

Second Weekend After Pentecost (RCL/A): "Healing of Body and Soul, Sickness and Sin: Matthew 9"
Romans 4:13-25; Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
June 10-11, 2023
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Manasquan, NJ

1) What do Jairus, the woman with the hemorrhage and Abraham have in common in today's Scripture?

a. **Desperation?** Inability to solve their own problems:

- i. Abraham: infertility/barrenness
- ii. Jairus: death of a child
- iii. Woman with flow of blood: loss of health and of community (ostracism)

b. **Trust in God's power to save; trust in God's faithfulness in keeping promises.**

2) **"Blessed are those who know their need of God!"** (... the poor in spirit....)

3) **Jairus:**

a. Only in Matt. (9:9) is child **already dead** when father approaches Jesus.

- i. In Mark (5:23) she is at the point of death.
- ii. In Luke (8:42) she is dying.

b. Mark (5:42) and Luke (8:42) tell us she is **12 years old**.

c. Luke says this is Jairus' "only daughter."

4) **Woman suffering from hemorrhages:**

a. for **12 years**. (Imagine: 2011 until now....)

b. **Pariah status, because perpetually "unclean"**: even her husband (if she had one) could not touch her. Sitting on the same chair as she had would render a Jewish male unclean. He'd have to change his clothes, bathe, wait till sundown to become clean again. (Same story for any bed she had lain on.)

c. **"She had nothing more to lose, for she had already lost everything."**
(*Interpretation*, p. 108)

d. Per Mark (5:26), she had spent all her \$ on consulting doctors, had suffered much under their care, and was left worse for it all.

5) **Abraham**: God has promised him and Sarah as many descendants as there are stars in the sky and grains of sand on the seashore, but the nursery is still empty, except for a slave they've adopted, and Ishmael, the child of Abraham and enslaved Hagar (not Sarah). **But**, Paul writes in the letter to the Romans:

Hoping against hope, [Abraham] believed that he would become "the father of many nations"... He did not weaken in faith... No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in the faith as he gave glory to God, being full convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. (Romans 4:18-21)

6) **And that is faith: trust in God, trust in God's promises, trust in God's faithfulness in keeping promises, trust in God's power to save:**

- a) Jairus: *“My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hands on her, and she will live.”* (Matt. 9:18)
- b) *Then suddenly a woman suffering from hemorrhages for 12 years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If only I touch his cloak, I will be made well.”* (Matt. 9:20)
- 7) Matthew leaves out some of the drama: when the woman reaches out to touch His hem, Jesus **does** feel power go out from Him, but He doesn't demand, “Who touched My garments?” “Who touched Me?” He turns around, sees her, and simply says, *“Take heart, my daughter; your faith has made you well.”* (Matt. 9:22) She has wordlessly reached out in confidence that Jesus is powerful to save, and it is so. There's no “Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!” There's no group of friends calling Jesus' attention to her need. There's no making a mud pie with dirt and spit, no order to go show herself to the priests. There's only desperate need, silent faith, complete trust.
- 8) Likewise with Jairus: There is no one to turn to except Jesus. There is no doubt that Jesus is powerful to save. There is complete confidence, full-of-faith-ness, that this Man can raise this child from death. The mourners laugh at Jesus and at His naivete when He says the child is sleeping, not dead (Matt. 9:24). They aren't laughing anymore, though, when the child emerges whole and well.
- 9) The *Celebrate* intro to today's Gospel says, “Jesus demonstrates God's mercy and power, accepting the unacceptable [Matthew the tax collector] and curing the incurable [a dead child and a chronically ill woman].” 2,000 years later we people of faith still turn to the Lord for acceptance and healing. We pray for ourselves and our loved ones to be made whole from physical and mental illness, from spiritual blindness, including the prejudices, like racism, that pollute our relationships with others. We pray to be accepted despite our unworthiness. We come to be forgiven of our sin and cured of every impulse that leads us away from what is holy and true. In the Gospel Jesus uses the metaphor of sickness for sin, when He explains why He hangs out and eats with tax collectors and sinners:

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. (Matt. 9:12)

May we trust that God sent the Son into the world to **save** the world, and that our salvation, our soul healing, is a **gift** despite our **unworthiness**, not a **reward** for our worthiness. May we “know our need of God” like Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood, and like Abraham may we *“not weaken in faith... [Nor allow] distrust [to make us] waver concerning the promise of God, but [rather grow] strong in the faith as [we give glory to God, being full convinced that God [is] able to do what [God has] promised.*

Amen.

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham