and to the Father. God responds to every act of honest faith.

God’s incorruption will operate upon us now and throughout our afterlife. Seek out God’s presence in your life, and let it start working upon you now. Incorruption and immortality are not centered in the body, and not even in the mind. They are in the Spirit, and Spirit flows to our spirit, giving the waters of everlasting life. When we get an instinct for spiritual goodness, when we get an idea of spiritual truth, when we get a taste for spiritual beauty, then we get a glimpse into eternity. Then we can really “go in peace,” every day.

The medieval mystic Meister Eckhart wrote, “Those who have never been familiar with inward things do not know what God is. Like a man who has wine in his cellar but has never tasted it, he does not know that it is good” (Sermon 10, from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meister\_Eckhart). So, drink the wine that is in your cellar. Open up to the Spirit of God. Allow the relationship, the fellowship of God and human to be a part of your experience.

God has created us to enter into communion with him, to grow towards him in God’s great family. What an amazing future awaits us!