

Sunday 27 June 2021

Mark 5:21-43

Jairus

A story within a story, *sandwiched!* The story of the Woman Afflicted with Hemorrhages is sandwiched within the story of Jairus' Daughter. This is a typical technique of Mark in which the inner story is more important, in this case the Woman with the Hemorrhages. In a way she leads us to a deeper level of belief, where as the party of Jairus got news that his daughter died and are ready to give up. The spotlight is on both Jairus and the Woman, or I should say, Jairus' community and the Woman without a community. This bleeding Woman is literally unclean because of blood, which is sacred to the Jews but can cause her to be separated from the community, same as for all women during their period, are ritually unclean. Yet, she believed in Jesus' power even for her, just touch the cloak. Don't give up, even if the little girl dies.

Jesus reminds us, "Do not be afraid; just have faith." Like the Woman with the Bleeding, have faith, "If I just touch his clothes, I shall be healed!" Jairus pleaded earnestly with Jesus, "My daughter is at the point of death...just come and lay your hands on her, that she may get well and live." The woman believed that if she even just touched his clothes, she would be healed. And Jesus told her, "Your faith has saved you!" For Jairus, Jesus had to remind them, "***Just have faith.***"

This story is among the bright gems of Mark's account. A hemorrhaging woman beyond the help of the medical profession. And a young girl dying at the cusp of puberty. This is a tale about the significance of blood as the primary symbol of life. One participant in this tale is at risk because the ungovernable flow of blood *separates* her permanently *from* contact with *the community*. The other dies before the promise of her role as life-bearer *for the community* is achieved. Both the lives of the woman and girl seem irredeemable. Until they encounter Jesus.

The *touch of Jesus* is all it takes to restore both woman and girl to wholeness and to the potential to which they were born. After a year of living in a society in which personal contact has been essentially the most risky thing we can do, we may appreciate the gesture of touch even more. The sick woman reaches for the cloak of Jesus knowing it is forbidden by law. Jesus takes the hand of the sick girl knowing

the same law makes him likewise unclean. Life is restored in each instance. The Lord of life wills it to be so.

That brings us to the reason for celebrating two of our brothers this day, Bro. Mike Murphy, and Bro. Bob Wiethorn, both willing to touch others most would consider outcasts! Bro. Mike started the HELP Program for many who wished to start over and live a better tomorrow, giving them a chance to reenter community and touching many lives. Bro. Bob touched many through his service to the Mercy Neighborhood Ministries for many years. Both show us a way to touch others like Jesus by putting our faith in practice. As a parish we are blessed with many programs that reach out to others and make a difference. You choose.