

What Does It Mean – To Be Healed



Rev. Peggy Casteel-Huston
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Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Mark 5:21-43

²¹ When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd (was squeezed together) with him; and he was by the sea. ²² Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³ and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made whole, and live." ²⁴ So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵ Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶ She had endured suffering under many physicians and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." ²⁹ Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. ³⁰ Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹ And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³² He looked all around to see who had done it. ³³ But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."

³⁵ While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" ³⁶ But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." ³⁷ He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and

wailing loudly. ³⁹ When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰ And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴² And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³ He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.

May God bless to our hearts the hearing of God's word.

In Mark chapter 5 we find two stories of healing. What is unusual is the way that Mark presents these stories. Mark begins with one story about a leader named Jairus then the reader is transferred to a story about a woman who is bleeding. Then we find ourselves back with the story of Jairus. The woman is an interruption to the story of Jairus. Mark's interruption is purposeful. There could not be greater differences between these two people. This is the time in a sermon that I want to have open discussion and ask parishioners to note the differences – and there are many.

<u>Jairus</u>	<u>Woman who is bleeding</u>
Has a name/male	Has no name/female
Has a position in society	Has no position that we are aware of
Asks for help for his daughter	Asks for help for herself
Tells Jesus the situation	Just touches Jesus
Goes to Jesus in public	Tries to touch Jesus in private
Daughter dies	Is suffering but not dead

Response of Jesus is different in both stories

Asks why the commotion	Asks who touched him
Says 'little girl'	Calls her daughter

Mark's point is to show us that God has the power and authority to provide healing. Healing is not limited to physical healing as we will see. I am sure that if we opened this sermon to conversation, we would be able to name several more types of healing that we see in this story and that we experience from God.

One type of healing that this woman received from God is the healing from being marginalized. She is a woman AND a woman who is bleeding. Regardless of the cause, she would have been considered unclean. No one would have wanted to be around her and certainly no one would touch her.

By Mark telling her story he takes this woman from obscurity to being the woman immortalized in scripture. Mark, through his own witness of who God is chooses not to keep this woman marginalized but rather tells this story giving this woman value.

Mark wants his readers to hear about the woman whose fighting spirit and faith in Jesus gives her the courage to make her way through a crowd; to move away from being marginalized, to become known as one who is not willing to give up or give in, and one who wants to know to Jesus.

As a result, Jesus acknowledges her and more. I think she was known from that moment on in her village as the woman brave enough to touch Jesus. Like Mark, when we see people, when we speak to them, when we hear and share their story, regardless of who they are - what we are doing is acknowledging them as a whole person.

God heals people through us when we speak to and share the stories of those who we see as marginalized in this world.

The woman is also healed from being a nonentity as Jesus gives her a name. Her name is now daughter. She is kin to God. She is family. She belongs to Jesus which makes her important to his other followers. Notice the differences between the two stories. The woman has no name until Jesus gives her the name of daughter. In the other story we not only learn the man's name but his status as well. Notice how Jairus' daughter already is a full person with the identity of being the daughter of Jairus but this woman really has no status as even being a person until Jesus makes it so. Do you see the broader healings taking place?

God uses us to heal when we speak another person's name and take the time to know their name. I know there is a funny commercial that says that they waiter at the restaurant doesn't need to know your name - which is true - but you need to know theirs and to call them by their name. Speaking a persons name acknowledges that they are someone - not only to you but to God.

Are there other types of healing happening here? Yes! Mark says that the woman suffered. Mark uses the Greek term παθοῦσα pathosa. He uses this Greek term only two other times in his gospel - both when Jesus tells his disciples that he will suffer and die (8:31 and 9:12). By the choice of Mark's words, we know that this woman was deeply suffering and Mark by using this term is putting in on the scale of Jesus' suffering. The woman not only suffered from her illness, but she had also suffered from the hands of those who tried to heal her. She suffered the loss of all she had, financial

resources and likely her emotional energies as well. This woman needed Jesus to stop her suffering.

Mark's story tells us that God cares about our suffering. Certainly, God experiences our suffering. God hurts. God feels pain. God knows we suffer, and God suffers with us. I get it – when we see people suffer our tendency is to ask, 'why God why?' Knowing that God knows suffering and is with us in our suffering is meant to be a source of healing comfort to us.

When we suffer alongside of someone who is going through a terrible time, God uses us help carry the heavy load of suffering. To help carry the person until the suffering subsides. People suffer in all kinds of ways: physically, emotionally, with memories, from hurt, from watching a loved one suffer. Not only can we help them by walking with them we can assure those who suffer that God is with them and we can be that source of God's care to them.

Jairus comes asking that his daughter be made whole. Being made whole is the Greek work σωθη (sothi) which is often translated saved. But this Greek term is much richer than one meaning. If we think of this as Jairus asking that his daughter be 'saved' to many that would suggest that he wants to be sure that his daughter would have a place in the afterlife, however, most Jewish beliefs of an afterlife developed post biblical times.

Jairus wants what all parents want, he wants his daughter to be returned to him. This is the most common way that we think about healing. We want our loved one to be returned to us the way that they were. This healing in Mark's gospel is one of the few places where Jesus raises someone from the dead restoring them to the life as they knew it.

What we experience when someone dies is a finality. Death separates us. With death comes grief.

As a pastor, as most pastors do, we spend time with people whose loved one is dying. Most pastors practice the ministry of presence. Being willing to be present in the room where someone is dying is sacred. You know what it meant to you and your family when a pastor or deacon came and prayed with you. The pastor or chaplain is meant to be a source of healing comfort.

The reality is that death is God's perfect healing. What I mean by God's perfect healing is that when we are in the presence of God we have been made completely whole. There is no more marginalization, no more being a nonentity, no more suffering, no more, no more, no more. We stand whole as the daughter, the son, the person that God created us to be. We are set

free from whatever physical, emotional, or spiritual limitations that we once knew. We are free to be fully embraced in love.

I see this best in Psalm 23 where David writes, "you prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows". Yes, we feel loss, we grieve, there is a place at our tables that will never be filled, but for the one who dies, they have been made whole.

Through this past year we have known people who received their ultimate healing. It isn't always what we want, especially when a death is untimely, but just as God in Jesus Christ raised this little one to give her fullness of life our believing does the same for us. This request of asking Jesus to make his daughter whole is what Jesus still does to this day. We are healed as Jesus raises us from the death of loss and despair and seeks to give us fullness of life within God's creation.

God heals. God is a healing God. God heals not just physically but God heals us emotionally and spiritually as well. God is in the healing business. Let's remember that God uses us as agents of healing. Even today, God may use you to bring a healing word, a healing touch, a healing prayer or simply to stand in solidarity working to bring healing justice to our world.

Let us pray:

Healing God, healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow, give us peace beyond our fear and hope beyond our sorrow. Amen