

Introduction

A woman finds healing by touching Jesus' cloak, and a girl is restored to life when he takes her by the hand. In both cases a boundary is crossed: in Jesus' time the hemorrhaging woman was considered ritually unclean, polluting others by her touch, and anyone who touched a corpse also became unclean. In Mark's gospel Jesus breaks down barriers, from his first meal at a tax collector's house to his last breath on the cross as the temple curtain is torn in two. We dare to touch Jesus in our "uncleanness" and to live as a community that defines no one as an outsider.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, we implore you to hear the prayers of your people. Be our strong defense against all harm and danger, that we may live and grow in faith and hope, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

David laments over the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan, who was a beloved friend of David's. David mourns for Saul, the first king of Israel, even though Saul tried to kill him on several occasions. Though deeply flawed, Saul was still God's anointed.

¹After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag.

¹⁷David intoned this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan. ¹⁸(He ordered that The Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.) He said:

¹⁹Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰Tell it not in Gath,
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

²¹You mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor bounteous fields!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more.

²²From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
nor the sword of Saul return empty.

²³Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

²⁴O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you with crimson, in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

²⁵How the mighty have fallen
in the midst of the battle!

Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.

²⁶I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

²⁷How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

Psalm 130

¹Out | of the depths

I cry to | you, O LORD;

²**O LORD, | hear my voice!**

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my | supplication.

³If you were to keep watch | over sins,

O LORD, | who could stand?

⁴**Yet with you | is forgiveness,**

in order that you | may be feared.

⁵I wait for you, O LORD; | my soul waits;

in your word | is my hope.

⁶**My soul waits for the Lord more than those who keep watch | for the morning,**

more than those who keep watch | for the morning.

⁷O Israel, wait for the LORD, for with the LORD there is | steadfast love;

with the LORD there is plen- | teous redemption.

⁸**For the LORD shall | redeem Israel**

from | all their sins.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

Paul encourages the Corinthians to honor their commitment to participate in the collection his churches are organizing for the Christians in Jerusalem. He presents Jesus as an example of selfless stewardship and reminds them that Christians have received abundantly so that they can share abundantly.

⁷Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something—¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written,

“The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little.”

Gospel Reading: Mark 5:21-43

Jairus, a respected leader, begs Jesus to heal his daughter. A woman with a hemorrhage was considered ritually unclean and treated as an outcast. Both Jairus and the unnamed woman come to Jesus in faith, believing in his power to heal and bring life out of death.

²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live.” ²⁴So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, “If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well.” ²⁹Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, ‘Who touched me?’” ³²He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

³⁵While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader’s house to say, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” ³⁶But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” ³⁷He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, “Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping.” ⁴⁰And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha cum,” which means, “Little girl, get up!” ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us come before the triune God in prayer, saying “God, in your mercy,” and responding, “hear our prayer.”

A brief silence.

God of hope, the ministry of your church extends across borders, from nearby neighbors to far and distant countries. Accompany all those who labor eagerly in service of the gospel, that through your good news all might experience transformation. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land that provides our food. Guard all species of plants and animals from harsh changes in climate and empower us to protect all you have made. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Righteous God, we pray for nations and their leaders. Give them a spirit of compassion and steer them towards a fair distribution of resources; that none among us would have too much or too little. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of healing, your touch has the power to make us whole. We pray for those suffering from physical or mental illness. Embrace those who are sick (*especially*). Surround them with your unwavering presence. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for this assembly and all those gathered together in worship. Revive our spirits, renew our relationships, and rekindle our faith, that we might experience resurrection in this community. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for the faithful ancestors in every age whose lives have pointed us towards you (*especially*). Envelop them in your love, that (*with Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, and all your saints*) we may be reunited with one another in the last days. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

Amen.

A reflection for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost...

Jesus' Power Is Enough

Today's story of two healings in a single reading appears to present a horrific choice: should Jesus hurry to the dying daughter of a rich man, or pause to heal an outcast woman? The urgency of both requests before him presents a real dilemma, one we might be tempted to resolve in a variety of either/or ways. Either he keeps his commitment to Jairus, or he pauses to help the woman before him who is so obviously suffering. He either helps an important person who can help him further his ministry, or gives help to someone who has no other resource at all.

We see these apparent zero-sum equations in our ministry all the time. The church council meets over the budget and feels the pull between benevolence outside the congregation and the increasing costs of health care for the church's employees. The building's windows need repair, but we know another congregation across town that can barely pay its pastor. The needs "inside" and the needs "outside" always seem in competition.

Individuals feel these tensions as well: people are sandwiched between the needs of aging parents and the needs of small children; parents feel stretched to meet their vocational obligations and spend time with their families; students want to serve others but feel pressed to just get their own work done.

Of course, in the face of Jesus' power, none of these really are either/or propositions, even though they seem like dead ends. In Mark's gospel, Jesus' power is enough to provide new life for both the rich man's daughter and the poor woman. How often do we assume that God's power is not enough to bring life out of the seemingly impossible choices we make? We are challenged to open up the interruptions and hard choices of our lives to Jesus' power to bring life out of death.

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