

Worship at Home – 27th June 2021
4th Sunday after Trinity
Prepared by Rev Gareth Erlandson, Curate



Prayer to start
Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation and order
to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bible Reading (Mark 5:21-43)

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” So Jesus went with him.

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

“You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha kum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Thought

Do you remember our passage from Mark 3 three weeks ago – when Jesus's family and the religious teachers basically accused him of being insane? That was an example of a story-telling technique than Mark uses throughout his gospel account, commonly referred to as a sandwich. There was the start of the incident with the family (the bread), then the debate with the teachers (the filling) before the family issue was concluded (the second slice of bread). The idea is that Mark threads stories together in this way because the filling helps us to make more sense of the bread. Today's passage from chapter 5 of the same gospel is another "Markan sandwich."

So what does the story of Jesus healing bleeding woman teach us about him resurrecting a 12 year old girl? It's important to understand exactly what the woman who touched Jesus's cloak would have endured for 12 years. At the time, women were hardly treated with respect at the best of times, neither by the Roman army nor the Jewish temple elite. And menstruating women were the most unclean imaginable. So, for 12 years, this poor woman would have been a complete outcast, firstly based on her gender but more so because of her physical condition. So, Jesus certainly heals the woman physically, but with that comes holistic healing – she will no longer be excluded from her community and the religious festivals of her fellow Jews (as much as women were allowed to join in).

So, the filling of this story reminds us that the two people in need of healing – the woman and the girl – were outcasts, based on their gender. And just as the woman was even more excluded because of her physical ailment, so would the girl have been because of her age – children were afforded very little respect too. But the girl's story is not one of ordinary healing – it is a resurrection. She is not just restored to health, she is not just restored to a place in the worshipping community – she is restored to the fullness of life.

This is the message of this week's passage. All who come to Jesus, regardless of gender, age, or physical weakness, are fully included in his family. All are given a place at the banqueting table in his kingdom. All are given life in abundance.

So some questions for us to ponder this week...

1. Who do we know who might feel excluded for any reason?
2. How can we reach out to them to make them feel included and whole?
3. What difference does it make to us that Jesus invites us to his banqueting table?

Prayers to end

Lord God, give us confidence in the knowledge of your steadfast love for us, assured of the healing touch of Jesus upon us and emboldened by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit within us. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Please do get in touch if you want to talk about anything.

Services on 27th June:

Morning Worship at Emmanuel 9:30am, Hope 11am and St John's 11am.

God bless – Adam (01978 760439) and Gareth (07731 827988)