

Mark 5:21-43

It might be just a coincidence, but then maybe not...the daughter of Jairus was born at the same time that the woman in our text acquired her dreadful disease. For twelve years this woman suffered. During those same twelve years, Jairus' daughter was growing from infancy into adolescence. And on the same day, the very hour that the woman was freed of her blood disease, Jairus' daughter died. It's almost like these two were bound together as opposites. While the one suffered, the other enjoyed her life. But now as the one dies, the other is released from her bonds of suffering.

This points us to a mystery of the Faith. For this is how you and I are bound together with Christ. We are bound together as opposites. We as sinners; He as the holy Lamb of God. We, as the woman was, afflicted in this life because of our sin; He, as the Son of God, having all splendor and honor. But then on the same day, the very hour that Jesus dies, the bonds of sin cease to hold power over us.

Now in our text we see that many people were with Jesus that day. Throngs gathered around Him by the sea, and a crowd was there with Him at the home of Jairus. But of all these people, only two were helped. One was healed of her disease; the other was raised from the dead.

Day after day, in our own day, throngs of people still gather around Jesus, but not all are helped. Some are not ready to be helped. Others are not aware that they even need help. In our text, only two were helped--one was dead, and one was struggling with a dread and crippling disease. This is why Jesus is here today--for these two kinds of people--those who need to be raised to life from death, and those who believe, but who are struggling as Christians and need to be released from the bonds of sin in their life.

Which one are you? You know something?... in a certain sense, it doesn't matter. For whether you have lost your faith, (or never even had faith), or whether you are struggling in your faith, Jesus is here to help you. But if you are only here as a spectator, as one who throngs around Jesus but has no real need of Him, then you will leave here today receiving what you expect to receive...nothing.

The woman in our text was once at that point in her life. This day was the first time that she came to see Jesus. And she only came because she had bottomed out. No one else could help her. But it took her twelve years to learn this. Some of you took longer than that. But that's okay, because you're here now, and not as a spectator.

The woman came to Jesus with faith. She did not say, "Maybe I can be healed." She said, "*If I touch even His garments, I will be made well.*" Many people were pressing in around Jesus and touching Him, but this woman touched just the hem of His garment, and she is the one who was healed.

That garment is here for you. When you come to the altar and touch Jesus in the Lord's Supper, you do not touch His uncovered body, but like the woman, to touch Jesus, you touch His garment--the bread and wine in the Supper. This is a sacred mystery. This bread is His body, and this wine is His blood, and so you are eating and drinking Sacramentally the body and blood of Christ. But you eat and drink also bread and wine. And so the bread and wine is the garment covering the flesh and blood of Christ. And this touch, done with faith, makes you well, just as it made the woman well.

The Sacrament of Jesus' flesh and blood is a meal wrapped up in His garments for you. Many see the Sacrament and pass it off as nothing, just as the crowd that day by the sea thought nothing of Jesus' garments. But the woman saw His garments as everything, and believing, she was made whole by her touch.

As you come to the Lord's Supper in the same way, you will leave the Sacrament refreshed. The same power that came out of Jesus to the woman comes into you. The bonds of sin which strangle you are released when you touch the hem of His garments.

No wonder we have members here who desire that touch every single week. And we will give it to them. Those of us who are not struggling with sin every time we come to church dare not keep those who are away from Jesus' garments in the Holy Sacrament. Even if you do not come to church each week like the woman, there are some who do. Would you really want to keep them away from the garments of their Savior in Holy Communion?

And then in our text we see Jesus at the home of Jairus. Here, too, we see a touch taking place. But it's not the girl touching Jesus, for she is dead. But now it's Jesus who touches the girl. He takes her by the hand and raises her to life. In our text, the woman came to Jesus with faith, and so she could, and did touch Him. But the girl, being dead, needed Jesus to come to her and touch her, and He did.

And so those of you with faith come to touch Jesus in the Lord's Supper. Your sins are forgiven. Your bonds are released. You leave being made well. But some need to have Jesus come to them. And so in Baptism, Jesus comes to us and touches us. He takes us by the hand and raises us to life.

And sometimes even the baptized lose their faith and become dead in their sins. But Jesus is here to help. He speaks the word of life--the word of absolution through His pastor, which gives life--and you are brought back to life as the girl was. And as she got up, and walked, and ate, so you can once again rise up and live as Christians, and eat and drink the Holy Supper of the Lord.

Our text for today is full of life, and healing, and joy for two reasons--the touch of Jesus, and the words He spoke. Both of these are here for you. In Baptism Jesus touches you. In Holy Communion you touch Him. And in both of these, His words are spoken to you--the same words you hear every time you come here--the word of forgiveness, the word of power over sin and death.

The two go together...Jesus' touch and His spoken word. He did not allow the woman to go away with just her touch of His garment. He called to her and said to her, "*Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.*" And to the little girl He said, "*Talitha cumi (I say to you, arise).*"

Wherever you are right now--whether your sin has a stranglehold on you, or whether it has completely mastered you and driven the risen life out of you, you have a Savior who can, and will help you. Nothing is impossible for Him. He comes to you today through the same word He spoke to the woman and to the little girl. In your Baptism, His gentle touch is always upon you. In the Sacrament, His garment is here for you to touch. If you are a sinner, like me, then you need the touch and the word of Christ often; and you have it. "Rise," He says to you, "Go in peace, your sins are forgiven; you have been made well." Amen.