

Sunday between 26<sup>th</sup> June and 2<sup>nd</sup> July [13]

Mark 5:21-43

Jesus calls on two people in today's reading to trust him in different ways. First, we have a public figure who must choose trusting Jesus over the jeers and doubts of his loved ones. Then we have an anonymous figure who has faith in Jesus but hasn't taken a public stand, acknowledging him before the crowds.

Our public figure is Jairus, a synagogue ruler who wouldn't have wanted to be allied with Jesus publicly. Yet, through desperation he comes to Jesus. It's amazing how true need breaks through prejudice. People will mock Jesus and sometimes they mock us for belonging to him, but when a true crisis happens in their lives they will often then pray as the only real source of help.

As a synagogue ruler – Jairus was more like an administrator than a theologian. He was a public figure, a well-known and respected name in the community. Coming to Jesus like this carried with it huge risks. But we are told that the girl in need was 12 years old and was Jairus' only daughter. Put yourself in his shoes, about to lose this precious child, Jairus asks Jesus to come and lay hands on the daughter and he goes but on the way something else amazing happens, Jesus encounters the woman who had been haemorrhaging for 12 years. According to Jewish law this woman's husband could not touch her and everything she touched became unclean. What a terrible life that was to lead. She had sought the best of what the medical care of the day had to offer and spent every penny she had – but to no avail. For every year that Jairus' little girl had lived – this woman was in torment.

In Jesus' time medical knowledge was scant. Often the Pharisees went around claiming to be physicians. They would offer all kinds of strange superstitious methods of healing this type of condition. One method called for seven pits to be dug, with vine branches not yet four years old burned in them, and then the woman was to sit down by each pit and to say "Be free from thy sickness." Whatever the method this woman tried it didn't work.

Interestingly Jesus does not know what's going to happen in advance, instead he senses it after the fact. Apparently, Jesus would have a sense when power for healing had gone out of him. There is no direct action taken on Jesus' part, rather the woman reaching out to him in faith obtained the power. Jesus didn't just channel or use the power of God, he IS the power of God –he IS God.

It doesn't show up in the English translation – but Jesus uses the feminine pronoun for "who". He knew it was a woman who touched him, and perhaps at that moment he knew who it was – but Jesus doesn't turn to the woman and say "you there – you touched me." He wants her to do something. The disciples can't believe he wants to pick one person out of the crowd. "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

So apparently people were jostling back and forth – probably lots of people were

touching Jesus – coming into contact with him – but only the one who reached out in faith got the healing. You can stand near to Jesus all you want, but unless you reach out to him and ask him for something you won't get anything. In this case it was important for some reason for this woman to not be an invisible healing, Jesus wanted her to acknowledge the source of the healing.

Jesus always makes time for a legitimate need. This woman was nobody special particularly compared to the synagogue ruler yet Jesus stopped from an important mission because somebody, anybody reached out in faith to him. He will also stop what he's doing to listen to us if we cry out to him in faith, putting our trust in him. And Jesus' delay has an important implication for Jairus, who I'm sure was chomping at the bit to get Jesus to hurry along to his house. After this impromptu pause word comes that the little girl has died.

But Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; just believe." How would you react? "Your daughter is dead" they tell Jairus. It's too late nothing can help her now, don't bother the teacher anymore, he didn't get there in time so just give up. And yet – Jesus turns to Jairus and says two very important things. 1. "Don't be afraid." Jesus heard what the men said – and actually interrupted them. It's like He was saying "What you are hearing and sensing is likely to bring great fear into your heart – but I want you to disregard it."

Then 2. He said, "Only believe." This is a command. In essence Jesus is saying to Jairus – "Do you trust me, no matter what?" Jairus had a choice to make – believe the environmental information around him, or believe the Word spoken to him by Jesus. We don't get his response – but it's obvious that Jairus does indeed trust Jesus because they continue into the house and Jairus does what Jesus says and clears the room of everyone except the child, her parents and his disciples.

Jairus and Jesus were surrounded with unbelief and ridicule. But what Jairus asked for, Jesus granted. Later, a Centurion would ask for healing from a distance and Jesus would grant that request too. He responds to what we ask for and whether we are trusting him add to the mix the Father's will and you get the complete picture. So we learn to trust in Jesus, don't limit your prayers, and also trust that how the Father responds is in our best interest, even when we lack understanding

Human efforts do little in the long run. The woman had availed herself of all the world could offer and it only made matters worse. That's what we do sometimes too. We will do anything before trusting in the Lord for our situation. We think by working harder and making more money we will have satisfaction. We think by studying and espousing every philosophy created by people that we will find peace in our hearts.

But for me only Jesus brings real healing and joy and satisfaction and peace. If you've run all your life trying to get ahead and find yourself further behind than ever – come to Jesus. Let his Word, not your senses be the guide. And don't panic – Jesus never let time determine his moves but when he makes his moves lives are transformed and prayers are answered.