

Lesson: 2 Corinthians 8: 7 -15
Psalm 30
Gospel: Mark 5: 21-43

5th Sunday after Pentecost
June 27, 2021

“Healing Grace”
Sermon Preached by Rev. Judith Rainforth
American Lutheran Church of Sun City

Grace and peace be to you through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! In today’s Gospel reading Mark describes Jesus healing two daughters of Israel. Jesus was on the loose with the divine power to restore abundant life. Jesus shared his healing grace, and those who doubted and laughed were left in speechless amazement. Jairus was a respected leader who begged Jesus to heal his daughter. She died before Jesus arrived because he was detained by a woman with a hemorrhage. She was considered ritually unclean and was treated as an outcast. Both Jairus and the unnamed woman came to Jesus in faith, believing in His power to heal and bring life out of death. Often overlooked in the telling of this story is that Jesus was breaking the law by having contact with an oozing woman and by grabbing the hand of a corpse. He was explicitly disregarding two clearly stated purity codes from Leviticus and Numbers.

As Christians, we believe that Jesus’ life and actions reinterpret and even change the law and our relationship to it. We don’t follow the Jewish law or the law of any nation blindly. We look to Jesus Christ to show us the way of righteousness, justice and salvation, not religious law. Jairus and the bold woman in our story could not be more different; he was a parent and a man of privilege with a name and a title. She was nobody, unwomanly. He was a religious leader; she was cast out by her religion. He was wealthy; she was poor. She spent all her money trying to find a physician who would cure her, and all of those attempts failed. Jairus approached Jesus with a formal request. She pushed her way forward and didn’t even ask for permission.

Those two people are connected; their stories depend on each other. The woman had suffered for 12 years, the entire length of time that Jairus’s daughter had lived. They both expressed incredible faith falling at Jesus’ feet. Both experienced God’s grace and salvation, God’s healing through Jesus Christ. The woman and the little girl were both unclean because of bleeding and because of death. In both cases Jesus blows right past the religious rules, breaking the law to help them. Jesus calls them both ‘daughter.’ Their healing, their salvation, is not in competition. They’re connected, and so are our stories.

As different as we are, we are connected. We come to Jesus; whether we come with dignity or without, with privilege or without, we all come to Jesus in our desperation. We fall at His feet; we find God's salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Jesus looks into the face of each one of us and calls us daughter, son, beloved child. The stories in Mark's Gospel need each other. In Luke 4:18 Jesus quotes Isaiah to describe the purpose of His ministry. He says "the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberation to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.

Sometimes when our world seems so divided it can begin to feel like my healing and your healing are at odds, like your liberation is an interruption of mine. But in the Gospel story today, Jesus shows us that as different as we are, our liberation is bound together. May we look around at all of God's children, all the world's desperation, all the orthodox and unorthodox ways people are reaching out for help, and recognize that our stories are tied together.

Let us pray: Gracious and loving God, may we, like Jesus, speak words of peace and love. May we, like Jesus, lift each other up with the healing power of grace. Amen.