

**Worship Service for June 27<sup>th</sup>: 5th Sunday after Pentecost**

- **Old Testament:** Lamentations 3:22-33
- **New Testament:** Mark 5:21-43
- **Psalms:** Psalm 30

**Announcements:**

- Tuesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>: Session meeting for St. George's, RJ.
- Wednesday, July 14<sup>th</sup>: Session meeting for St. David's, TR.

**Sermon Title: Don't Be in The Crowd!**

Faith is defined by the Webster dictionary as "having complete trust or confidence in someone or something." Hebrews 11:1 describes faith as "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Last week we heard Jesus reprimanding his disciples for lack of faith and this week we hear him commending a woman for her faith and encouraging Jairus the official not to fear but only to believe.

The Markan gospel tends to put a story inside another one and this is known as a Markan sandwich. We begin with the story of Jairus the official and are interrupted and introduced to the woman who has the bleeding problem. And then Jairus' story continues serving as the outer story and the woman's story as the inner one. Both stories are about fear and faith.

Jesus was approached by an official of the synagogue to heal his dying daughter. As Jesus followed the synagogue official to his home, we are told that a large crowd followed him and pressed around him. The large crowd was following Jesus because they had heard all the great things he had done.

In the midst of the crowd was this woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. For twelve years this lady had sought help from every possible place and doctor she could reach. She spent all she had, lost everything, and still did not get the healing she had been searching for, she instead got worse. When a woman was bleeding in ancient Israel, she was considered ceremonially unclean and had to keep herself away from people until she had undergone the cleansing rites. So, for this woman to be bleeding constantly meant she was also always considered unclean and couldn't be around people. She was therefore defiled, destitute and desperate for help.

When she heard about Jesus, she went in search of him. She was moving with the crowd, but she had a different purpose. I am pretty sure the people in the crowd had their own challenges, yet they chose to be carried away by Jesus' performances.

Scripture tells us that the lady thought to herself, "if I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." When we hear and read about Jesus what do we think in our hearts? Where do we find ourselves – in the crowd? This lady heard all the miracles that Jesus had been performing and she believed and decided to touch him for her own healing. To her Jesus was her only last and only hope and she needed to make contact with him. And she did indeed receive her healing.

No matter what sermon we hear or what we read in the Bible, we are our own biggest preachers and motivators. This lady believed what she heard and decided to take action. She made up her mind to touch Jesus' garment with the conviction that she would receive her healing.

What is that challenge that we are going through? Are we following the crowd or are we acting like the woman who had a bleeding problem? Where we place ourselves will determine what we will receive.

The two stories in our passage show us different ways of reaching out to Jesus. In the first story we see the person who needs help seeking in for themselves. Whereas in the other instance, we see someone requesting for help on behalf of another. This goes to show that we can either pray for ourselves or pray for others and Jesus will intervene.

We can notice one thing about these people – they were ready to make a move even in their fear. The leaders of the synagogue were totally against Jesus' ministry, and we see that the few ones among them who believed Jesus and sought him, did so privately. Whereas Jairus in his desperation didn't bother about the large crowd. We are told that he fell at Jesus' feet and pleaded with him earnestly. Likewise, the woman with the bleeding issue who was considered ceremonially unclean. She wasn't supposed to be mixing with people until she was pronounced clean. However, in her desperation she snuck into the crowd with the hopes of just touching Jesus' garment and receiving her healing.

When we need help from Jesus, we shouldn't allow anything to hold us back – not our position in the society, our titles or even our fears. We should come to him and pour out our hearts to him in humility, in fear and in faith knowing that he will attend to us. Jesus does not care if you are grammatically correct or how you have been living your life. He is not interested in your weaknesses and would not judge you where others would. He doesn't care whether you are too young or too old; age doesn't matter to him. What he cares about is your soul, your spirit, and your body.

Come to him today, even if it has been a while since you spoke to him or fellowshiped with him. Come to him, even if you have never come to him before. He died for everyone, those who know him and those who don't know him; those who acknowledge him and those who don't. Come to him today and he will take care of you and give you the healing you need. Get out of the crowd and follow Jesus with a purpose.

Are you desperate enough? God says if we seek Him, we will find Him if we seek Him with all our hearts.

This lady's encounter with Jesus, interrupted Jairus' plea for Jesus to come and heal his daughter. And by the time Jesus was done talking to the woman, some of Jairus' servants came in and told him not to bother the Rabbi because his daughter was dead.

And Jesus responded and said to Jairus, "don't be afraid; just believe." And at this stage, after seeing how Jesus had healed this woman just from her touching his garment, Jairus had hope and confidence. He knew for a fact that after what he had just witnessed, Jesus was going to bring his daughter back to life.

What desperate situation are you facing right now? Come to Jesus with all your heart; fall at his feet like Jairus did; believe like the woman with the blood challenge knowing that he will intervene for you. And in case it is a loved one who is facing a challenge, remember that Jairus was standing in for his daughter. Therefore, you too can intercede for your loved one and Jesus will come to their rescue. And as Jesus blesses us let us also share our testimonies with us to encourage them and boost their faith, so they too can believe in Jesus. Be desperate and humble enough to seek Him with all your heart and you will find Him, and my God will do exceedingly, abundantly, above all that we can ever ask or imagine. Amen.

**Prayer**

O Lord, you are indeed the healer of all our ills. We bring to you, Lord, our bodies, minds, and spirits hurting and broken by the violence, ills, trauma and cares of a world separated from you. Come to us now with your healing powers.

O God, we ask that you heal us. Give us the strength, health, wisdom, and knowledge found only through you. Send your life-giving Spirit so that we may live our lives with courage in the profound peace of your love. Come to us now with your healing power. Sustain those who seek to alleviate the pain and suffering of this world. Give strength, courage, wisdom and knowledge to all doctors and orderlies, nurses and clerks, psychiatrists, researchers, and all other medical care givers, volunteers, and professionals. Send your life-giving Spirit so that their ministries may bring healing and promote health. Come to us now with your healing powers.

Be also with those who work to heal the wounds of societies and nations. Guide, protect and strengthen our lawyers and police, chaplains and pastors, healthcare and social workers, politicians, military, diplomats, and all others who work for economic and social reform. Send your life-giving Spirit that they may promote your love and grace, bringing healing to those in conflict and stability to those who are vulnerable. Come to us now with your healing powers.

Lord Jesus Christ, You are our source of peace and healing, and we are grateful. Today we pray for each one who faces choices and decisions about their health— for those trying to follow good diets and exercise enough; for all waiting for appointments or wondering if they should make another; for any who find caring for their health frustrating, and for all facing pain or anxiety after the months of pandemic. In all our struggles and good intentions, bring healing, strength, and peace.

Lord Jesus Christ, You are our source of peace and healing, and we are grateful. Today we pray for each one who faces choices and decisions about their health— for those trying to follow good diets and exercise enough; for all waiting for appointments or wondering if they should make another; for any who find caring for their health frustrating, and for all facing pain or anxiety after the months of pandemic. In all our struggles and good intentions, bring healing, strength, and

peace. Lord Jesus Christ, You are our source of love and forgiveness, and we are grateful.

Today we pray for each one facing choices and decisions about their relationships. We pray for people we ought to call but just haven't; for those with whom we feel a grievance and have been avoiding. We pray for those we'd like to invite into closer relationship but haven't yet; and for those we miss dearly and need to tell how much we cherish them. In all our struggles and good intentions, bring healing, strength, and peace. Open our eyes to new ways in which we can bring healing in our communities as we pray together the words Christ taught us:

*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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

### **Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift His countenance towards you and give you peace in Jesus' name. Amen.