

Mark 5:21-43 Year B  
July 1, 2018

Grace and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior  
Jesus Christ!

Today we have not one but two stories of Jesus' ability to heal intertwined together. Both give testimony to His ability to heal but they also work through the contrasts and comparisons in the stories to shed light on what it means to live within the kingdom of God.

### *Contrasts*

- Jairus vs. the hemorrhaging woman
  - Religious authority – a somebody in society
  - Male
  - Woman – a nobody
  - Probably unclean by Levitical code – outcast or a no body
- Jairus is named vs. woman who remains anonymous
  - Even Jairus' daughter is identified as his daughter giving her some identity
- Daughter has an advocate while woman has no one
- Rich versus poor
  - Jairus – as a leader of synagogue would have been relatively well off financially in those days; while we learn the woman had spent all she had seeking to find a cure through physicians.

### *Similarities*

- Faith exhibited by both
- Desperation of their fear to do whatever to be healed or “saved”/saved his daughter

- Both are healed
- Both called daughter
- Both unclean – one bleeding/another dead
- Touch involved in both healings
- 12 – 12 years old/hemorrhaging for 12 years

So what do these contrast and similarities matter? Why are they significant to the story? Well, the contrasts clearly point out the fact that when it comes to God's grace no one stands outside of it. Whether rich or poor, a somebody by societal standards or a nobody, male or female, clean by law or unclean by law – it makes no difference in the eyes of God. God's grace is given freely to all. The contrasts lead to the emphasis on God's amazing grace even to the least of them. This story shows what the kingdom of God is like now and gives us a foretaste of the feast to come.

The similarities help to emphasize the fact, that although different, Jarius and his daughter are not that different from the hemorrhaging woman. Too often we let our differences divide us. This is true not only outside the church but within the church. If we can look past the differences we see similarities. How many times in life do we meet someone who at first glance strikes us as being different than us? Perhaps it is due to their skin color, an illness, nationality, the language they speak, or any number of other things. However, what happens when we sit down and get to know them and their story? Slowly but surely we almost always encounter our similarities. Perhaps, that similarity is faith in Christ. Perhaps, it is a hobby or

something that has happened in their life we can relate to. Often, we learn we are much more similar than we are different.

There is one more similarity that might sometimes be overlooked. But, it caught my attention today. Perhaps, it's because recently the illness that is depression has entangled me in its ugly web of despair, doubt, inability to at times seemingly move or make a decision, exhaustion, and loneliness. It's a condition that easily clouds my perception of reality and even opportunity and possibility. And I think that just maybe it's through those lenses I noticed the similarities in this text between the disciples who said, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say 'Who touched me?'" and the people who came from Jairus' house saying to Jairus, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher any further?" Or, those gathered whom Jesus addresses by stating, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." We are told they respond by laughing at Jesus.

Notice the similarities. One of disbelief and doubt; even, failure to find hope where at first glance there appears none or that God can do the unthinkable and even impossible. The repetition of this point would seem to imply Mark is making a point to the young church he is serving alongside for which a similar state of mind had set in. Doubt in the face of adversity and naysayers. And reality, if we are honest with ourselves, this mindset continues to surface in the church yet today. We don't have enough – resources such as people, money, or time. Or, we can't do it that way.

Yet, there is so much hope in this passage. This passage calls us to move beyond pessimism and move toward optimism. Rather than a glass half empty we see a glass half full and dream of Jesus' ability to overflow that cup. Might we dare to reach out, touch his cloak, and trust he will open new doors and heal our community of faith in ways we might never imagined. What miracle might he do in our life together? In what new way, might he call us to be the body of Christ and share his love in the world? Do we risk falling at his feet, making ourselves vulnerable, and taking the chance that just maybe Jesus might do something amazing and incredible through us and move beyond our fears, doubts, and complacency and into a new beginning, opportunity, and experience of growth and transformation?

“Do not fear, only believe.” Whatever it is we encounter as a community of faith let these words be the healing balm of grace we need equipping us through the Holy Spirit with the strength, confidence, and faith to trust Jesus is alive. Alive and at work in us and through us. “Do not fear, only believe.” Amen.