### “Jesus Notices,” July 1, 2018

**Mark 5:22-34**

22Then one 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. . . .”

25Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. 26She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. 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 hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30Immediately aware 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 . . . how can you say, “Who touched me?” ” 32He looked all round to see who had done it. 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 made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

The story of Jairus, the Galilean synagogue leader, and his daughter, is *certainly* interesting, but it is interrupted by one thatis even more compelling of our attention: the story of a humble and frowned-upon woman who nervously reaches out for healing.

This woman has an ongoing bleeding problem, and is therefore considered impure, *religiously* impure, so she is avoided by most people, but especially by the religious authorities. Impurity makes one unfit to enter the Temple precincts, and impurity is *infectious*; so people treated her as a religious problem.

To make it even worse, the woman has undoubtedly internalized some shame about this. She tries to stay in the shadows, she 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 must have felt she was in trouble. But Jesus speaks tenderly to her, saying “Daughter, your faith has saved you.”

You may notice that I changed the translation a little. The NRSV has him saying “your faith has made you well.” The Greek verb σώζω *sōzō* primarily means “to save.” Now, just as our English word “save” can have various meanings, including saving someone’s health, as a doctor might do, so the Greek word also can mean to make someone well, or make them whole again. So “made you well” is an acceptable translation, but “save” might be better. It reflects the *primary* meaning of *sōzō*.

This is one of seven times in the Gospels that Jesus says “your faith has saved you.” And the tense of the verb tells us a lot. All seven times it is in the perfect tense (*sesoken*). Perfect tense refers to an action in the past, which has continuing effects in the present. So it means your faith has *already* saved you or made you well, and is still saving you or making you well.

Jesus likes to give people credit for their own healing. Maybe it’s more accurate to say that he likes to involve them in the healing. He can *involve* someone in his or her own healing by getting the person to *do* something, like the man he told go bathe in the pool of Siloam after he had put clay and spittle on his eyes (John 9:7). By getting him to dosomething, Jesus was helping to activate the man’s faith. The woman had *already* activated her faith, so Jesus draws attention to what she did.

He strongly affirms the individual side of faith, giving the woman credit for her own healing: Your faith has made you well.

Now, this tells us that every act of honest faith *reaches* God. Maybe that unnamed woman had just a little faith, but it was enough. Jesus took notice of her so that he could empower her. He wants to empower all of us.

Now, can we just walk around as though we had *power*? Well, actually, if we aren’t egotistical about it, it should be easy, if we can adjust to the Jesus paradigm of power, which is power *with* rather than power *over*. Jesus *noticed* people, valued them, and affirmed the power of their faith.

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. *Our* faith enabled *him* to make us whole.

And it affects all parts of our lives. Jesus heals people physically, restores them socially, en-courages them emotionally, and remotivates them spiritually.

When the woman is made well, she is also restored socially. She is no longer considered impure, and will no longer be shunned. More than that, she is *publicly* honored by the Teacher, and empowered by being told that her faith has saved her. So, one thing to take home from this sermon is an emphasis upon *personal* *experience*.

Now she can walk around like a normal person, without shame! Shame has beaten many people down. Jesus heals us from our shame—a miracle greater than any physical healing.

So if you think healings don’t take place today, think again. Healing is what Jesus is *always* doing with us, both here and in the afterlife, only it is *usually* not instantaneous. What he did instantaneously for people when he was here in the flesh, he does with every one of us at the normal, slow pace of growth and recovery. It’s what he does for us all the time, making us *whole*, restoring our self-respect and our social standing. Jesus helps us integrate our lives, and become whole.

Do you need to draw on Jesus’ whole-making power? Do you need to integrate the parts of your life, perhaps to unify your Monday morning mood with your Sunday morning mood?

Ask Jesus to make you whole. Such faith cannot be in vain. He will work on you. Trust that!