

## Healing of the Daughter of Jairus and the Woman with the Hemorrhage

*Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24, Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13, 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15*

*Mark 5:21-43*

Twelve.

Jurors in a trial.

Apostles around Jesus.

Years for the planet Jupiter to orbit the Sun once.

Twelve.

Drummers drumming.

Tribes of Israel.

Steps of AA.

Inches in a foot.

Months in a year.

For one woman, twelve years of hemorrhages and doctors and expense.

For another, twelve years of growing and learning and passing through childhood to the cusp of what would've been adulthood in the first century Middle East.

Two daughters of Israel, both in dire need of healing.

Details. Meaning is sometimes found in the most mundane of details and the passage from the Gospel of Mark is full of them. Rich in symmetry and balance, Mark tells a story of unbiased grace that surpasses details. We have the synagogue official, Jairus and his family. A person of status in the community, he is named and speaks to Jesus directly, approaching him from the front. Juxtaposed with Jairus we have a woman, identified only by her illness. She has no name, no one accompanies her. We don't know any of her details beyond the suffering and illness that have led to her poverty as she approaches Jesus, obscured by a crush of people. Whereas Jairus has no reason to expect his request denied, she has no reason to expect acknowledgment or a place. And still they are unified in what they seek and the faith in which they ask.

And so they are...

Jairus running ahead seeking healing for his dying daughter.

Jesus hemmed in by crowds ready to heal and minister.

An unnamed woman, making her way, hands outstretched just to brush his garment and be healed.

Listen again to the first reading from the book of Wisdom, "*God did not make death, for God formed [humanity] to be imperishable; the image of [God's] own nature he made [them].*"

We might be tempted to look at the picture of Jairus, Jesus and the unnamed woman and create a construct of who is worthy, of who comes first, of which need surpasses the other. We might be tempted to question the woman and her indirect approach, cast doubt on her illness and needs, surely she should wait, the child is dying, what's one more day of her illness? But the Book of Wisdom affirms the equal dignity of all, made in the image and likeness of God each person bears the mark of the Creator. Each person, in their exact location with their precise mix of particularities is made to live, is the recipient to God's complete and loving attention. Each person, precious in God's gaze.

The binary is rejected for inclusivity. It doesn't have to be one or the other.

The action of the Gospel continues as the woman, propelled by faith and more than a decade of affliction, reaches out with purpose in faith and touches Jesus' garment. Mark tells us that simultaneously two things happen.

In her body, the woman knows herself to be healed. Imagine what that might that have felt like, to have the weight of 12 years lift, the pain of twelve years gone, health and life replacing illness and death.

In his body, Jesus becomes immediately aware that power has gone out from him to heal. Unwilling to let the healing go unremarked on, unwilling to ignore the person who he stops and demands an answer from the crowd.

Suddenly exposed, her boldness evaporates and she comes forth in fear and trembling lays herself at the feet of Jesus, telling him the whole truth. In the face of her belief and bravery, her willingness to take a risk for her future, in the face of her story Jesus affirms her faith and sends her in peace. For God, *"does not rejoice in the destruction of the living. For he fashioned all things that they might have being."* Jesus sees her humanity, and compliments her physical healing by allowing herself to tell her story and be fully known. He makes her whole physically, spirituality and in community. Healing for the body and soul.

In the delay, life has gone out of the body of Jairus' daughter. But the healing of one does not mean the destruction of another. Jesus tells Jairus to have faith, as the unnamed woman had faith and they make way to a house consumed by grief. Accompanied by Peter, James, John, Jairus and his wife, Jesus restores the girl to life. In the face of death, delay, ridicule and sadness he tenderly calls her to arise, walk and

eat. She is restored to her family. As the psalmist says, *“You changed my mourning into dancing, O Lord, my God, forever will I give you thanks.”*

The healing of one does not mean the death of another, because our God is a God of Life.

It would be fine to stop here. It would be comfortable to move forward into our profession of faith and our intercessions, content in the loving healing presence of Christ in all situations. But we have not yet satisfied what the story of Jairus’ daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage calls from us.

As Paul reminds us, all that we have is given that it might be shared, *“Not that others should have relief while you are burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their needs, so that their abundance may also supply your needs, that there may be equality.”* The apostle calls us to do what Jesus did not in the scripture, to look back and see, who, like the woman with the hemorrhage, is reaching out to us from behind?

We have much. Identify with who you will in the story, but as a people we are Jairus and his daughter. We have a place, we have a name, we have homes. But we are still surrounded by those without name, without home or place. There are hemorrhaging women, men and children at our borders. Women and men reaching out just to have a chance at life, to escape their suffering. Out of our abundance, the gospel morally obliges us supply their needs.

We are called to serve as Jesus did. Once he was made aware of the need he was willing to be inconvenienced, to put existing plans on hold and be attentive to need of another.

As the Church, it is our duty to shelter the lowly, the outcast the poor and the immigrant. You and I, as the body of Christ, cannot be blind to their plight of those at our borders. We cannot be blind to the women being sent back to situations of domestic violence and assault because they do not qualify for asylum. We cannot be blind to the families being torn apart at our borders, to children being separated from their parents with no explanation and inadequate support and counsel. We cannot be blind to the nameless suffering of our brothers and sisters, because it is the nameless suffering of God in our midst.

The psalmist praises the Lord who rescues the lowly and preserves the vulnerable from the pit, who draws close those in need, who brings joy after weeping. May those



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suffering at our borders find us to be advocates, helpers, witnesses to the Gospel truth that they too are created in the image and likeness of God.

Jesus tells the daughter of Jairus, “*talith kour,*” meaning, “little girl, I say to you arise!” May all of us who are dead through the injustices of the present age come alive at the sound of his voice. May we see, with the eyes of God, past race, class, orientation, gender, country of origin, political or religious affiliation, or any other detail that falsely divides us from the human person standing to our left and right. Let us, together as the body of Christ, hear his call, awake, arise, and immediately walk toward those hungering and thirsting for justice to do what we can in their aid. Amen.