

6th Sunday after Pentecost
July 1, 2018
Text: Mark 5:21-43
Theme: Little Girl Arise

Today we have another sandwich from Mark.

The other week I told you about the gospel writer's technique of stuffing a story inside another story.

Today we have the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter and inside of it we encounter another story—that of the hemorrhaging woman.

They are meant to bring light to each other. Like diamonds set together on a ring, they add further brilliance than if they were simply separate stories.

These are two females. **One on the verge of womanhood** who dies before she enters it.

The **other stuck in menopause**, unable to move beyond it.

One has been suffering as long as the other has been alive, 12 years.

And Jesus has time and resources for both to be moved from illness to wellness. And from death to life.

There are alienating conditions here.

A woman with blood flow could not be a part of the worshiping community.

And the **financial implications of her illness**, and the costly but ineffective medical procedures that she underwent would further alienate her in poverty.

And we know the deep alienation that coincides with deep grief, over the loss of a child. It often pulls marriages apart. Talk about nobody knowing the pain and sorrow you have seen.

When we talk about salvation, and Jesus saving people, most of the time I think contemporary Christians think of it simply as a saving from hell. But salvation is more about wholeness than hell. Salvation is restoration. Salvation is being made whole.

Salvation is being restored to the fullness of community and the loving relationships therein.

When Jesus said to the woman with the blood flow, you have been made well, he uses that word *sodzo*—saved. He wasn't just talking about the blood flow ceasing. He was talking about fullness of life being hers through believing in him.

I think this story also begs us to struggle with the realities that healing sometimes does not happen. Maybe it doesn't happen for 12 long years. Maybe it doesn't happen in the way we would hope at all.

How many people in our congregation have been struggling just as long, 12 years or more with health issues that do not go away? It is the reality of our lives, even in a time with the greatest medical advances in history.

We also see in the story that the woman who was hemorrhaging had spent up her money with treatments. Though Jesus healed her she continued to have to deal with being financially sick—the financial burdens of having spent all her money on what she had hoped would bring healing but didn't.

And we know that there are people whose children are not raised, but despite their prayers and the prayer lists and prayer chains of many congregations, their child dies long before the tender age of 12.

What does it look like for us to be a community of faith who walk with one another through the difficulties of life.

Who **have faith and practice believing** with those whose troubles are not quickly relieved as well as with those whose burdens are lifted.

Not dismissing those whose ailments we can't relate to.

Or growing tired and falling off the train of support for those whose illnesses drag out for more years than we can remember.

What does it look like for the body of Christ to define no one as unclean. Nobody as an "outsider?"

Jesus in this story moves effortlessly across boundaries that others have set up. With good intentions to be sure. Hygiene was critical to the viability of community.

Don't come into contact with another person's blood—you'll be ritually unclean. Don't touch a corpse—you'll have to avoid contact with others for so many days.

But Jesus moves through those established purity law boundaries like butter. This rabbi not only isn't angry with the bleeding woman for touching him. He tells her "your faith has made you well."

And then he proceeds to touch a little girl's corpse after the gathered community has laughed off his audacity in saying the girl is only sleeping.

His actions were nothing less than shocking to the people who witnessed them. His movement in our midst could very well be the same.

What rules have we insisted on at GG that kept certain people at bay, or at least don't clearly include ALL?

What ideas to help others have people suggested, that we have laughed off as impossibilities that Jesus would really have no trouble at all executing if two or three would not fear, but believe?

Look in this story at who has power. It is the men. It is Jairus the leader of the synagogue. And it is Jesus.

And look how they use their power to benefit the women in these stories.

What would it look like for the men in this congregation to acknowledge their power and privilege and work for the good of women and girls.

Every Sunday in the month of August this congregation will be studying the Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice.

Now we did this earlier in the process before the document got to this point. And we had 2 men besides me in those sessions. Two.

This social statement is gospel driven. It speaks truth in prophetic ways. It calls for wrongs to be righted. It calls for action for changes in church and society that will engender salvation, manifest wholeness in our relationships with women and girls in all aspects of life.

Surely like me, some of you have daughters. Surely, some of you have grand-daughters. Surely, like me you long for a society where women have the same

rights, the same opportunities, the same privileges, the same access to medical care, the same pay, and on an on.

What does it look like to be church, where we stand together as men, women, and children, and don't snicker and stand outside the door, but like Jairus, enter into the room with Jesus, and watch "Talitha Cum", watch the little girl arise. Amen!